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STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr JJ McDonald MP—Chair
Mr JR Martin MP
Mr TA James MP
Mr D Kempton MP
Mr SR King MP
Mr BJ Mellish MP

Staff present:
Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary

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

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 8 October 2025

Cairns

WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2025

The committee met at 2.45 pm.

CHAIR: Good afternoon. I declare open this public hearing for the inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. I am Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer and chair of the committee. With me here today are: Mr Terry James, the member for Mulgrave; Mr David Kempton, the member for Cook; Mr Shane King, the member for Kurwongbah; Mr Bart Mellish, the member for Aspley; and Mr James Martin, the member for Stretton, who is substituting for Ms Jonty Bush, the member for Cooper.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with its examination of e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. This hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and 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. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the committee.

These proceedings are being recorded by parliamentary Hansard reporters. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Please turn your mobile phones off or switch them to silent mode.

Today we will be hearing from invited witnesses. There will also be an opportunity for anyone who has registered with the committee secretariat to provide brief comments in the last session of the hearing. I note that allocated speaking opportunities are limited and we ask each participant to limit their contribution to about three minutes. We will talk about that in a short while. I welcome ABC Radio today; thank you for being here. It is an honour to bring part of the Queensland parliament to Cairns for these hearings.

OLDS, Mr Brett, Deputy Mayor, Cairns Regional Council

CHAIR: Welcome. I invite you to make a brief opening statement, after which the committee will have questions for you.

Mr Olds: Thank you, Chair and committee members, for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Cairns Regional Council. I acknowledge the state's proactive approach to understanding and improving e-mobility safety across Queensland. I also note that, from a local government perspective, e-mobility presents both opportunities and challenges, many of which sit outside council's direct control.

Cairns does not currently permit commercial shared e-scooters or e-bike hire services on council controlled land. Our observations and submission focus primarily on privately owned devices and local impacts. My submission will highlight key issues we have observed locally with helmet compliance, youths using high-powered or modified devices, and emerging waste and fire safety risks from discarded lithium ion batteries.

I emphasise that council's role is to support the state through education, communication and on-the-ground observations, not as the regulator of device standards, compliance or enforcement. I reaffirm council's support for e-mobility as a sustainable transport option that complements other travel modes while recognising that regulatory and educational frameworks have not kept pace with community uptake. In conclusion, stronger, coordinated state action, particularly in terms of education, compliance and battery management, is what our submission entails. I am ready for questions.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for being here and thank you to council for the submission. We really appreciate it.

Mr MELLISH: Thank you for coming along and for your submission. Council staff showed us around some of the facilities in Cairns earlier today. It will be really useful for us as the inquiry goes forward. When we went out we saw some of the private hire scheme operators. Have they been keen to approach council about setting up an e-hire scheme in town? What are the current guidelines? I

understand they are not allowed to park their e-scooters on council footpaths or council land. Can you run us through that? It varies in the different council areas we have been to as we have gone around.

Mr Olds: They are keen as mustard. They approached council many years back when the honourable Terry James had my role as deputy mayor. When they came along we knocked them back, and we have knocked them back every time since, mainly because when you travel around cities in Australia or around the world—and a lot of people love them—they look ugly. We also have a youth crime issue, so devices get thrown in creeks, on The Esplanade and in the mudflats. We did not think they were appropriate for Cairns, which has a very small, walkable CBD area. We have had quite compelling cases put forward, but to date council has not been keen to have them.

They have obviously found other ways to get into Cairns. They have gone to private hotels or landowners and they are renting them. So they are in Cairns, but it is the same problem with them. I have photos up the wazoo. You can see 17 of them of a morning, every morning, over at the cemetery on McLeod Street. As you drive around you can see they are left everywhere, but we are told they are not going to be. It is just not a good look for our city.

In my opinion, the biggest issue with e-mobility scooters—I did not ask them, so this is not the council's opinion—is the devices that go really fast. Those can be regulated to go really slow, so that is not the issue we have with them as a council. The bigger issue right now is that you have kids on the highway doing 80 kilometres an hour. As I was driving in to work this morning I was doing about 80 kilometres an hour. There was a young girl riding to school, and it took me a while to overtake her because she must have been doing 70 or 72 kilometres an hour on a footpath. I have seen kids on the Smithfield Bypass and on the highway. I think the bigger issue is not really with the companies we do not want here; it is with kids and even adults riding them and not following road rules.

Mr MELLISH: I have recently seen good police enforcement action around some of those privately owned scooters. It sounds like riding on thoroughfare roads and busier roads in particular is a pretty bad issue. That would be really difficult for you to try to manage when you do not have the regulatory tools to crack down on them.

Mr Olds: It is an issue across a lot of different areas, but what we are dealing with today is just another one of them. Even if we had the ability to do it, we do not have the staff to regulate it. Ratepayers should not be left with the burden of paying staff to pull people over and give them tickets, even with kids who are not wearing helmets and everything else. You have probably heard from heaps of people about all of the issues. There are positives to them and that is why people love them, but there is no driver training for the kids who do get them, and that is something in our submission as well. There are already educational activities at schools to teach them bike riding and road rules and everything else, but these things can fly. As a state, I think you guys are on a hiding to nothing, to be honest, because the horse has bolted and you have this issue, which is why you are holding this inquiry. We really do appreciate you taking this seriously. I wish I had more solutions to offer you. I wish you well.

