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STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr JJ McDonald MP—Chair
Ms JM Bush MP
Mr TA James MP
Mr D Kempton MP
Mr SR King MP
Mr HHC Vorster MP

Staff present:

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary
Ms R Duncan—Assistant Committee Secretary

PRIVATE HEARING—INQUIRY INTO E-MOBILITY SAFETY AND USE IN QUEENSLAND

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

(Private)

Wednesday, 23 July 2025

Palm Beach

WEDNESDAY, 23 JULY 2025

CHAIR: Good afternoon. I declare open this hearing for the inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. Thank you for your attendance here this afternoon. I am Jim McDonald, member for Lockyer and chair of the committee. With me here today is: Ms Jonty Bush, member for Cooper and deputy chair; Mr Terry James, member for Mulgrave; Mr David Kempton, member for Cook; Mr Shane King, member for Kurwongbah; and Mr Hermann Vorster, member for Burleigh, who has sought leave to attend and is participating today.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with its examination of e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. I would like to thank Mr Capra, the Principal of Palm Beach Currumbin State High School for his assistance with the secretariat in being able to arrange this. I also thank the members for Burleigh and Currumbin for making approaches to the committee to have this hearing here today.

This hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament—we are bringing parliament to Palm Beach Currumbin today, which is great—and it is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. The proceedings are being recorded today by parliamentary reporters and a transcript will be made available for your review. Today we will be hearing from students of the school as well as the principal, president of the P&C and Mr Kennedy. We may also have a little time at the end of today's proceedings to hear from anyone else who would like to register their interest and share their views with the committee. Speaking opportunities are limited and we will have to manage the time in that regard.

BURGER, Ms Matilda, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

DEWSBURY, Ms Tahlia, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

HUNT, Ms Holly, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

JORDAN, Mr Blake, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

KENNEDY, Mr Mitch, Deputy Principal, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

LOFTUS, Ms Anita, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

MOORE, Mr Rhys, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

PALMER, Ms Harper, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School

ZWEGERS, Harry, Student, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School

CHAIR: Welcome. Mr Kennedy, I will hand over to you to give us an opening statement.

Mr Kennedy: Thank you. Good afternoon, members. Thank you Chairman Jim. Firstly, I want to welcome you to our beautiful school, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School, and introduce once more our eight wonderful student leaders. We are getting to meet, as you can see, eight student leaders from across our school—four from years 9 and 8 and four from year 12—who are all part of our leadership team and who all very much have an insight into what is becoming both a localised factor of life in e-mobility and also very much a state concern. They have very valid points to make. To give you an overview as to how they would like to present, I would like to pass us straight over to Rhys who will commence our proceedings.

Mr Moore: Good day. I am Rhys Moore and I am joined here by my fellow junior secondary student representatives, Matilda Burger, Blake Jordan, Harper Palmer, and senior secondary student representatives, Holly Hunt, Anika Loftus, Tahlia Dewsbury and Harry Zwegers. We are all here to discuss the use of e-mobility devices and the safety and rules around them. Thousands of school-age children across Queensland ride an e-mobility device to school each day. Although this may be

keeping traffic off the roads, PBC has seen at least one student a week injured while riding on an e-mobility device. So, what can we do to solve issues like these? We have planned three points for this session: the positives to e-mobility device use, the issues and the solutions and recommendations around the issues. I would now like to pass to Matilda and Tahlia to discuss the positives of the use of e-mobility devices.

Ms Burger: There are a variety of positives to having an e-mobility device, particularly in teenage years. Firstly, they are quite convenient, especially for school-age children. Obviously, they are going to be engaging in extracurricular activities and possibly getting themselves to and from work. This takes the burden off parents' very busy schedules and allows students to get to and from their curricula without impacting parents' schedules. It is obviously a lot quicker than walking or taking the bus or riding a normal bike and it can get through lots of terrain so if you live in a hilly area you can ride up and down the hills without any issues. It means fewer cars on the road which also means less traffic on our busy roads, as well as a smaller carbon footprint, which is obviously a massive issue in today's society. In terms of PBC, there would also be fewer cars parked in school areas for students 16-plus if they are driving to and from school. I will pass to Tahlia who has some extra points.

Ms Dewsbury: I just want to add to what Matilda was saying about making it easier for parents. I know for a fact that my parents obviously were waiting for me to get my licence or be able to get my own way to school that was easier than just taking a bus that is very unpredictable with cancelling routes all the time and just never really knowing when they are going to come. I feel like e-bikes and e-mobility devices are quite a good solution to that. I think it just takes the pressure off parents and older siblings as well to feel the need that they have to constantly be a taxi service or do drop-offs and pick-ups and all those sorts of things. Thank you.

Mr Jordan: As we know, e-mobility is a new and prominent way of transportation. It is useful, as Matilda told us earlier, but there is a clear lack of safe and secure storage for these said e-bikes. Down past O block there are about 300 just tied up by locks practically for the taking. They are also a safety hazard. They can explode because of their lithium batteries if not taken care of properly. Those 300 lithium batteries will add to the cost of the bike. Each bike comes in at about \$3,000 and there are 300 bikes down there so that is \$1.1 million worth of property which can be damaged or stolen. There is also no accountability if anyone was to get into an accident. There would be no insurance that could cover the damages to cars, e-bikes and pedestrians. It is also unidentifiable if the rider of the e-bike is able to get away on said bike as there is no registration of the e-bike.

Ms Loftus: As you all know, us year 12s all drive cars at the moment. We have our licences. E-bikes and their awareness of the road safety rules is quite a large concern. Personally, leaving school of an afternoon is quite nerve-racking. I get quite anxious when I am pulling out of the car park because you normally have the kids flying past you doing 40 kays an hour. You look to pull out, they are not there; you look again and they are right there. It is not good the number of students and obviously people in the community being hurt when e-bikes are hitting them or just missing them. Yesterday I was driving along the Gold Coast Highway and I nearly saw a death in front of my own eyes. There were these two school students from our school riding along the road and a bus nearly hit them. That was quite nerve-racking for me. All in all, e-bike safety and the awareness of road rules is quite a concern and it needs to be addressed.

Mr Palmer: These are some serious issues but we do have some solutions and recommendations to help fix or improve the problems involved with e-mobility devices. We could implement age limits to make sure the people driving e-mobility devices are mature and have proper decision-making skills; a maximum speed for specific areas like beach paths; a registration age for people looking to register an e-mobility device—this should also be linked to a responsible adult; and an e-mobility licence—a specific licence for e-mobility drivers so they know enough road rules and e-mobility specific rules to drive an e-mobility device safely. Road rules should be known to all e-mobility drivers. Numberplates could be used as a way to identify e-mobility devices and keep drivers liable for insurance and liability consequences for illegal e-mobility device use and other regulations. Consequences could be fines, re-education programs—to be retaught the rules and regulations around e-mobility devices—loss of the e-mobility device or the e-mobility licence being taken away. Stickers with registration ID for e-mobility devices who have completed a safety course or other ways to identify is another solution. Police should also be involved with the misuse and behaviour of e-mobility device drivers, especially when it causes trouble on the road or elsewhere.

Mr Zwegers: Funnily enough, I did have a quick look into our charity for the school this year, the Queensland Children's Hospital, and they have noticed a significant increase in children coming in aged 16 years and under with e-mobility device related injuries, the median age being 13. Because

it is quite an alarming thing to think about young teenagers being involved in critical accidents and crashes relating to e-bikes or e-scooters, obviously something needs to be implemented to stop this. I think that adding on a minimum age requirement could be a step in the right direction. If riders under the age of 16 were unable to register for a device by themselves and they needed a parent to co-sign with them, it would ensure the responsibility is spread out to adults as well.

From my own personal experience, a lot of teenagers that I work with, especially those under the age of 16 who I see around school, more lack the ability to judge risk than those above the age of 16. I think that is a key factor going into things such as e-bikes, because they might not fully understand the lack of safety around them. I think that also then leads into whether, if someone is able to ride a bike, there needs to be a way to verify whether they can or who is riding that bike.

