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Farmsafe Toolbox Talks – Transcript of Podcast #12

'Kidsafe Tips from WA' with Scott Phillips, CEO of Kidsafe WA

Host: Dr Richard Franklin, James Cook University

Guest: Scott Phillips from Kidsafe WA

Voiceover:

“Welcome to Farmsafe Toolbox Talks, a podcast series focusing on farm culture, leading to a healthier and safer, working, living and playing environment. Here's your host Richard Franklin.”

Dr Richard Franklin:

“Today's podcast is brought to you by Farmsafe Australia under funding from the Australian Government, Department for Agriculture, Water and the Environment. I'm your host Richard Franklin and today, I'm talking to Scott Phillips, Chief Executive Officer of Kidsafe, Western Australia. Kidsafe is a national organisation which aims to make the world safer for kids by leading the promotion of action to highlight and minimise the unacceptable level of risk and consequences of injury to children, in our adult focussed world.”

“Welcome Scott, and tell me how did you end up being part of Kidsafe?”

Scott Phillips:

“And thank you for welcoming me, Richard. Interesting journey. Um, I've always ended up in jobs working around children. I was a primary school teacher for a while; Phys. Ed, and educational support. I went back and did a pediatric physio degree. So, I worked for many years with, particularly children with disabilities, neurological problems. At a different time, I made too much noise about government funding, and ended up being a government funder in disability for Allied Health for many years. And which taught me a couple of lessons about how this all works. And then I was asked to would I head up something like Kidsafe? About 12 years ago now. So, I've been here since then. And, again, making sure our kids have a great life.”

Dr Richard Franklin:

“Yeah. So, let's talk a little bit more about Kidsafe. How does it work? What...what is it? And why should people get a little bit more involved with Kidsafe?”

Scott Phillips:

“Kidsafe nationally, like you said, we, you know, there's one of me in each State and Territory of Australia, but we come together to collaborate, for one reason is really to stop unintentional deaths to children from an injury, or any disability

Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms



that may come from an injury. Why do we do that? Each year, there's 150 children that die from what we would call accident. Not what we expected to happen - in my state, that's 24 children in a classroom full of children every year. And most of those are quite young."

"So, our mission is to let people know that happens, try to prevent that through really simple things we can do. And you know, highlighting some of those simple things that people can do."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"Yeah, I think that's the message isn't it? Is that you can make a difference and prevent these children from dying. I mean, we do focus a lot on death. But there's also what, 68,000 hospitalizations each year of children from injuries? So, there's a lot of work that needs to be done across Australia."

"So, you know, one of the activities that obviously you've been involved in, which is why I'm chatting to you today is about keeping kids safe on farms. Tell us a little bit more about what you're up to, and the booklet that you've produced and what it means for farmers."

Scott Phillips:

"Well WA is such a big and diverse state that we have every type of agriculture enterprise that you can think of plus many, many hobby farms. So, we will have farming of aquaculture all the way through to grain to dairy, out to cattle, sheep. So, and some of these farms can be quite removed from where care is, and they're also quite big. And then there's some that congregated around the metropolitan area. So, we have lots of farming. And it's a mix of farming enterprise versus hobby farms. And we have a lot of families living on those farms."

"So, in WA, we sort of understand that it is a home and a workplace and that the messaging particularly around injury, with children on farms, is really looking at what that's about, that people will live there, but you know, it is a worksite that these kids are living on."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"Yeah, very much. So, and I think one of the things that I liked about Kidsafe, in their messaging, was talking about kind of the adult centric world that kids live in, you know. And I think as we grow up, we kind of forget about the world that the kids look at, from their perspective, their height, their physical abilities, and all the different challenges on farms that might not be there for adults, or, or at least we're aware of them."

"And I really like kind of having a look at your booklet, particularly the checklist. It's at the back and gives people some practical hints. One of the things that keeps on coming out is this 'safe play area'. So, what's... what's your messaging around kind of building a safe play area and how well is that going in Western Australia?"

