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4 December 2003

Dear Ms Murray

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry – Injuries and Fatalities on Victorian Farms

For the purpose of this submission we will be talking about deaths on Victorian Farms and deaths in the Fishing, Forestry and Mining Industries. One of the main causes of deaths on Victorian Farms and in the Fishing industry is drowning.

Every year Australia wide there are a number of children who drown on farms predominantly in a dam after wandering away from the house. Owen's in her report "Unintentional Drowning: Toddlers in Dams in Victoria 1989-2001" found 27 children aged 0-5 years had drowned in a dam. RLSSA believes that the "Keep Watch" program which advocates for Supervision, Fencing (ie providing a safe play area from which children can not wander), Water Familiarisation and learning CPR is the most appropriate program for the prevention of drowning related deaths to children under the age of five years.

To ensure that all Victorians are able to deliver CPR when needed, RLSSA provides a Senior First Aid course (which encompasses CPR training). RLSSA believes that the Senior First Aid Course is appropriate for all workplaces and that not only do people learn CPR but also first aid skills which help in minimising the severity of the injury sustained.

RLSSA would suggest that farms managers attend a Managing Farm Safety Course. The course provides practical skills that allow the farm manager to manage the occupational health and safety of the farm.

For people who are on, in, or around water we would recommend that they undertake a Bronze Medallion to help with surviving immersion in water. The Bronze Medallion gives knowledge and skills to be able to make the right survival decisions, instinctive decisions that may help you or those around you survive in an aquatic emergency.

To get these programs and water safety message to rural people, RLSSA attends rural field days, disseminates information via the rural publications such as the "Weekly Times", provides a network of volunteers and paid trainers to deliver RLSSA programs and has links with other organisations such as Farmsafe Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia where we provide consistent messages.

The major impediment to sustaining improvements to the rural sector in particular workplaces is financial (eg cost of travel and cost of resources).



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RLSSA believes that there is already a number of education and training programs available as outlined above. RLSSA believes that what is needed is support from government to allow these programs to be delivered systematically to all people in Victoria. RLSSA believes that the development of strategies for the prevention on injuries and fatalities is best undertaken by industry with government support, which includes worker representation.

RLSSA would like to be involved in any further programs of work that allow for the prevention of aquatic incidents including drowning deaths.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Franklin', with a small flourish at the end.

Richard Franklin
National Manager Research and Health Promotion