Going to the point of stickers, with cars nowadays you have licences and registration and you can tell your car is registered because you have a numberplate. Obviously that might be a bit costly when you think about the number of e-bikes there are. If you are generating metal numberplates for every e-mobility device that could become quite costly, which is not ideal. Instead, something much easier could be a little sticker that can be quickly identified which is similar to a numberplate on a car but obviously a lot less large and bulky. These can be relatively cheap, maybe \$20 a year just for someone to renew a registration, which means that people from low-economic families are not being disadvantaged by this.

Lastly, the thing that trumps both of these points is obviously education. The most important thing for anyone riding a device, whether that be a car, an e-mobility device or even a plane, is knowing how to ride it safely. I propose things like mandatory school-based learning. PBC has a care program which at the moment is being used for a lot of mental health and mindfulness things, but if we could also add in programs around e-mobility device safety at school or even into curriculum areas that could be a key aspect, especially for children under the age of 16—just trying to build their risk factor awareness.

Ms Hunt: I do really strongly agree with some form of licensing for bikes and that being taught in schools. My father always brings it up. I have an e-bike at home. I do not really ride it anymore. My little brother, who is 13, can barely reach the ground when he is on it. All he wants to do is just ride it. In the last year my dad brought home his own little motorbike/scooter type of thing. He always brings up the fact that he had to do a course. He basically rides at the exact same places that all of these e-bikes are being ridden without even having to worry about being on your Ls or being on your Ps for his motorbike licence. I think it is really important that kids are being taught that. Even in PrepL and things like that where 16-year-olds—I think PrepL is 15—can be taught to be aware of e-bikes and e-devices because that is not on there currently. It is just the 1.5 metres with bikes. There is a very significant difference between a bike and something that can go 40, 50 or even more kays an hour. That is very reflective even in our car park here at three o'clock in the afternoon when people are pulling out and there are all of these bikes in the bike lane. You look and there is no-one there, but you pull out and someone is there. It is crazy. That was my point.

Mr Palmer: Thank you for listening to our points on e-mobility device safety and its uses. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.

CHAIR: Thank you, you have pre-empted me. Thank you very much for your opening remarks. You have all made some very wise statements. I will go to the member for Kurwongbah for the first question.

Mr KING: Thanks for that; it is not what I expected to hear. What you have said is very valuable. I have a few questions. Harry mentioned metal numberplates previously when there was a conversation about registering pushbikes. The reason motorcycles do not have a metal numberplate on the front is because in an accident they are like a razor blade. They are very dangerous, so plastic is a good idea. If that was to come about, that is a really good idea.

The other thing is that in order to register something it needs to have a compliance plate so the vehicle is identifiable so you are not swapping regos. You know, you have two or three different ones and you are swapping between. For that compliance plate, the e-bike or whatever it is would have to have certain restrictions such as only being able to do 25 kilometres an hour or that sort of thing. We heard about a place that sells modifications online. I am sure that quite a few people modify them, but then the device is not illegal but it is being used illegally if it is ridden in a public place. Licensing and training are great ideas, but risking a future licence or anything for a car because of that behaviour brings me to one of my questions. Someone mentioned education being part of the curriculum. Learning as early and as young as possible about these things—they are not going to go away—is a great idea.

My only question relates to theft. In my area, pushbikes and other things sadly go missing from schools, shopping centres and everywhere. There is a bike rack at the end of my office and we have put CCTV there to catch people. You lock these things up at school and everywhere. Is there a lot of theft of these things?

Ms Hunt: Last year when I did bring my e-bike to school every day one of my close friends had her bike stolen from inside the school. The thing is, there is not very much parking space for where they are parked. Because they are such big bikes as well, it is a bit hard to stack them all next to each other in the actual bike racks. What happened to her was she had attached it to her friend's bike as well, and her friend ended up leaving early for whatever reason. It was left unattended for half an hour, and by the time she came back it was gone. It was three o'clock. She was ready to leave and she's standing next to me and she goes, 'My bike is not here. I've looked everywhere.' People were filing out. It was pretty much empty and her bike was nowhere to be found. She had to go and file a police report. As far as I know, she did not get it back. She had to get a brand new one and she was out of pocket about \$3,000. I feel like that is a big problem.

Another issue I personally had was I live very close to school, about five minutes. The first week I owned my e-bike I was riding home from school. As I pushed the brakes on my e-bike getting onto my street, the front wheel completely disconnected. Keep in mind that I probably would have been going about 25—it was down a hill, so maybe 30—and the front wheel came off my bike. You are going to go face first. It took all the skin off my palms and knees and things like that. We took it back to the store we got it from to find out how a front wheel falls off a bike. There is a little screw on the front wheel because you can detach the front wheel to transport bikes around. If a kid wanted to sabotage another kid or something of the sort, all you have to do is flick up a little piece of metal, spin it three times, and the wheel will come off when you push down the brake. That is what happened to me. We do not think that anybody actually did that to me. It might have been an error. I do not actually know how the bike ended up coming down. It might have been that I did tap another one of my friends' bikes as we were riding home about three minutes before that and I accidentally clipped my wheel on his. But if a kid did want to do that and they did have access to that information, it would not end well.

Mr KING: I suppose that a pre-start inspection could be part of the education. I just have one more question about helmets.

CHAIR: Hold that thought. Matilda had something to add about theft.

Ms Burger: I have some personal experience with theft. I have had two e-bikes stolen from this school in the last year. Unfortunately, it was very easy to happen. I had both of them locked up inside the school gates. On the last day of school before Easter holidays the gates were opened and someone came in with a grinder and popped the lock off my bike. They took it very easily and we never got that one back. The same thing happened about six months later. Then we also had one stolen from a caravan park. It happens very easily. Even with a good lock, it is very hard to keep them safe. It was inside school grounds and it still was not protected, so it is definitely a big issue.

Mr KING: That is where an identifier and compliance plate come into it. When they do not have those, they all look the same. I was just wondering about the popularity of helmets. It was suggested today that, if you buy one, the helmet comes with it to make sure people are wearing them.

Mr Zwegers: I can attest to that. I work locally down at the McDonald's at Tugun. Being right next to the highway, which seems to be a rather large hotspot for young teens on e-bikes, I get all of them coming in. Whenever I am working and I see a hoard come in, half the time I will see that seven or six out of the 10 of them have no helmet. They might be doubling as well. I can understand your point there. It is very true that the popularity around wearing a helmet has significantly died off. Where that comes from is I guess the social culture around 'oh, helmets?' or whether it is the lack of actually having a helmet. I am not sure which one it comes from, but it definitely is a significant issue that I can attest to because I have seen it firsthand.

Mr Jordan: Sorry to contradict your point, Harry, but on Monday I was walking home with my friend and I saw that, out of the 20 e-bikes there, most of the people on the bikes were wearing helmets and they were properly on.

Mr KING: I wonder if that behaviour is because you actually wear them when you are leaving school but maybe on the weekend it is different. I do not know.

Ms Loftus: When you were talking about the curriculum before, I do not think younger kids have the education or understanding that, when you come off a bike, you can seriously injure yourself and the effects that will have if you hit your head. Personally, as a motorcycle racer, wearing a helmet is the biggest priority. You want to get a good one because if you come off, yeah, it is life or death. I think even some form of education around your helmet is going to save your life is something that really needs to be done.

CHAIR: That is a point well made.

Ms Hunt: I feel like another problem with the helmets at school, since they are a method of getting to and from school, it is almost similar to carpooling in the sense that you can fit two or even three small kids on one of those bikes. So you will walk into that bike area after school and say to one of your friends, 'Hey, do you mind just dropping me home since it is on the way?' How are you meant to know to bring a helmet to school—kids literally do not have a helmet on the spot because of the doubling and carpooling kind of idea. You will see it coming out of here in the afternoons. Even if one kid has a helmet on, the person who they are doubling at the back might not have it on or the person being doubled might have it on and the other kid will not.

Mr VORSTER: Thank you very much, Chair. Before I ask a few questions, I draw the committee's attention to the fact that on my register of interest you will see it noted that I have made a donation of over \$1,178.61 to Palm Beach Currumbin State High School.

Mr KING: As you should!