Scott Phillips:

"Well, it's going well, I think it is really letting people know that in the normal injury sense, the child's home is the number one place they normally get injured. So, it's no difference on the farm, except on a farm, there's all of these things that revolve around the house. So, it's really setting up a play area for your young children, that they can't get access out to

where the maybe the machines are, water bodies are - on a farm water bodies can't really be fenced like we might do with a pool, because then...then the livestock can't get to the water. So, we really need to have an area that's away from moving equipment, that is accessible from the house and can be seen so their kids can be isolated from those dangers of a farm, which can be machinery, animals, water bodies, and anything else on a farm that's there."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"I think one of the things for me about the safe play areas is very much making sure that it's an area for kids, obviously, and that they can do things in it. It's not just a paddock with a fence around it, or a yard with a fence around it as part of it...some of the rule setting. And I guess one of the questions that I have for you, yeah, we talked about rules, and we talk about supervision of kids, but also on farms, we want kids to grow up and have some of the experiential learning and we've talked about this in previous podcasts. But how are you dealing with that kind of feedback about, you know, we don't want to wrap our kids up in cotton wool. And you know, what do we need to do to actually keep them safe?"

Scott Phillips:

"Well, there's a couple of aspects to this is that, as we've said, farms are this pretty unique environment. We do live in a place where some of these farms are massive. And so, line of sight to where somebody is, isn't always... isn't always there for people."

"We also know that where most of the injuries that happened in the population happened to children under five. On farms, we have the highest percentage in children from 10 to 14, which is different. And we will see more girls in that age group around animals being injured and more boys being injured around machinery, and particularly quad bikes and motorcycles. Partly is that children become part of the farm life, and they want to help out and they want to do things with their parents. And they want to, you know, get on that tractor and learn how to do something. But you know, whether it's appropriate for the age and quite often there's thinking that 'we've done this for generations'. That is a really big part of it is just making sure that we... we know that children of different ages learn differently, and that they don't always take in the dangers. We all have, you know, we all know about adolescent boys, for instance, and in our latest research was showing that nearly up to 80% of the injuries are boys."

"So, we want to make sure that we're treating our children as children, we're not getting older children to supervise younger children in these environments, and that there are some rules around what they do. Now there's some simple things when we talk about farms, things like leaving keys in machinery for kids to get to and try out if they see dad or the grandfather or the uncle doing something, they're... they're going to try it. So, take the keys out of things, make sure all your poisons are locked up away, make sure that children don't play in, you know milking sheds or where equipment is."

"And as we said, give them a safe area to play. And they're supervised by somebody who's capable of supervising them, which is an adult."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"Yeah, I really liked the way the book is set out. I think all of that advice is really pertinent to everybody who's got kids on farms."

"And interesting that we got to think a little bit more about the adolescents, kids and you know, different activities. Yeah, as you said, horses for... for females, but not totally. I mean, there are also guys that love to jump on horses and do things

and motorcycles for guys. But again, not... not all guys, because girls love to jump on them as well. So I think that was really great."

"The other one that I just wanted to pick up on was the workshop safety part of your booklet. I think it's probably an area that people don't think a lot about, because they're often in the workshop. And there's a lot of hazards that were there as part of it and some really nice advice around fire extinguishers. And I guess hopefully people have already got a residual current device to the, to the board if something goes wrong."

"So, what else around, you know, workshop safety? Are you kind of thinking and how do you, I guess approach it with a farmer to get them to think about, you know, tidying up the workshop and making it safe for kids."

Scott Phillips:

"One of the things with the farming communities are they are quite isolated, and they're quite clunky. So, one of the issues that we have as a Health Promotions Unit is how do you get these messages to farmers, and to farming families without them thinking that you're there as a regulator? They've got enough rules about what they do anyway. How do we get those messages to them from somebody that they will listen to?"

"So, we know that if we work within the schools in regional areas, we would quite often work with children there. And a number of you know, public health things have always been from the ground up. We saw recycling bins come basically from your kids coming home from school telling you to put things in the right bin. It's just really from the ground up telling children, you're going to letting children know some of those dangers and put that there."

"The other thing is that we're seeing more and more that on a farm, that quite often the wife or the partner runs the enterprise. Where maybe the husband is running the farm. So quite often the message... getting the messages to the people who run the farm and look after the children - so, through the mums that are out there, you know, is a really good method of getting that there."

