



QUEENSLAND  
FARMERS'  
FEDERATION



## Quad Bike Safety June 2026

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**Prepared for:**  
Safe Work Australia

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This submission is provided to:

Safe Work Australia

Submitted via web - <https://consult.swa.gov.au/improving-the-safety-of-quad-bikes-used-in-the-workplace>

### Our members

- Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers
- Cotton Australia
- Canegrowers
- Greenlife Industry QLD
- eastAUSmilk
- Australian Cane Farmers Association
- Queensland United Egg Producers
- Turf Queensland
- Pork Queensland
- Australian Chicken Meat Federation
- Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group
- Burdekin River Irrigation Area
- Central Downs Irrigators Ltd
- Fairburn Irrigation Network
- Mallowa Irrigation
- Pioneer Valley Water Co-operative Ltd
- Theodore Water Pty Ltd
- Eton Irrigation
- Lockyer Valley Water Users

# About the Queensland Farmers' Federation



## **The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is the united voice of agriculture in Queensland.**

Our members are agricultural peak bodies who collectively represent more than 13,000 farmers who produce food, fibre and foliage across the state.

QFF's peak body members come together to develop policy and lead projects on the key issues that are important to their farmer members and the Queensland agriculture sector.

Together, we form a strong, unified voice leveraging our effectiveness by working together to drive policy and initiatives that support a strong future for Queensland agriculture.

## **Submission**

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) welcomes the opportunity to respond to Safe Work Australia's April 2026 consultation paper on quad bike safety reforms and the accompanying EY Parthenon economic impact analysis.

Since 2011, more than 245 workers have died nationally in quad bike incidents, with rollovers continuing to represent one of the leading causes of fatalities and serious injuries in Australian agriculture. These incidents continue to have devastating impacts on farming families, workers and regional communities.

Queensland has already implemented a suite of quad bike safety reforms through amendments to the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*, including mandatory helmet requirements, passenger restrictions and minimum operator age requirements introduced in 2024. QFF supported these reforms and considers Queensland's experience to demonstrate that practical, proportionate regulation can improve safety outcomes while remaining workable for agricultural businesses.

QFF supports all six reform options proposed by Safe Work Australia and strongly encourages SWA to proceed with the measures as an integrated national package. A nationally harmonised approach will reduce regulatory inconsistency and compliance complexity for agricultural businesses operating across jurisdictions, create a more consistent enforcement framework, and maximise the combined safety benefits that arise from engineering controls, personal protective equipment and behavioural restrictions operating together.

Our responses follow.

## Response to Consultation Options

### Option 1. Requiring Operator Protective Devices (OPDs) on Workplace Quad Bikes

QFF supports the mandatory fitment of Operator Protective Devices (OPDs) on all quad bikes used in workplace settings:

- Rollovers remain the dominant fatal incident mechanism associated with quad bikes, accounting for more than 100 fatalities nationally since 2011. OPDs represent the primary engineering control available to reduce crush-related injuries and fatalities during rollover events.
- QFF considers the proposed implementation timeframe, including transition arrangements and enforcement commencing from 2028-29, to be reasonable and appropriate. This approach provides businesses with sufficient time to retrofit existing vehicles, plan replacement cycles and source compliant equipment.
- Given the financial pressures currently facing many agricultural businesses, particularly smaller and family-operated enterprises, QFF considers it essential that implementation be supported through government-funded rebate or assistance schemes. Similar programs implemented in New South Wales and South Australia provide a practical precedent for reducing barriers to compliance and accelerating uptake.
- For option 1, QFF also recommends that SWA develop clear national guidance outlining compliant OPD types, installation requirements and maintenance expectations to support consistency across jurisdictions.

### Option 2. Mandating Helmets on Workplace Quad Bikes

QFF supports mandatory helmet use for all workplace quad bike operators:

- The evidence supporting helmet use is clear and compelling. Safe Work Australia data indicates that helmets were absent in approximately 86 per cent of fatalities where helmet use was known. The accompanying EY Parthenon analysis further demonstrates that this measure delivers the strongest economic return of all proposed options, with a net present value (NPV) of \$28.17 million and a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 4.09 across all modelled scenarios.
- Queensland's 2024 regulatory experience demonstrates that compliance is both achievable and increasingly becoming normalised within agricultural workplaces. While some initial concerns existed regarding practicality and cultural resistance, QFF's engagement with industry suggests that helmet use is now becoming an accepted component of on-farm safety practice.

To support implementation nationally, QFF recommends that SWA develop practical guidance on minimum helmet standards and suitable helmet types for agricultural use, including considerations relating to comfort, ventilation, visibility and compatibility with common farming tasks. Education and awareness activities should also focus on reinforcing the importance of consistent helmet use, particularly for short-duration or low-speed tasks where operators may otherwise perceive risk to be lower.

### **Option 3. Passenger Restrictions on Type 1 Quad Bikes**

QFF supports restrictions on carrying passengers on Type 1 quad bikes:

- Carrying passengers on operator-only vehicles is inconsistent with manufacturer design specifications and operating instructions and is a known contributor to rollover incidents and loss-of-control events. The additional weight and altered centre of gravity significantly increase instability, particularly on uneven terrain or during turning manoeuvres.
- Queensland implemented passenger restrictions in 2024 without significant operational disruption across the agricultural sector. In most operational settings, alternative transport arrangements are available and can be implemented without substantial productivity impacts.
- The EY Parthenon analysis demonstrates that this reform achieves positive safety outcomes at relatively low implementation cost, with a positive NPV of \$1.82 million and a BCR of 2.80.