Mr VORSTER: Happy days, and it was not for a bike! As the local member I receive no shortage of complaints and feedback from members of our community who are dodging e-bikes. There are some voices that are very pro e-bike but it appears to me that most concern in the community is driven by those who are deliberately riding e-bikes in unsafe ways; that is, not people who are not aware of the road rules but people who appear to be deliberately breaking the rules. I am thinking of those riders who are popping monos on the Gold Coast Highway on their phones while doing 60 kays an hour overtaking a vehicle. A lot of people have put to me that there is an emerging culture around e-bikes—a bad culture that risks e-bikes being a potential solution in our transport mix. I would love some feedback from you as the next generation. Do we have a healthy culture around e-bikes and a majority view and, even if it is a minority exhibiting this bad culture, how has it taken root—is it peer pressure? Is it parents setting a bad example? What has led to this behaviour that is causing such reputational damage for these vehicles?

Mr Moore: I completely agree with that. Even on my street, sometimes I see kids on their e-bikes popping wheelies. I think it is just the mentality of risk-taking. You can seem cool in front of your friends. You have the ability to do it so kids just take that risk without the concern of the possibility of tripping and falling and hurting themselves. They have the mentality of risk-taking and they have no concern for the after-effects. It is just: I am here, I want to prove to my friends that I am a cool guy so I am going to do this crazy stunt that is completely risky with no consideration of the possibility of falling off.

Ms Loftus: Obviously when they do it there is not much of a consequence so then the mentality is they can just do it again and again. A lot of the time the people who are doing it go, 'Oh, the police are not going to do anything about it. They have not caught me, they are not going to do anything.' I think that is where that mentality is drawn from and that culture is coming from.

Mr Zwegers: I want to add to what both Anika and Rhys have talked about. It seems we have a very big culture of 'Oh, she'll be right'. I guess it is a very Australian way of looking at things. I noticed one of my co-workers rides an e-bike. Sometimes she will not have a helmet. I will see her flogging it down the highway after leaving work and I will ask her, 'Do you understand that you could really hurt yourself if you come off that and you are not wearing a helmet and you come off really fast?' and she is like, 'Oh, it won't happen to me, though, she'll be right.' That is another thing that adds into it. That is where it kind of goes back to young teenagers having that underdeveloped risk concept because that, I think, is really where it stems from.

Ms Burger: It is almost like a novelty having an e-bike. Kids do not think about the consequences. I crashed my e-bike in a blind spot. I always thought 'It won't happen to me; I ride my e-bike safely,' but even when you are riding very safely, unfortunately, things still happen—there is a blind spot or a car will not see you. People definitely need to be more aware of it because you are riding it safely and it still does not always matter.

Ms Hunt: One more thing to raise around this is the access to them. As much as parents' lives get busy and they do not exactly want to be the taxi to and from school, the fact is that there is a reason a 13-, 14-, 15-year-old is not old enough to drive a car. I think the fact that they have access to a \$3,000 upwards bike—where are they getting that money from? They are getting that money from parents. Yes, you can be 15 working a part-time job but \$3,000 or \$4,000 in savings is quite excessive. I feel like there is a little bit of a burden on the parents there, which is understandable.

Mr VORSTER: Holly, thank you for mentioning that. That sentiment has been echoed by many people in my community because they worry that parents have enabled this culture and if your parent hands you an e-bike it is a licence to go and use it and it is not necessarily lawful. So if mum and dad say it is okay, then when challenged by authority, there are issues. I want to tease out this notion that there is risk-taking in your younger years. Some of the ideas that we have heard and the community have put out are around better education, changes to rules, regulations and all the rest, but I would love a very frank, fearless and honest assessment: are there any rules, is there any framework, is there any system that can be put in place that will get through to those who are taking their lives into their own hands? How do we get through to those who are risking their lives on the streets? They are responsible for so much carnage in our hospitals—how do we get through to them?

CHAIR: Good question.

Mr Zwegers: You raise a very good point. You can almost draw a parallel to motor vehicles on the road. Obviously, they have been around for a much longer than e-mobility devices and you still have the reoccurring problem of fatal crashes. There was an incident on the M4 in Sydney yesterday that I am pretty sure resulted in a fatality. There is constantly going to be incidents, whether it is the result of someone purposefully taking risks or not. There will always people who do not agree with the framework or the system who will always take that risk. That is my honest opinion and I definitely know people who would be like 'What are they going to do?' Enforcement, as well, is a very big problem in being able to have frameworks from the beginning.

Ms Burger: I think the punishments need to be harsh. For people who are using them responsibly they are a really great resource, so when people are not using them responsibly they are ruining something that can be very helpful. The punishments need to be harsh. Police need to crack down on it and not give second chances. If you are not using your e-mobility device correctly, you get it taken off you. There needs to be a very clear line of what happens.

Ms Hunt: I think that two big things, as well as that, would definitely be licensing and education. I know that in my father's course with his actual motorbike—I cannot remember the exact statistic—but if you are going in a straight line at 50 kays an hour and you hit a straight wall, you are basically dead. We could have something as raw and true as that. Even with education, similar to the Growing Good Humans days and things like that at school where they have someone come in and talk about car crashes, fatalities and dink driving, things like that, where it is true stories that resonate with people. I feel like that emotion is what resonates and what actually causes change in people's behaviour because punishment and enforcement only goes so far because some kids genuinely just do not care. They do not have anything else going for them so they are acting the way that they do.

Ms Dewsbury: Adding to what Holly said, I do think it does really come down to the education in schools and introducing it into schools because as much as some kids will feel like it is being forced upon them, it will be better in the long run. I know that it would ease a lot of parents' minds knowing that their kids are being taught these things in schools. I know that it would definitely ease my parents' minds—my younger brother is in year 8 and he rides one of these bikes—as well as mine. I worry about him all the time knowing how kids act on these bikes and how dangerous it can be. I think introducing it into schools as a program would be beneficial.

Mr Palmer: I think what Tahlia said really summed it up.

Ms BUSH: I wanted to go back a couple of steps and make the point—I am probably cutting the chair's grass, I am sorry—the way these processes work is: there is an inquiry and we will make recommendations to the parliament to accept or reject. Those recommendations can only be formed from the things that we hear throughout the process. It is a really big opportunity for us to have you here because you are the only young people we have heard from and maybe—I hope not—the only young people who we hear from. So far we have heard from a lot of older people who probably feel quite anxious about some of the behaviours that they are seeing and probably, if they had it their way, would just remove all e-bikes and scooters from every young person. We want to avoid that, we want to try to find that compromise and that is what the committee is here to do.

Firstly, I want to understand, who here owns an e-bikes or e-scooter? A show of hands. Half of you. My daughter has an e-bike but it is a pedal bike that then has a battery that propels it forward versus the ones that I understand are more throttle driven. Are we using the word e-bike interchangeably? Help me understand what an e-bike means because I thought there were e-bikes and there were motorbikes but there is this thing in-between now—these kind of throttle bikes.

Ms Hunt: My family have been big on bikes, big on e-bikes. I think COVID, or just post-COVID, is when we got our first e-bike but we have had two which were just pedal assist. I feel like right as I moved to PBC halfway through 2023, is when they started getting more popular—the ones with the actual throttles on them. I feel like the majority of the ones that we actually have out the front here are those same throttle bikes. I feel like when we are referring to e-bikes in the context of PBC and around the Gold Coast, that is what is being used more than just the pedal assist.

Ms BUSH: I think that is what people are talking to us about, and scooters as well.

Ms Burger: I definitely agree with that. If you try and go as fast as you possibly can just pedalling, which is the one I have, you cannot get above 30. Am I correct in saying that that is just above what the legal limit is at the moment?

Ms BUSH: Yes.

Ms Burger: You cannot go much faster at all. I think that could possibly be a solution—that you cannot have a throttle on a bike without there being some guidelines on it. The pedal power bikes, with that extra assistance, have that accessibility of getting to and from places, but I do not think they pose the same danger risks as throttle bikes.

Ms BUSH: That brings me to the next question, which is that those throttle bikes are currently illegal to ride on a road so the behaviour you are describing is not lawful behaviour. I am curious why police are not outside the school at three o'clock on a Monday to Friday policing that. I am curious to hear from you, as a young person, whether the threat of detection frightens people. What is the control? What would get them to come back to be a bit more law abiding, do you think?