"But just popping in once a year from the city to tell farming communities what they shouldn't be doing, doesn't always land. So more and more we're trying to work, you know, through the kids and through groups that are already there. Sometimes it can be, you know, a local publican, who talks to the men, you know, twice a week after work and can put some of those messages out. And we're seeing that across many things like mental health, and that also that really is finding somebody who's trusted in the community to deliver that message for you."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"Yeah, I think, you know, part of that discussion is you're talking about sort of leading by example, as well, making sure you're doing the right thing so the kids kind of follow you and, and look at it. And I think very much farming is now becoming much more a partnership, you know, that, that often the, you know, both... both the husband and wife, both farm or both farmers and both working."

"And it kind of goes to that busyness that we see generally across the community around, you know, looking after kids. And so, I guess part of the challenge is putting things in place, so that you can supervise kids while you've got work going on. And working through those sorts of challenges as well. Do you have any tips or tricks for busy parents about kind of keeping their kids safe on farms, and generally, making sure that they're safe?"

Scott Phillips:

“Well, the tenant of Kidssafe is supervision is the key. But we also all know that that's not always 100% going to happen. But so having those safe play spaces, where children are separated, particularly from machinery and animals, and water is really important.”

“Having some rules with children, children respond well to rules, if they're put in front of them, and you know, rewarding children for when they you know, come up with a solution to something or they follow that rule. So simple rewards.”

“One of the things that we do wish we're seeing more and more, and we're just about to release a report that's just showing that a number of the injuries, serious injuries, happenings on farms are from visitors to the farm. So, it's also for farmers to be aware. And look, as we approach April in WA that's a time when a lot of people seem to go and visit farms and stay there they come home from boarding schools. And we seem to see a lot of injuries in the visitors to farms. And part of that is experience. And part of that as them trying to keep up with the kids that live on the farm.”

“So, it's really important to have those rules in place for when children come to your farm and make sure they're clear of where they can be and what they can do. And what the rules of your farm are. I think most farmers will know that you know when you've... your kids come home from say, from boarding school or school and they're going to be there and they school holiday periods. If their friends are there, it's a really important time to watch out for injuries. We see injuries on farms spike during school holiday periods.”

Dr Richard Franklin:

“Yeah, that makes a lot of sense about the school holidays and kids. And I think the message about bringing friends home, it's like a normal business. So, you kind of need to do your little induction for the friends and make sure they're aware of kind of the hazards and where you're allowed to go and not go as you say, setting the rules. And I guess also, you know, your kids might be able to ride a motorcycle, but the friends might not have ever been on them. And so, again, I guess remembering that you've got different people and you need to reset your kind of thinking around that sort of space is really important. So yeah, good message there for people for visitors, particularly as we you know, if you come into holiday time, in particular and kind of work around that.”

“So, Scott, Tell me a little bit about yourself. So, what's the normal day look like for you being the CEO of Kidsafe? What do you get up to on a regular basis?”

Scott Phillips:

“Well, the best part about being a CEO and working at Kidsafe is actually my day is not normal. It's mostly different. You know, we all have those things that will come up that we have to do every month, but I can walk in the door this morning - I've you know, walked in the door and started a new research project. Then I've met with a student that we had from university who did a research project for us on on actually, farm safety. And then I'm on a podcast. Later today I'm helping with a consultation around e-rideables, which will be this week. I could be sitting on a panel with government.”

“And, or most of the time, really just watching how good my staff, I have a really good staff and just making sure they've got enough support to do the jobs they do. You know, there's a number of ways children's can... children can get injured. And we just want to make sure that parents know, you know, simple things you can do. We don't have to change the



whole world. But there's simple ways that we can just avoid our kids and getting injured and make sure that everyone has a great life, like I did growing up, and you probably did, too."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"Yeah, I think it sounds interesting and varied and very exciting."

"So you mentioned the e-rideables kind of thing coming through. So, is that a big issue for kids that we're kind of seeing across Australia or in Western Australia, in particular, it's something for parents to keep an eye on?"

