

23 November 2010

Reference: H10/04159

Coroner Stella Stuthridge
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 1, 436 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Coroner Stuthridge

Jock Rial (deceased) – Coroners Court reference 2490/2009

Thank you for providing your findings in relation to the death of Jock Rial, which were received by WorkSafe on 4 October 2010.

WorkSafe has considered the findings and your comment that '*[t]he public, in particular farming communities, should be reminded of the dangers involved in children travelling unrestrained in the back of utilities*'. In this context, you made the following recommendation:

'WorkSafe should include this issue in their regional road and safety campaigns. Consideration should be given to an intensive awareness campaign aimed at farming fatalities with young children, in this region.'

WorkSafe has developed guidance material relevant to this issue, and funds and sponsors a number of farm safety initiatives designed to raise awareness regarding child farm safety.

Examples of preventative measures undertaken by WorkSafe in this area include:

- Attending agricultural field days as an exhibitor and providing attendees with WorkSafe guidance material which include references to child farm safety involving farming vehicles. Examples of guidance material provided include publications such as the '15 Minute Farm Safety Check', 'Safe Operation of Tractors and Attachments', 'Quad Bikes on Farms', and 'A Practical Safety Guide in the Horticultural Industry in the Murray Valley' (also available online at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au);
- Co-funding the Farmsafe Alliance (FSA) which includes the Victorian Farmers Federation, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Human Services and the Australian Workers Union. The FSA has been involved with child farm safety awareness initiatives, such as the 'Playing Safely, Saving the Next Generation on the Farm' project;
- Funding the Victorian Farm Safety Centre at the University of Ballarat which provides safety training courses designed to reduce injuries and fatalities on farms. Relevant training courses include 'Managing Farm Safety', 'Tractor Training' and 'Quad Bike and Quad Utility Training';
- Providing naming rights sponsorship to the Victorian Country Football League and the Victorian Country Netball League, including the 'Game of the Month' initiative. The Game of the Month program involves the selection of one regional game of football and netball per month to host an event including speakers from WorkSafe and media and sporting identities to raise awareness of occupational health and safety issues. This initiative also provides farming communities with the opportunity to receive information

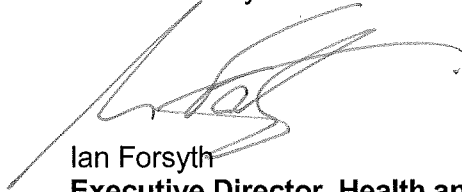
- and guidance in relation to farm safety from WorkSafe;
- Previously funded the WorkSafe KIDS educational program designed to provide guidance to primary schools on issues including child farm safety and injury prevention;
 - Previously funded the Farmsafe Rural Injury Prevention Primary Education Resource (RIPPER) project. This initiative developed an educational resource for primary schools designed to provide farm safety information and learning activities to children; and
 - Distributing media releases in relation to child fatalities on farms and relevant child farm safety issues to a wide network of rural and regional newspapers.

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, WorkSafe will seek to further reinforce the farm safety message to a wider audience by incorporating issues relevant to child safety on farms into presentations at the Game of the Month events throughout regional Victoria during the 2011 season.

As part of its 2010-11 agricultural strategy, WorkSafe will also conduct 600 visits to workplaces to assess compliance with occupational health and safety legislation, and will attend 11 agricultural field days as an exhibitor and provide information and guidance to the farming community to reduce workplace risks, injuries and fatalities.

WorkSafe thanks you for providing your findings in relation to the death of Jock Rial. As outlined above and consistently with your recommendation, WorkSafe will continue to work to raise awareness in relation to child farm safety in the farming community.

Yours faithfully



Ian Forsyth
Executive Director, Health and Safety
Deputy Chief Executive