Ms Loftus: From personal experience, one afternoon I was driving out of school and there was a copper who was getting kids coming on e-bikes with no helmets or doing above the speed limit. He pulled one over, and seven kids came past on their bikes and were laughing at him. Obviously, the number of coppers who are out doing it needs to increase. It stems from the fact that the kids think, 'They're not going to catch me. They're not going to get me. There's not enough of them.' I feel that is the mentality that they are all thinking.

Ms BUSH: Is that the vibe—that they are thinking, 'They can't catch us'?

Ms Loftus: Yes.

Mr Zwegers: I would like to add to what Anika said. As lovely as it would be to have more police, I am sure QPS already have quite shared resources of where they are allocating things. As nice as it would be to have a specific allocation so they could just be outside of school getting all these people, it is kind of a dream almost that does not really have a lot of ground.

I think that is leading to things like having a sticker registration that is linked to bikes, like a step in that direction. It could even be similar to automated recognition. If you are driving north on the M1, there are a lot of speed cameras sitting on the side of the road. The whole point of your number plate is to identify your car not only for police who are there but also for the automated system so if you are doing 140 on the M1 you are going to get a speeding ticket. If that same idea can be applied to e-mobility devices, it could also be beneficial so a child who is riding would be thinking, 'I don't know if there's a camera nearby that's catching me.' It would be like something watching your actions, in a way. That could even add a bit more anxiety to them in that they feel like they are going to get caught which could limit how much they act irresponsibly.

Ms BUSH: Do you have a school-based police officer here?

Mr Kennedy: Yes.

Mr KEMPTON: When I was kid about half a century ago, the whole idea of being not mentally aware enough to deal with danger was just there. We raced everything from horses to motorbikes, utes, tractors, trucks, you name it. We were trained how to do all of those things—we learnt how to ride a horse and so on—but here it seems to me like you have access to something that is inherently dangerous at a much, much younger age. I did not have a motorbike until I got a licence at 17 or whatever it was. Is that a factor—the actual access to these dangerous things? That is presuming you have raced a horse at some time in your life.

Mr Zwegers: Actually, I have done a bit of horseriding in my life. I do understand what you are saying there. I find myself drawing a lot of parallels to motor vehicles and cars. Even then, as you said, you would not have had access to a motorbike when you were a child until you were of age, like 17 or whatever it was, and it is the same now. I did not have access to even my learners—where I had a fully licensed adult next to me—until I was 16. However, you see some kids on e-bikes but they are aged 11, 12 or 13. I definitely agree with you in that it raises a bit of a hairy situation—that they are being exposed to devices that allow them to do dangerous things without ever really being trained on how to use them properly and how to not make silly decisions in the first place, regardless of whether they are with that device or not. I agree that that is probably a key factor in a lot of the misuse of e-mobility devices.

CHAIR: There are four or five of you nodding your heads there as well. Blake, do you have something to add?

Mr Jordan: Also, there is no age limit for who is riding these bikes currently. It can range from eight-year-olds to 19-year-olds and older. The younger they are, the fewer rules they know and that is a problem if they are controlling the bike. If they are on the back of their older brother's or sister's bike, that is no problem but that is the question. They need to know the road rules and they need to know safety, and if they do not it is a real problem because they can cause accidents and problems.

Ms Burger: I one hundred per cent agree with what they have said, but I also think in this day and age it is very different to how it used to be. Catching public transport is very different to how it used to be and is, unfortunately, possibly more dangerous. It is just not the same world it used to be and kids need a way to get around. I think one of the reasons kids are getting access to them younger is that in some ways it is the safest way to get around but there definitely does need to be education on it.

Mr Palmer: I believe the actual age they are meant to be to ride an e-mobility device is 16 or 14, but it does not really seem like there is anything stopping them from getting one anyway and using it.

Ms Loftus: Throughout my whole schooling since year 7, I have been catching the bus to school and the unreliability of buses is horrific. Every afternoon I would wait 30 minutes after school to catch the school bus—which was a Surfside one that would come 30 minutes after school—but some days it would not even turn up and they would not say anything. We would just be waiting there and it would hit four o'clock and it was like, 'I guess the bus isn't coming,' and then I would head up to the highway to catch the public ones. That unreliability of buses is obviously driving the e-bikes.

Mr Zwegers: Even going back to riding horses, if I use that as a good example, you generally do not just get on a horse and giddy-up; you always have someone there to teach you. I think points have been raised about e-bikes being used and parents saying, 'You can get your way to school now because you have an e-bike.' It kind of shifts the idea of almost parental fostering of learning. Even if you look back, your parents might teach you how to ride your first bike with pedals but that has kind of died out now. You do not really see many parents with their own e-bike saying, 'This is how you ride your e-bike safely.' I think that is another consideration as well.

CHAIR: That is a great point and very well made.

Ms BUSH: I want to comment on Anika's comment about buses. Lime scooter had a submission to us and their submission picks up that a lot of women are choosing to use e-mobility devices because they feel safer now than on public transport, which I thought was interesting. I did want to talk about Lime scooters or scooters generally because we have not touched on that yet. Do you have any observations about the use of those shared mobility devices from a young person's perspective? Do you have any recommendations you would like to make? Some of the things we have heard in the committee are that they are left everywhere, that helmets are left everywhere, that they are parked across the street, that people do not have the experience, that they are coming up quickly behind people who are walking. That is what we have heard. Do you have any observations you would like to make, because they are quite good as well for young people?

Ms Hunt: As much as they do get left around the place as well, I feel like young people, first of all, cannot really afford them so they will do the thing where they whack the back of the bike really hard and just ride on it anyway because it will start clicking. I feel like that is something that people kind of just see the bikes for. As a young person, they do not really see it as a legitimate way to get around. Even though parents can provide the money to buy an actual e-bike that belongs to them,

parents are not exactly willing to pay for the Lime transport to and from school consistently, every day. Finding one close to your house can be difficult. Even if they were getting dumped out of the school every day as well, I feel like is it really a thing to do?

Ms BUSH: Do any of your friends own their own e-scooter, or is it more the bikes?

Ms Hunt: I feel like here it is more the bikes.

Ms Burger: Personally, I think e-scooters are more dangerous because I have noticed that the e-scooters are going much faster than the e-bikes. I know on e-bikes you can set a speed limit when you buy them from the store and that limit is 25 kilometres an hour. I do not personally have an e-scooter but they seem to be going a lot faster than the e-bikes, so I am wondering when you buy an e-scooter whether there are any speed regulations on it or is it just, 'Here you go.'

Mr JAMES: Blake, when you were talking before, you mentioned insurance but I missed the context. Could you elaborate again?

Mr Jordan: With insurance, there is no liability if someone crashes. Matilda's bikes were returned to her via her insurance, but if there is no register then there is no way to tell who it was and they cannot be contacted. There is no way for the insurance to know if it was this person who crashed.

Mr JAMES: Do you know if the insurance that you spoke about is expensive?

Mr Jordan: I do not know.

Mr Moore: If a crash occurs, some children would not be set up with the third-party insurance. I guess it is a concern that, if something happens, there is no way of collecting these details and also correctly giving the details and sorting out the problem.

Ms Burger: From experience, I would say the insurance is quite expensive. It is definitely something that my parents were umming and ahing about as to whether they do it because it is so expensive. It is obviously very different to car or house insurance. I think that is definitely a factor.

CHAIR: I want to ask about illegality. Do you think students or youngsters actually understand what is legal and what is illegal in terms of behaviour and riding the bikes, or what sorts of e-bikes are legal? They are all legal to purchase; they are not legal to ride on roads or footpaths. Do you think they know?

Mr Zwegers: I think that is a very good question. Obviously I cannot speak for the thousands of students, especially the young ones. Kurt from the Queensland police comes down here, I want to say regularly now. You will constantly hear him talk about what e-bikes are legal and what e-bikes are not. Students actually understanding what the differences are that Kurt talks about when he mentions motor assisted or throttle bikes is possibly not there. Especially younger students from year 9 and below might not have the experience of seeing multiple different types. There are laws around speeds and there are different speeds on bike lanes as opposed to footpaths and I think many students from here, even though they have been told, might still not grasp that fully.

