



ABOUT WORKSAFE K.I.D.S.

K.I.D.S. Education is a non-for-profit organisation funded by sponsorship, donations and fundraising activities.

K.I.D.S. Education was founded 10 years ago as a governing body to encourage schools to actively engage in safety education programs and promote affiliate safety organisations in schools.

The safety education program is now rebranded WorkSafe K.I.D.S. after receiving an ongoing sponsorship from WorkSafe Victoria through the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

Everyday in Australia 5,000 children are injured and 200 children are hospitalised, with accidental injury being the largest single cause of death amongst Australian children.

Due to an unacceptable level of injuries and death, WorkSafe K.I.D.S. saw the need to broaden safety education programs. As children were becoming more independent at a much earlier age, effective safety education programs needed to target the children directly.

The mission of WorkSafe K.I.D.S. is to provide quality education programs that result in reducing preventable child injuries and death.

It is the philosophy of WorkSafe K.I.D.S. to provide a breadth of experiences and opportunities aimed at developing children's cognitive understanding of risk management that leads to the evolution of a whole-school safety culture.

WorkSafe K.I.D.S. is dedicated to childhood injury prevention through education.

FARM SAFETY

WorkSafe K.I.D.S. would like to acknowledge the support provided by H.E.S.S.E. Rural Health Service, in particular Dulcie Long and Peter Birkett.

Approximately six months ago Dulcie contacted WorkSafe K.I.D.S. in relation to providing sponsorship to the 'Childless Tractors' Farm Safety in Schools program taught by Leigh Community Health Centre.

It was after this meeting that I began receiving numerous calls from around Victoria in relation to farm safety and the support WorkSafe K.I.D.S. could provide to them.

I became concerned that if farm safety educators were contacting WorkSafe K.I.D.S. in relation to farm safety, what programs were being offered by the farm safety governing bodies? In my reading about farm safety education in Australia, I have become aware of the lack of direction farm safety has in Victoria. To clarify this statement, there are many wonderful farm safety programs being taught by passionate farm safety educators. However I feel farm safety education in Victoria is fragmented and lacks continuity and cohesion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Methy R'.

Where to from here:

1. Conference

WorkSafe K.I.D.S. proposes to coordinate a state-wide conference for all stakeholders who are providing farm safety that may assist in the reduction of farm injuries or at least continue to raise awareness of the dangers inherent with the rural lifestyle.

The aim of this conference would be to gather an alliance of ideas and innovations where all attendees are prepared to share their knowledge and resources of farm safety with the desired result being a cohesive farm safety program that is generic to farm safety yet flexible to be specific to a particular region i.e. orchard region compared with a dairy region.

2. Farm Safety Education Program

As mentioned by Lesley Day in her presentation to this committee, effective programs combine education, environmental changes, engineering solutions and enforcement. They do not always have all three elements but the effective programs are typically characterised by a combination of strategies.

At the conclusion of the Farm Safety Conference, **WorkSafe K.I.D.S.** would like the opportunity to work with **Farmsafe Victoria, WorkSafe** and the **Department of Education and Training** to develop a school based curriculum for all Victorian primary schools with the intention of engaging children, parents, staff and the wider community.

In designing a farm safety education program we would need to take into account the variety of ways children interact on a farm i.e. whether they live on a traditional farm, live on or visit a hobby farm at weekends or visit a friend on a farm.

3. WorkSafe K.I.D.S. & International Perspectives

Our current approach to safety education would appear to be endorsed through the findings of the European Commission which recently passed the **Rome Declaration on Mainstreaming Occupation Health and Safety into Education and Training (October 2003)**. The main objective of this Rome Declaration was to propose a strategy that would prepare and sustain people throughout their life from childhood, teens, adult working life and retirement ~ in other words a whole of life safety education process. The following key findings were sanctioned:

- Projects for young children need to make use of imagination and play.
- Projects for children can use their own environment as sources of examples of risks; parents should be involved in this process.
- Children should be educated in how to identify hazards, assess and manage risks; they should not be taught to avoid hazards altogether.
- Occupational Health and Safety can be integrated into subjects taught anyway, or it can be handled separately.

Risk education should first make children aware of what is dangerous in their environment (at home, at school and at play) and what they should do to help make themselves and those around them safer. As a child grows up, their knowledge of risk assessment and management should develop. As young people make career choices their risk education should become more specialised to cover occupation health and safety issues, including links to their chosen profession.

The **Workers Compensation Board of British Columbia (Canada)** has gone to great lengths to develop a Student WorkSafe Program encompassing Kindergarten to Grade 12 or our equivalent Year 12.

WorkSafe Victoria, through Sweeney Research Melbourne, conducted an evaluation of WorkSafe K.I.D.S. in 2003. This study evaluated awareness levels of the different components of the WorkSafe K.I.D.S. Safety Education Program amongst Victorian primary school principals, grade 5/6 coordinators and student safety representatives. The results showed that of the schools surveyed nearly nine in ten Principals and Coordinators from member schools said the Program has built awareness of the issues of being safe in and around the primary school.

There is evidence to suggest that the current generation of children, dubbed the 'indoor generation' (Robbé, 2004) have fewer 'first hand' experiences than previous generations. This is the result of an increase in vicarious experiences (such as media and computer games) and a decrease in 'first hand' experiences due to overprotected-ness and risk avoidance amongst parents and teachers. (Robbé, 2004) describes these practices as 'bubble wrapping' children, depriving them of opportunities for autonomous risk taking due to concerns about stranger danger, car danger and injury prevention. The results are increasing levels of obesity, decreased physical fitness levels, eye and back problems and anxiety and depression (Robbé, 2004).

We believe, that given an adequate level of support and assistance, the immediate problems of ATV's, child drowning, children on tractors, child supervision and mixing recreation with farm activities can be reduced utilising both long term and short term strategies.

Clearly education within the school curriculum does provide an immediate opportunity to address the above issues. When education is combined with environmental changes, engineering solutions and enforcement, positive behavioural change and attitudes towards safety can take place.

As emphasised by Dulcie and Peter the opportunity that exists with farm safety education is not about ownership but rather collaboration; it is about an alliance working collectively to not only reduce the recorded number of injuries and deaths but also the unaccounted near misses.