Mr KEMPTON: Councillor, we have heard a lot of evidence in relation to fire and injuries from lithium ion batteries, but it seems that, having visited your site this morning, there is a much bigger issue here. These batteries take a lot of forms. Even the brakes on supermarket trolleys have lithium ion batteries, so there is always a potential there for a fire risk. When they come to end of life, it costs \$276 to \$300 for them to be disposed of, so people just chuck them in the garbage bin and they end up in your system. I understand that has potentially cost you somewhere between \$25 million and \$30 million just in the last 12 months through a lithium ion battery fire. The issue is that, even though you have banned the use of these e-mobility devices here, you have a bigger problem with trying to educate people not to throw these batteries into their waste. Do you have any comment about that?

Mr Olds: Yes, we have tried to educate them. With any of your e-waste—laptops, phones, even vapes have little lithium ion batteries in them—you can get what are called hot loads. When a garbage bin compacts—sometimes it can be a little tiny battery or it could be a bigger one—it can combust and cause a fire. Then that garbage truck needs to dump it right there or find somewhere real quick to dump it out, and this is a hot load. That is why tens of millions of dollars a year are being wasted on these issues.

We have tried education. We have told people, 'You can dump them here at Spence Street at council chambers, at every single transfer station and at libraries.' I think because they are so prolific it comes down to laziness as well. I do not know. When I was a kid I used to like the Slip, Slop, Slap; Norm; and Click, Clack Front and Back campaigns. Those campaigns were successful. They started them at school level because when kids got home they would be calling on the parents: 'Hey, you

haven't plugged yourself in.' I think there is something to be said for not only educating kids on road rules but also teaching parents where to throw batteries out. I do not believe it is just children throwing them out; I believe that adults, when they finish their vape, just throw them in the bin. In terms of education, we have tried a few campaigns. We have ads on the radio and all that kind of thing. Maybe it is something we need to push out through the schools. Like I said, I wish I had more solutions.

Mr KEMPTON: Would you support an end-of-life levy on the producers of these batteries? Otherwise you wear the cost yourselves, obviously. The consumer does, ultimately.

Mr Olds: That is a loaded question. I do not know how council feels.

Mr KEMPTON: No, it is a good question. It is not a loaded question.

Mr Olds: I always feel bad about taxing people more because at the end of day that cost will go back on to the end user. I understand that you need a carrot-and-stick approach if someone is not doing the right thing, but if a levy was put on them I think that would shift the cost to the end user. I do not think it would actually punish the people making it; it would punish the people who are using that equipment. I do not know. I would have to sleep on that to give you a proper answer.

Mr KING: The scooter hire schemes in town have nothing to do with the council, yet they ride them around and they leave them everywhere; is that correct?

Mr Olds: Yes, they leave them everywhere.

Mr KING: I do not know how they work. If they end their ride and just leave it there, is the hire company then responsible for picking it up?

Mr Olds: That is correct.

Mr KING: You are wearing the problem. I saw them down the road before and I thought, 'I thought Cairns didn't have them, and there they are.'

Mr Olds: There is one version out there that self-drives. I have seen it. I filmed it. I am like, 'They were not lying. This thing does self-drive.'

Mr KING: They can shift them remotely to keep them off footpaths and things.

Mr Olds: That is right. I have talked to the CEO of that company because when I saw that I was really impressed. I have seen hundreds of them everywhere and I am like, 'This thing is not working. It worked with one, but what about all these other hundreds?' They reckon they are going to get that under control. If they can, maybe we can revisit it. Like I said, it is mainly an amenity thing. That is why council does not want those ones, because they do not go fast, and as long as they keep them off the road—

Mr KING: It is the ones that can be managed; you are right. Do you have scooter hires at all?

Mr Olds: No.

Mr KING: You answered most of my questions and you have been very good with your answers already. In relation to e-bikes and helmets, you see a lot of kids getting around on these things without helmets. E-bikes without pedals are basically just an electric motorcycle. I do not think any schools are appearing before us, but do you know if any of the schools have any rules around not allowing students to ride them to school? In other places principals have said that kids would not get to school if they did not have one of these things. We have seen 200 to 300 of these at a school, but once operated in a public area they are illegal to be used by kids. The liability has to be on someone.

Mr Olds: When you asked that question I was trying to think, because I have four kids—two of them are still at school, one at primary and one at high school—and I am not sure whether, if they turned up without a helmet, they would be turned away or I would get a call. My kids all wear them, so I have not heard. I will find out. I will make a phone call when I leave here. They probably do not because schools already have enough on their plate. Every time a kid shoplifts or something goes on and they are wearing a school T-shirt, the principal is called. They have so much on their plate where they are not responsible. They are responsible for once the kids are within the fence.