Ms Dewsbury: My point is quite quick. I think it comes down to the education of the student, whether that comes from mum and dad or the school. Personally, I am very lucky to have parents who educated my brother and I on the danger and the technicalities of these bikes. I think it just comes down to whether other students are experiencing this or a blind eye is turned to it.

Ms Hunt: I think it also comes down to the culture and enforcement of it. Kurt does come in and talks about it, but then those kids will see that, jump on their e-bikes and fly home at about 40 kays an hour anyway. Other kids see that as well and they go, 'There's nothing legitimately happening to those kids so why can't I gap it home as well?' I feel that is something culturally that does need to be changed through education and some kind of emotional ties to it and the legitimate dangers as well as enforcement with fines. All of that comes a lot easier with the actual registering of the bikes.

Mr Palmer: There is no required training or licence or any courses that you need to take to get or use an e-bike or e-mobility device. There is not exactly a way for all people who have one to know what the laws are around them.

Mr VORSTER: I want to ask the students for their views on licensing and registration and what may be workable. I am aware that some international jurisdictions with many e-bikes use RFIDs built into e-bikes or attached to e-bikes for the purposes of registration. We are not talking about licence plates or stickers. We are talking about a code that can be used by an authorised person to scan the bike or by beacons along the road in order to find where a bike happens to be. Do you think embedding RFIDs physically into e-bikes and making that mandatory would help deter theft and create a more robust tamper-proof way of potentially registering e-bikes?

Ms Burger: I definitely think there should be a way that you cannot just take it out. I put an AirTag on mine after the first one got stolen and they found it straightaway and threw it in the river. It was very easy to say, 'You know what: they've got a tracker on here so let's just throw it away.' Having something that you cannot tamper with I think would 100 per cent help with theft, which is a really big issue.

Mr Zwegers: I would love to add to that. I am glad you brought up RFIDs because it is a very good area. I have personal experience with that technology because I am interested in cybersecurity so I like to look into that. I have tested how easy it is to either manipulate or view and alter RFID tags. It is a very nice idea to have and I think it would work well. I think there would need to be some potential understanding that it would not be a complete deterrent because there is definitely still the possibility for people to, say, override the information in certain RFID chips. In the same way that someone might steal a numberplate and put it on a different car that they may have stolen, I could go up to someone else's bike and somehow clone their RFID information and put that onto a bike I had stolen. That could cause troubles in the same way.

Ms Hunt: I do agree that it is a brilliant idea, but I feel the only downside that could come with that is that it needs to be simple. I am not really sure what the software is, but for people to legitimately want to go and implement it, even kids if their parents are not aware of their e-bike usage and things like that, it needs to be something simple that someone can access easily and also implement themselves easily if it is to be successful.

CHAIR: Does anybody know what the fine for a ticket for failing to wear a helmet is?

Ms Burger: I am going to say \$300?

CHAIR: It is \$160. That is interesting and there are challenges around tickets being issued to youngsters and all that sort of thing. That is something that we have to grapple with. It is a challenging thing for us. You have done a great job. Thank you to all of our committee but, most importantly, thank you to the students of Palm Beach Currumbin High School. You should be very proud of yourselves and your school should be very proud of the way that you have carried yourselves and answered questions from the committee and for the address that you gave at the start. Thank you very much. No questions were taken on notice so it is great that you have no homework. Mr Kennedy, is there anything that you want to add?

Mr Kennedy: I just want to thank the students and the panel for your time. Harry, thank you for teaching me about coding and security. It is very much a concern within our local community. Very similar to what Mr Vorster has explained, it is something that the parent community in particular voice back to the school. It is very much a reality that we may have students severely injured in the next couple of years. As an educator, a father, someone who cares about these people or a friend, that is not something that we really want to face. It is very much a serious concern. We thank you for your time and thank you for listening to the students.

CHAIR: It is an absolute pleasure. Harry, you seem to have some expertise in RFIDs. If there is any information that you would like to provide to the committee, we would be very happy to receive it. Thank you all again for speaking to the committee and for the information that you have provided. I now declare this part of the hearing closed.

Proceedings suspended from 2.53 pm to 2.59 pm.

CAMPRADT, Ms Kaylee, President, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School P&C Association

CAPRA, Mr Chris, Executive Principal, Palm Beach Currumbin State High School

CHAIR: Welcome, Chris and Kaylee. Would you like to make an opening statement and then the committee will have questions for you?

Mr Capra: Thank you and good afternoon, Chair McDonald, Deputy Chair Bush, committee members and other gathered members today. I start by thanking you for coming to our school today to give us an opportunity to talk about something that is important not just to our school but to the entire community of Palm Beach Currumbin and the surrounding areas. Also, could I do a shout-out and thank our local member for Burleigh, Hermann Vorster, and Minister Laura Gerber for making this happen and for supporting the school as we have attempted to address this problem over the last couple of years. I believe their support was instrumental in the committee's being here today.

Again, thank you for coming to listen to us today. This is a very topical issue for the southern Gold Coast, and I believe we are slightly ahead of the curve in terms of the adoption of and the adaption to these devices. Building on some of Deputy Chair Bush's questions of the students earlier today, 90 per cent of our devices are throttle-based, which means that 90 per cent of our devices are effectively motorbikes with an electric engine. If they had a petrol engine the students would not be allowed near them, but because they are powered by battery they are allowed on them. I had a look through our playground with our Police Beat police officer and it is our perception that 90 per cent of them are actually illegal to ride on the roads.

Just as a point of clarification: one of our students said that we have a school-based police officer. We do not. We have a very proactive Police Beat where the officers come to the school. Senior Constable Kurt Foessel is on call, so I can understand why the kids think that and that is actually great. The community thinks we have a resource there that works.

Basing our commentary this afternoon on the fact that 90 per cent of the devices that my students are using are illegal will help to provide some context. I have a few dot points. You have our submissions, but I have a few dot points. Some 260 to 305 of these devices come into the school grounds every day. We believe that, as a rough estimate, \$1.5 million worth of devices are within our school grounds every day. Over the last six months, it is our belief that we have had a hospitalisation a week—not necessarily an overnight patient but a student requiring medical attention where the Queensland Ambulance Service or a parent has taken a student to Tugun's outreach hospital or to Griffith University's hospital. It is averaging one a week.

In the first six months of this year, 26 community complaints have been provided to the school in writing. That does not include all the phone calls. Today I was representing the community as a panel member for the senior sergeant position here at Palm Beach, as it is vacant. Four of the five senior sergeants I spoke to today mentioned electric bikes and electric scooters as a point of community concern. Three of the four senior sergeants mentioned it in their job interview today. Quite clearly, it is an issue across the broader community.

Having stated all of that, we are not here today to complain. There have been some good things that have happened, including Operation Elektra, which was when QPS had some resources to devote towards schools to change student behaviour. It was a great start, but unfortunately police resourcing has meant it has not been able to be followed up. You have heard from the students that if visible policing is not present then the behaviour will not change. One good thing that has happened is that, through intervention and education at school, helmet compliance is up compared to when these devices existed previously.

The school does have a role to play, and you would have seen in our submission, especially at point 8, that we have undertaken a multitude of different methods and strategies as well as made an investment in time with our students to try to change their behaviour. To an extent we will be able to modify behaviour, but as our newly installed Premier has said—and I am paraphrasing quite generally—solutions that build community confidence require a whole-of-government solution. Education definitely has a part to play but so do a number of other government departments, especially when we are changing young adolescent behaviour. One thing we could look towards where schools have been successful in changing a behaviour with government support is the mobile phone policy—phones away for the day. That has been successful. Unfortunately, this is a more nuanced and complex problem, but I do believe that through whole-of-government coordination it can be done.