QFF recommends that SWA provide clear regulatory guidance distinguishing Type 1 and Type 2 quad bikes to support consistent interpretation and enforcement in the field.

### **Option 4. Minimum Operator Age of 16 Years**

QFF supports the proposed minimum operator age of 16 years for adult-sized workplace quad bikes:

- Children and younger operators often lack the physical strength, bodyweight, coordination and hazard perception necessary to safely operate adult-sized quad bikes, particularly in complex agricultural environments involving uneven terrain, towing loads or livestock handling.
- Queensland coronial findings have repeatedly identified cases where children who died in quad bike incidents were operating adult-sized or oversized youth vehicles inappropriate for their age and capability.
- While QFF acknowledges that family farming operations may have concerns regarding the practical implications of age restrictions, the available evidence strongly supports the proposed measure. The EY Parthenon analysis identifies a benefit-cost ratio of 4.20, reinforcing the substantial safety benefits associated with restricting access to adult-sized quad bikes by younger operators.

QFF recommends that SWA provide practical transition guidance for farming families, including information regarding:

- age-appropriate youth vehicles;
- supervision practices;
- operator training; and
- safe task allocation for younger family members.

QFF also considers it important that the final regulatory drafting clearly confirms that the restriction applies to adult-sized quad bikes used in workplace settings and does not unintentionally prohibit the use of age-appropriate youth vehicles in non-workplace recreational contexts.

### **Option 5. Improving data collection**

QFF strongly supports measures to improve national quad bike incident data collection and reporting:

- Current incident data remains fragmented and inconsistent, with known discrepancies between Safe Work Australia datasets, coronial reporting, health data and agricultural injury surveillance systems such as AgHealth Australia. Existing reporting also appears to significantly underrepresent the scale of non-fatal injuries occurring in agricultural workplaces.
- Improved data collection is essential to better understand incident causation, identify emerging risk factors, measure the effectiveness of implemented reforms, and support evidence-based policy development into the future.

QFF recommends that incident reporting frameworks capture the following information wherever possible:

- Make, model, engine capacity and age of the quad bike; OPD fitment and condition; helmet type and use; passenger involvement
- Operator age and experience; task being undertaken; terrain type and conditions; loads or attachments present
- How the operator was found in relation to the vehicle; whether the incident was work-related; reporting pathway
- Greater coordination between NCIS, state health datasets, WHS regulators and AgHealth Australia is recommended

### **Option 6. Targeted Safety Communication and Education**

QFF supports targeted safety communication and education initiatives as an important supporting measure alongside regulation:

- However, communication campaigns should complement, rather than replace, enforceable safety requirements. Voluntary measures alone have not achieved sufficiently consistent behavioural change across the agricultural sector over the past decade.
- Effective communication will be critical to translating regulatory requirements into practical day-to-day workplace behaviours, particularly within geographically dispersed and remote agricultural communities.

QFF considers communication initiatives will be most effective where they:

- are delivered through trusted industry channels, including QFF and member organisations;
- utilise field days, grower meetings, producer networks and industry conferences;

- prioritise practical, on-farm demonstrations over purely written materials;
- include demonstrations of OPD installation, helmet fitting and quad bike type identification;
- provide tailored guidance for family farming operations regarding age restrictions and transition arrangements; and
- are paired with visible and proportionate enforcement during the initial implementation period.

QFF also recommends that communication activities include built-in evaluation mechanisms to assess reach, behavioural impact and effectiveness, with findings informing ongoing improvements to incident data collection and policy development.

## **Additional comments**

### **Transition Support for Small Agricultural Businesses**

QFF emphasises that smaller agricultural businesses are likely to experience the greatest relative compliance burden associated with implementation, particularly in relation to OPD retrofitting and equipment replacement costs.

To support successful implementation, QFF recommends:

- a nationally coordinated rebate scheme for OPDs and compliant helmets targeted at small agricultural businesses;
- a minimum 18-month transition period before OPD enforcement commences, consistent with the EY modelling assumptions;
- nationally consistent guidance on compliant OPD products, installation requirements and approved installers; and
- dedicated industry engagement and education programs delivered in partnership with state farming peak bodies.

### **Side-by-Sides (SSVs)**

QFF supports the gradual transition toward side-by-side vehicles (SSVs) where operationally appropriate.

However, SSVs are not a direct or universal replacement for quad bikes across all agricultural contexts. In some environments, including narrow terrain, steep slopes or tasks requiring frequent mounting and dismounting, quad bikes may remain the more practical and lower-risk option when operated safely and fitted with appropriate controls.

Accordingly, policy settings should focus on improving the safety of quad bike use rather than assuming wholesale substitution with SSVs. Risk management approaches should remain task-specific and proportionate to operational conditions.

## Conclusion

QFF supports all six reform options proposed by Safe Work Australia and encourages their implementation as a coordinated national package and supported by a rebate scheme for SME to assist with a transition phase.

Queensland's recent regulatory experience demonstrates that these measures are practical, proportionate and capable of being implemented within agricultural workplaces. National harmonisation will reduce regulatory inconsistency, simplify compliance obligations for businesses operating across jurisdictions, and contribute to preventing fatalities and serious injuries across Australian farming communities.

QFF looks forward to continued engagement with Safe Work Australia and governments on the implementation of these reforms and the development of practical guidance materials that support safe and sustainable agricultural operations.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Officer



**This submission is provided by the Queensland Farmers' Federation**

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