Scott Phillips:

"It is, it's actually across the world. And at that last injury conference, we were talking about, particularly e-scooters and how they're appearing, and a lot of country regions also, they're appearing. We've been keeping watch. But our latest anecdotal evidence from the hospital is we're getting injury rates doubling year over year, in the last three years, particularly on e-rideables, there has been different legislations put in place in different states, they don't always match, which doesn't always work."

"But what we've found is the education component of that went to retail as well, but it didn't go to families. Well, so we still have, you know, we still have young children on, you know, on e-rideables that are way too fast. And we also have some very smart kids who know how to turn those things off. So, we're seeing more and more injuries, again, it is teenage boys and older males. Bit like quad bikes, actually. So, it's exactly the same two age groups that seem to be getting injured."

Dr Richard Franklin:

"Yeah, interesting. So, a little bit of a tip there for parents around the e-rideables and thinking about whether it's appropriate for the child and where they're going to use it, I guess, as part of that process. And I mean, that applies to people on farms as well. We're seeing a lot of those go across the board, as part of that we see."

"I think also, you know, we've been talking a little bit also outside of this about button batteries for young kids and keeping them safe there. Burns and scolds is another major issue. So, thinking about, you know, fires, and particularly campfires as we think about on farms. But also, obviously, other things within the house like irons and hot water and those types of things that can burn kids and leave permanent damage as part of it."

Scott Phillips:

"Just one other thing to add to that is, which is the biggest concern that's raising it's head and is vaping around the country. And we've been as Kidsafe, I've been involved in a bit of consultations on what should happen with vaping, not just the nicotine ones, but these other flavored ones that are getting through to our kids. And there's legislation to say, it shouldn't be there, but we know that the environment is rife with them. And just so that people know that one vaping instrument with nicotine is the same as nine packets of cigarettes."

Dr Richard Franklin:

“Wow, what a message there. So again, vaping has become very popular, we're seeing it everywhere. And let's make sure that people don't get addicted to vaping as part of it. So, thanks for the reminder.”

Scott Phillips:

“Just on that to, nicotine is a poison, and people who are refilling these things. Five mls, five mls will kill an adult. So, if a child just takes, you know, licks it off a spoon or something, and it also is absorbed through the skin, so is a really bad poison around our kids with these nicotine refills going on and that and it's really important for people just to know how dangerous that is as a poison. And you know, that our kids are ingesting this at nine packets a day, basically through these vapes.”

Dr Richard Franklin:

“They will thank you for that. And that's a good reminder also just generally about chemicals and keeping things safe and out of reach and look, if we can get people not vaping in the first place, that would be fantastic and will save us a lot of troubles in the future.”

“So Scott, any last comments? Thanks very much for being here.”

Scott Phillips:

“Thank you for having us. But look, we just want our, we want kids out on farms, and we want that lifestyle for them. But if we can keep them safe at the same time, and their friends when they visit safe - will be much, much better for everybody.”

Dr Richard Franklin:

“Well, beautiful. Thank you very much. And on that note, as you said there is much that we can do to keep children safe on farms. We've talked about safe play areas, we've talked about keeping kids off machinery, taking away the keys which is a really simple solution that you can do to make sure that they don't do them, separating the child from animals through safe play area but also when they're out in the yards making sure that they're not in there, fencing your pool at home is another one that came up.”

“Not with you Scott was coming out of some of the other work, I think leading by example, setting rules and making sure that they're appropriately supervised, is really important, locking up chemicals. And I guess the last one that I just wanted to finish on, was doing a first aid course so if something does go wrong, which we hope that it doesn't, that you're prepared and ready to act.”

“So, thanks very much Scott for your role and what you've been doing to keep children safe on farms. It was great to hear all about Kidsafe .If you'd like to read the Kidsafe document or know more about what they're up to in Western Australia, please visit www.kidsafewa.com.au and go to the resources section, or you can visit www.kidsafe.com.au to look generally at what Kidsafe's got going on across Australia.”



“And of course, Farmsafe Australia has a whole range of resources for keeping children safe on farms, and you can visit us at www.farmsafe.org.au. Today's podcast is brought to you by Farmsafe Australia under funding from the Australian Government, Department for Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Thank you very much for listening to Farmsafe Toolbox Talks. I'm your host Richard Franklin. I look forward to chatting to you in the future. Bye for now.”

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