Finally—and I know I am probably preaching to the converted here about the complexity of this problem—you just heard from one of our young, very articulate female students who is a very well-behaved student who achieves quite well at school. The one thing that she did not sell herself on is she is a very gifted sportsperson. Her sport requires her to make a significant investment of time—four to five training sessions a week—up at Miami, Pizzey Park, which is a fair distance from here and has no direct bus run. She is under 15. She rides a device that would be classed as illegal. She is a student who would not have that opportunity otherwise and she is not somebody who would be breaking the road rules. You have perfect behaviour on an illegal device, but then we have legal devices with imperfect behaviour. Congratulations for taking on this substantial challenge, and I will pass over to our P&C president, Kaylee.

Ms Campradt: Can I just echo some of what Chris said and thank you for coming to the school. I think this is a unique opportunity for us, and I really do relish the opportunity to share our story and our community's story today.

We are a close-knit community. We have been committed to grappling with this issue ourselves for the last couple of years. There have been various interventions and various things that we have attempted to do as a school community, which are outlined in our submission. The answer to this is a complex one and, again, it cannot be something that schools are tasked with, that schools are additionally responsible for. There has to be a layered approach. There is a regulation element to this. We are dealing with illegal bikes. We are dealing with a very serious issue.

As Chris said, a number of students are seriously injured every week but do not end up in hospital. They are just being put back together at home and are back at school the next day. When you see them limping around, you know what has happened. My son was in an accident recently at Tugun and the sympathy is not even there from the frontline people because they are sick of people coming in all the time with these serious injuries. It is terrible.

There is a flipside to that. I have noticed that in the mornings in particular in this area it is so much easier to get around. There are so many kids who use these devices to get to school so there are fewer cars on the road. It is a visible, noticeable change of behaviour in the wider community. I know we do not have too many things on the benefits list when we are grappling with this issue, but that cannot be ignored.

Included in some of the things that we have outlined is the mixed use of the footpath that becomes a problem. These kids are on footpaths with pedestrians driving at speeds that they should not be and driving in places that they should not be. Then you have that mix coupled with some of the risky behaviours—the five per cent who are probably doing the wrong thing when 95 per cent are not. This is an opportunity to look at some of those areas, but part of it does start with the regulation issue that allows these things to be so accessible to young people in the first place.

A lot of the kids who were here today who have them are not 16 years old; they are 12 and 13. They are also at the primary school. They have exactly the same number at the primary school. Why are parents spending all of that money? They are not having to drive their kids to school or get their kids to school. It is a convenience thing. Again, I thank the member for Burleigh for facilitating this today and for having us here. I thank the committee for coming to visit our school. We really appreciate the opportunity.

CHAIR: Thank you, again, for your submissions as well. They were very well put together.

Ms BUSH: Thanks, Chris, for making this possible and, Kaylee, for being such a fantastic P&C president and being so engaged. I have quite a few questions and probably not enough time, so I will start with the obvious.

It was raised today—and some other submitters have suggested—that the education should be in schools. Obviously, there are pros and cons to making that work. What do you think the pros and cons would be? What is practically feasible? A better option may be that the state designs some education and training that parents can deliver at home. I am keen for general feedback on that recommendation that has come up.

Mr Capra: A lot gets put on to schools at the moment, whether it is respectful relationships, road safety, drug and alcohol awareness or civic citizenship. The first thing that comes to my mind is would I be telling my maths HOD, my English HOD, my humanities HOD and my HPE HOD to give up their time to put in the education program? Having said that, schools do have a very important part to play in terms of the general awareness of road rules. We have already invested time at the school. You heard from our students that our local Police Beat officer addresses the first assembly of every year. His No. 1 topic is safety and the safe use of e-devices.

You brought up a very good point about parental responsibility. Where we as a school have been most successful at changing individual student behaviour is when a member of the community has identified an individual to us through a picture or whatever and we have reached out to that parent directly and let them know, 'A member of the community has advised us your little one nearly got cleaned up today.' It is a close community. Even though it is the Gold Coast, it is like a big country town. Most people still know most people. The parents are very receptive.

I honestly think some of it is the parents are not aware how their students are actually behaving on these high-powered or overpowered devices. It is a bit of a shock to them when they receive the phone call or if we show them some footage. We have never had an individual parent push back and say, 'You're out of your jurisdiction. You're out of your lane. You can't discipline my kid.' We have had some parents take the bikes off their kids. When parents are the primary educator, we as a school have experienced success. We have experienced degrees of success in educating our students on assemblies with a police officer present when it is followed up with things like Operation Elektra, but when kids are being kids—and with TikTok and social media—they do forget quickly. It needs to be regular and reinforced.

In answer to your question: yes, schools have a part to play, but I will say on behalf of high school principals that we simply do not have the time to deliver an entire education program that is commensurate with a unit of learning, such as English or maths. If I were a primary school principal, I would probably be saying, 'I don't have the resources. Those children are more kinaesthetic learners, which is hands on. They need to be there seeing it and doing it.' The school itself does not have the resources but if there were a joint government initiative—such as the department of transport and the Department of Education working together with philanthropic organisations that could deliver it on site—it may be possible.

Ms BUSH: So the school would have more of a reinforcing role?

Mr Capra: Yes.

Ms Campradt: I would just say again that it should be a layered approach. We went along to the forum that we had down here and it was very illuminating for 90 per cent of the people in the room to learn what is legal and what is illegal. Sharing that information with our parent community through various social media channels has been good for the community because they just did not know that what they were buying their children was illegal. We can play a role by sending it through the avenues that we have, but schools should not be the primary place where that education happens.

Mr Capra: Over half of the community members who ring up to complain and give us suggestions are pleasantly shocked that, yes, we have done that. We are not sitting by pretending that this is another government department's problem; we are trying. They see that it is a very complex problem. Working with Laura and Hermann has been successful. They said, 'There's a parliamentary inquiry coming. You might like to put in a submission.' I think the community are happy that there is a whole-of-government response, but they are also happy that the school is not just saying, 'This is somebody else's problem.'

Mr VORSTER: Before I ask my question, I just want to note my sincere gratitude for the incredible leadership that has been demonstrated by the school in this space. Although forced to react to an unfolding situation, the school's approach has been very proactive. Chris, you have done a great job. Kaylee, thank you for backing it up with the P&C.

Are the kids substituting pedal bikes for e-bikes because they are novel or is there a good reason? I suppose that goes to your observations. Are the kids who are using e-bikes to get to school at the periphery of the school catchment or outside the school catchment and, therefore, feel as though they need these high-powered endurance devices? Maybe the use of the devices is spread throughout the school catchment—so even the kids living two blocks away are using them when they could otherwise walk or use a pedal bicycle.

Mr Capra: Yes and yes. We are a very unique school district in terms of our enrolment management plan because we are long and thin. We follow the Gold Coast Highway from Tallebudgera Creek to the border and to a large extent we do not go too far west. You asked: do students who live on the peripheral of our school boundary use e-bikes? Yes, every day of the week. Do children who live only two or three streets away use their e-bikes to come to school? Yes, every day of the week. It is both. One is functionality and secondly, to a smaller extent, it is still a fad. What I have noticed as a principal is that when scooters first took off we had a big uptake in scooters replacing pedal-powered bikes. However, very quickly motorised bikes or battery-powered bikes replaced scooters. If I am allowed to, I will check with my student leader who is still here to see whether I am on track. Is that pretty accurate?

Mr Zwegers: Yes, that is right.

Mr Capra: Awesome. My year 12s are backing me.

CHAIR: That is great leadership.

Mr KING: Obviously, you talk to other school principals and the school community and I know this is a common thing statewide. You said a couple of things about how, in your school, you are able to ring the parents and everyone knows each other. Is it better or worse here? There seems to be a lot more scooters here than in other schools. Maybe that is because it is the Gold Coast lifestyle; I do not know. Amongst your colleagues, is this equally as big a problem?

Mr Capra: Colleagues probably have not spoken to me as much about this, but it probably is because we are the fourth largest stand-alone high school in the state. You have probably hit on a really good point there: I think it is lifestyle based. Kaylee is probably better able to answer this one, being a longer term local.

Mr KING: I have one more question to add to that, time permitting. You say you will talk to the parents and let them know that their little ones might have done something wrong. During these hearings, registration and potential fines have been brought up a lot. I am not asking you to put words into the mouths of your students' parents and that lies with the authorities, but potentially that could come back to the school. Parents might say that their kid cannot come to school because they have been fined or they have lost their scooter. Has the school contemplated that?

Mr Capra: It is a good point but my quick answer to that would be that your student was coming to school three years ago, before the e-bikes were as prevalent as they are now. Cycling back to your first question in terms of community perception, again I think Kaylee is better positioned to answer that.

Ms Campradt: Yes, I think we are uniquely placed in that we do have probably more than our fair share of students actually riding these things to school, for long distances and short distances, because of the flatness of our area. There is the thing about the doubling as well. There are multiple children on these things and they do not understand that it is only one person per device. Most adults would not know that. Sometimes you will see a parent with two children on these things. That is a very regular thing to see around the place.

The second question was regarding fines. When Operation Elektra happened here, we saw a marked response in the number of kids wearing helmets because it was not just looking at the bikes but was also targeting helmets. I have noticed when most kids come through the gates now they have helmets on. If you are fining the parents who have outlaid \$3,000 to give their child one of these things, without the education around the consequences and all of that as part of the package, if you like, then I do think you will see an evening out in those risky behaviours if bikes are being confiscated. I think that does happen and we have seen it happen.

Mr KEMPTON: The last couple of questions really skirted around the main question that I want to ask. It is great that you have that relationship with the parents. I talked to some of the students before about the need to have regulation around that and everybody we talk to agrees that enforcing any kind of regulation against a young person is difficult. If that was sheeted home to the parents in terms of the ownership and operation of these illegal bikes and the abrogation of their responsibility about taking the children somewhere, as a P&C organisation would you support that?

Ms Campradt: I have already advocated for that, actually. It is the parents buying these devices for their kids. Most parents do the right thing and have the conversation with the young person about the role and responsibility that goes with that. As I said, I think it has had a positive impact. The ones who are not explaining the rules and are not doing the right thing—these things are not cheap. Some of them are \$3,000 or \$4,000 and they are just handed over. I do think that something has to give here. The community is expecting us to do something. I think fining the people who bought the device illegally and who are not acting—I do not know. As a parent and as the president of the school parent community, I would be in support of that because of the accidents and the community expectation that we cannot continue as we are and something has to happen.

Mr KEMPTON: Presentations to the ED here are doubling every two years. That is a massive impost on the whole health system. This has to stop somewhere. Thank you for your comments.

CHAIR: Did you have anything to add to that, Chris?

Mr Capra: That is fairly accurate. I think part of the problem for some of our parents is that they, in good faith, go into a commercial enterprise and say, 'Is this bike legal?' and they are told, 'Yes.' But the fine print is that it is legal but on your property only; it is not legal on the road and it is not legal on the footpath. There probably could be some quick wins like banning some of these devices from the footpath, but again it comes back to educating the students and some changes to legislation, as one part of many.

Ms Campradt: Yes, a layered approach.

Mr Capra: Yes, it is that layered, staggered approach.

Ms BUSH: This question is to Kaylee. I know we are here in an education context, but as a mum I think we can demonise parents a lot. It gave me a lot of hope, Chris, when you said that most parents are quite receptive. I think we have this idea that parents just buy these things and dump them on their kids. That said, I am one of those parents. I have a 12-year-old and I bought them an e-bike. I have never used an e-bike in my life. It is probably part of the digital divide we now have with parents raising teens and we do not know the technology. We have four children and I have aging parents. We are all time poor.

What resources can we give parents to make it easier? Yes, the onus is on us. If we are going to buy them a \$2,000 bike then we need to really get them to respect that, but sometimes it can be hard even just sourcing that. Is there an opportunity for us to do something to target parents to help guide them and take them through those conversations? Obviously, when they get their Ls there is a structure but there is nothing for a bike or an e-bike or an e-scooter.

Ms Campradt: It is complicated because it is not just at the point of purchase that something can happen where they are given the rules and the explanations because, as Chris just said, you can buy these things online. Temu sells them. That is how easy it is. There are things that can change a bike from being a regular bike to a motorised bike. Those things are available as well.

I think at the point of purchase there has to be something. Then it comes down to the whole thing about licensing and how you identify them. It is complicated. I feel like the horse has bolted. That is probably how you feel on it, too. It is really hard to rein this back in now. But it does have to be at the point of purchase and what the regulations are around that. I think there has to be a line drawn at some point so that we can grapple back because, again, parents are buying it. It is an opportunity for their kids. Some kids would not have the opportunities they have if they did not have access to an e-bike, which is the perfect example that you have just raised with after-school work. Having kids connected to work and opportunities is important as well. I think the education has to be there. For people who already have it, we have to look at all the avenues we have to raise the awareness of what the rules are and then at some point draw a line in the sand. Does that answer your question?

Ms BUSH: It does. I think there is all this silver shrapnel that we are going to have to pick up.

Mr JAMES: Thank you, Chris and Kaylee, for the work that the school is doing in this space. It is really good to see you on the front foot. Chris, you mentioned 260 to 305 devices come in to the school every day. How often do you collect that data?

Mr Capra: I have only done it three times. The first time was with the QPS to see what the percentage of compliance was as I was advocating, through my local senior sergeant, to have a QPS response to helping increase student compliance. The second one was just to fact check the first one for validity purposes. I did it again last week solely because we were looking for a particular device because of a community representation that somebody had done the wrong thing. I have undertaken that three times across the space of close to a calendar year.

Mr KEMPTON: One theme that has come through in all of the hearings is a lack of accurate data and how we capture that data. It would be a good thing if you could do that on a regular basis and supply the authorities with a graph. The more data the better: the types of bikes, the types of accidents you are seeing. That would be fantastic.

Mr Capra: Okay.

CHAIR: We have heard Operation Elektra referred to a number of times. Are you best placed to talk to us about that?

Mr Capra: Very basically, although it is perhaps the QPS. I do not know if it was an operation that happened within the south-east command or whether it was statewide. Essentially, Operation Elektra was road enforcement command maybe working with some local officers to compliance check

the e-devices as they entered or exited the school and, at the same time, see whether the students had helmets and whether they were being compliant with road rules. I do know, as a result of the original operation out the front of this school, that one bike was seized and impounded. The police articulated that it could have been more but the seizure and storage of e-bikes on this end of the Gold Coast is very time intensive and it is cost prohibitive for them to undertake that too frequently or capture more bikes. It was visible, the children saw it and we would have got an immediate sugar hit in compliance but again, because there was no follow-up, slowly some of the poor patterns returned.

In saying that, we are only speaking about five per cent of, say, my student community that do not do the right thing, but it is just that five per cent of 300 adds up. Probably a larger part of the problem is my students see the adult behaviour on these devices and to an extent the younger ones replicate it. I do not see year 12s or year 11s undertaking risky behaviours in terms of riding on one wheel or doubling or tripling. I do see the junior secondary students because they have probably seen some 22- or 23-year-old do it and they think, 'That looks cool. I'm going to do the same thing,' and they are the students who should not be on the devices in the first place.

Ms Campradt: To add to that, the ripple effect of Operation Elektra was that there was a lot of chatter in the community long after it happened. I guess it raised the awareness of what is legal versus illegal as far as the device goes and also the behaviour and the rules around where you can ride or not ride. It did have a very positive ripple effect.

Mr Capra: We sent out the TMR publications around the same time as the operation for that exact reason. The discussion was started. I think a number of well-meaning parents got a shock. They had actually purchased a device but, oh dear. Children are also enterprising. It does not take them much—and we learnt this through the scooters—to get a software patch that operates as a hack to take off the speed inhibitors.

CHAIR: I am sorry, can you say that again?

Mr Capra: When the scooters were becoming prevalent, the students had figured out that there were certain apps freely available on the internet that allowed them to override the software on their scooters that prevented scooters from going above 25 kilometres an hour. Students are very clever and tech savvy and they will run rings around us with this sort of thing.

CHAIR: The RACQ suggested that there are already rules in place and many of these devices have been identified as illegal. I am trying to flesh out the expertise that you have developed here with regards to these devices. What would happen if overnight all of the illegal bikes were no longer able to be used to get to school? Can you turn your mind to what a transition might look like?

Mr Capra: I think the reality for the school is our attendance would drop quickly for students who would previously have come to school. If the weather was adverse, if the traffic was bad, whether something was happening with the buses, their access to the school becomes prohibitive very quickly. It is now a learned behaviour using these devices. These days it does not take teenagers long to pick up something new because they are digital natives. It is what they expect. To take that away from them very quickly my belief is it would result in a decrease in engagement with school, possibly part-time work, possibly sporting commitments, recreational pursuits. We know that teenagers are busy. They are not adding to Laura's workload in youth crime or youth justice because they are engaged in the community. It is an access tool. We do know that three years ago when these devices did not exist, we did have levels of engagement, but if we took it away overnight we would see a drop. If you were to bring in a staged approach over time with some form of regulation around these devices. The mobile phones worked overnight, but that was an easy thing. Mobile phones are small. You can put them in a pocket. We are talking about access to school. It would need to be a phased-in thing over one, two, possibly three years.

I do not think there is research that has been done around how long these devices will live. We all know that with cars if you are under 280,000 there should be no problems with your car—in terms of kilometres. As cars—depending on the make and model—get to 400,000 or 500,000 they start to die and people get rid of them. I do not think e-bikes have been around long enough for us to understand how long they are going to survive. As Holly was explaining to us today, it is only one nut for a front wheel to come off. I am not thinking they are made all that well. As Kaylee said, if you can order them online through Temu I am not sure quality control is their point of business difference. It is probably a little bit too early for me to give a definitive answer. I am just estimating, judging on the access that these devices are giving students to life, it would be a few years if you wiped them out overnight. It would be interesting to see what other jurisdictions in Australia have done. I do believe that New South Wales might be a little bit more ahead of the curve in terms of regulating what these devices can and cannot do.

Ms Campradt: That is a problem in itself as well. We often hear about the border. We are so close to the border. There are different rules in different states. That is always a unique situation for us as well.

CHAIR: Absolutely. The member for Kurwongbah made a great point earlier today about geofences and if these things had chips so that when they went in this area they could only travel at 12 kilometres an hour and when they were in this area they could do other things. That is the ultimate plan, but we need to think about a transition towards that utopia for e-mobility.

Mr KING: Harmonisation of transport between the borders has been a topic of discussion of various iterations of this committee over many years. Four-wheel drives are allowed to be a little bit higher in Queensland.

Mr Capra: Whilst student safety is obviously our No. 1 priority, the second one for us as a school is around community confidence through safety. It is my belief that if the community believes that they are going to be safe with these devices we actually do not have a problem. Unfortunately, at the moment with adults and students who might not know any better, or who might be deliberately choosing to do the wrong thing, they are unduly influencing the elderly, mums with bubs in prams and dads with young kids crossing footpaths to get to playgrounds. My belief is that student safety is No. 1, but the second one is there is a perception in the community, and it is real in most instances, or some instances, they are not safe at the moment because the operators of these devices are not acting safely. I think if they are the two things that we can get under control this does not become an issue.

Ms Campradt: In those shared zones.

Mr Capra: Especially those shared zones. We have the coastal walkway, the Oceanway, which most other electorates might not have. It is very public, it is very well seen, and you would have seen in the media if there is an accident on there it is newsworthy. It is newsworthy for a school like this because of the sheer numbers and if the students wanted to they can gridlock the area, although you have heard from Kaylee it is actually solving that problem to a small extent because it is taking cars off the road.

CHAIR: There is no doubt we have heard very strongly from people about speed limitations for shared paths and things like that where they are interacting with pedestrians. You share that view?

Mr Capra: One hundred per cent. For what it is worth, and this is not an expert opinion, I do not have a background in civil engineering and traffic management, I would take them off the shared pathways. Those devices weigh, with batteries, I am assuming, 60, 70, 80, 110 kilograms. If they are moving at any sort of speed and they hit a person in the wrong place it is going to cause damage. We heard from the member for Cook that ED presentations have doubled. At the end of the day, that is a cost to us as taxpayers. It is my belief that the pedestrians on these pathways are not going to be upset to see those devices removed.

Mr VORSTER: School environments, from a traffic point of view, are extremely complex. Here at the school in particular we have a very busy roundabout. We have heard students who drive are very fearful of striking some of these devices. Can you share some lived experience around what it is like managing potentially hundreds of e-bikes exiting your campus, interacting with pedestrians, parents presenting to campus, vehicles coming out of car parks, and a busy roundabout? Does that give you palpitations? Is it a risk from a workplace health and safety point of view?

Mr Capra: Great question.

Mr VORSTER: Just to round out that question, if we are to remove e-bikes from 'shared paths' then it would follow that they would then have to be put into a road environment. How are we achieving a safer outcome overall if that road environment at pick-up and drop-off times is the busiest that it is going to be during the day?

Mr Capra: A good challenging question. Does it keep me up at night? Yes. We only this term have allocated an additional four staff members of an afternoon to our exit points because of the sheer number of devices now exiting our school because they are bigger, they are heavier, and they take up more space. In answer to your question, yes, moving these devices off shared paths onto the road might clog up a road. Again, if the students were doing the right thing, or any members of the public for that matter, and riding in single file it is no different to a standard bike, but a standard bike moves a lot slower, it is under pedal power, you can manoeuvre it a lot quicker and probably a lot

more safely than a motorised device because they are just simply heavier. I do take your point. It is still my belief, with 2,800 students and up to 300 staff possibly exiting a school—so for the member for Cook's benefit the entire population of Port Douglas leaving my school in the space of 10 minutes every day—that I would prefer the footpath to be for pedestrians only.

Ms Campradt: I would add to that and say that because of the scale and the numbers that are exiting all in that 10, 15 minutes, it just means that it is a bit of a gridlock so everyone has to go slower because of the sheer numbers of people that are actually doing it. Cars have to slow right down. That is not where the accidents are happening for us. They are not happening on those afternoon exits, they are happening at other times in other places, not usually around the school, to be honest.

Mr Capra: That is actually a good point. Most of our students who have been hospitalised, it is not within one or two kilometres of the school, it is when they are getting speed up and are away from the school. It is just too busy around here for anybody to get any sort of speed up.

Ms Campradt: I would even go so far as to say that most of the serious accidents that we have had at school have not necessarily been when kids have been in uniform in that pre and post school time. It is definitely not on that school exit time.

Mr Capra: No, but we would still deal with it if we understood it was one of our school students.

Ms Campradt: Yes, absolutely.

Mr KEMPTON: Are you mitigating the risk of an unlawful activity being undertaken in the school between the gate and the parking of the bike or the use of these bikes going to any off-school precinct event like swimming, because it would seem to me if there was loss or injury or, in fact, those students even harm themselves there might be duty of care there. That would be a bit of a concern, I would have thought.

Mr Capra: It probably depends on the interpretation of the education act. If behaviour is bringing the school's reputation into disrepute we will deal with it as a school.

Mr KEMPTON: Remember this is an unlawful activity.

Mr Capra: Again, if that were brought to the school's attention we would deal with it as a school and involve QPS as necessary. We have a very good relationship with our local police beat and we have utilised those officers on occasions where we have evidence that unlawful activity has taken place.

Mr KEMPTON: I am more thinking about the civil liability if there was a loss or injury.

Mr Capra: That is a little bit out of my jurisdiction. Outside my school gate, outside of school hours, we have a moral and ethical obligation to ensure that every one of our students makes it home so we will always deal with an incident. As for the legality around a civil case, it is outside of my jurisdiction. I would have to ask my legal and administrative law branch.

Mr KEMPTON: I only raise it because of the whole complexity of this issue and that is the problem, is it not?

Mr Capra: Maybe you could do me a favour in parliament and somehow get schools off that hook.

CHAIR: That is a very good point though. Thank you for that. Chris Capra, executive principal of Palm Beach Currumbin, and Kaylee Campradt, thank you so very much for appearing before the committee today. Your expertise in this area is very much appreciated. Thank you for sharing your expertise and answering the committee's questions. There are no questions on notice so you have no homework either. Thank you once again and please pass on our appreciation to the students once again. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 3.41 pm.