Mr KING: I did not want to put the onus on them, but some schools have given up. Other schools are doing things. I just did not know if you knew anything anecdotally in this area because it is a big problem. DTMR, Transport and Main Roads, has a brochure on what is legal and what is not legal. I fully support what you are saying about an education campaign. That needs to be out there a lot more. I do not know what we are going to recommend, but we hear what you are saying.

Mr Olds: The schools do have a teacher to watch the kids as they come in. It would not be too hard to have that, I do not think, especially for the primary schools. If they see a kid coming in without a helmet, they can report that back to the parent. That might be an easy way to ensure they wear their helmets, but it still does not help them with the road rules.

Mr KING: I know there is the 'no hat, no play' rule for sun safety.

Mr Olds: That is right.

Mr JAMES: Council's submission recommends a multipronged approach to improving safety outcomes and reinforcing public confidence, in particular undertaking visible enforcement patrols at known hotspots in partnership with Queensland police or authorised officers. Do you think council would be interested in assisting with the regulation of these things, particularly on council owned land?

Mr Olds: Honestly, the answer is typically no, especially if it is going to cost the ratepayers more. It is like when you feed a wild animal: if you feed them once, they will keep coming back. If you step into someone else's space such as crime, which we are already doing on some level, you end up owning that space. I think council would be reluctant, unless there was some financial help to get that done. You were in council for a long time, so you know that the budget is always tight. If we started playing in that space, I think it would be a slippery slope.

Mr MARTIN: I just had a question about council revenue. We walked past some of these devices up the street. They were out the front of one of the hotels. They seem to be commonly located on private property such as out the front of a hotel. The committee has heard from other councils that the revenue they receive is approximately \$2,000 a year per scooter. Considering they are already here, would the council not be better off taking that revenue and regulating them?

Mr Olds: That is a good question. We have decided the answer is no at this stage. We have not been convinced that it is something we should be doing. To be honest, when they found that little loophole that allowed them to go on private land, there was a certain councillor who thought we should double the rates of those people who wanted to host them to pay for the regulation of them.

Every decision you make for a place where you live should not be based on economics. We could make a couple of thousand dollars here, which would pay for an officer. We do not think they are a good look for Cairns—that is, both this and the last council. Even if you want to pay us \$300,000 or \$400,000 a year, we will not make the decision based on that; it will be based on whether it is a good look for this place. When you come to Cairns, you have all the greenery around you when you land and you feel like the pressure is off your shoulders. When you walk around, there are no big digital signs like Times Square, although they are starting to come in now. Cairns has something special and unique and we want to keep it that way. You can get electric scooters in every city in the world. If we were like San Francisco and were very hilly, maybe we would have a different opinion. It is a very simple city to get around.

Mr MARTIN: What have tourism operators said to you? Have they approached the council to broadly support having e-scooters? Are they against e-scooters as well? Tourism is a big part of Cairns. I would have thought an e-scooter rental scheme would be good for tourists.

Mr Olds: I speak to Mark Olsen from Tourism Tropical North Queensland all the time. I do not think he has ever brought it up. Some tourism operators would really love it. I know they want to put some at Hemingway's because they think they can make some money off them, but the state government will not let them utilise that space.

I honestly do not know. I think you would get a mix. I think some tourism operators would really love it and others would say, 'No, we don't want them here.' People do not come to Cairns to just hang out in the CBD. We have the rainforest and the reef. You can go up north—anywhere you like—and go mountain biking or hiking. The scooters themselves are mainly used to get around the CBD.

Mr KING: Obviously the private ones are not left everywhere, but from what we hear they are a menace. When people are walking along the paths, all of a sudden these things will buzz past them and scare them.

Mr Olds: I think the private ones are a way bigger issue than the commercial ones because of their speed. I have not spoken to the hospital in a while, but I know that casualties have gone up and changed from little injuries to big ones. Again, it is about education and going too fast on footpaths. When you have a wheel this big and you are doing 60 kilometres an hour or more, you are on a hiding to nothing.

CHAIR: Thanks, Brett. I have a couple of questions too. This is further confirmation of why it is important to get everybody's opinion across Queensland. There is obviously a space for these devices. We just have to make sure that we get the regulations right so that people are safe and that there is some local autonomy as well. Just to clarify: were the 17 devices that were found in one area shared devices?

Mr Olds: I will forward the text to you afterwards, if you like.

CHAIR: Sure. That is fine. We have heard that some of the share schemes continue to charge the rider if the device is not left at a particular parking point such as one of the private places that they are using here.

Mr Olds: We must have some really rich people in Cairns then, because they leave them for ages.

CHAIR: So were they stolen devices or, to the best of your knowledge, were they hired and have just been left?

Mr Olds: I think they had been hired and left there. I will not name the company, but I have talked to the CEO of one of these companies. He has apologised and said, 'Look, we haven't had the number of people on the ground that we wanted or a general manager for your region, but we'll try to fix it up.' I said, 'When you get it sorted, come back and talk again.' We are always open to talk to anyone, especially if things change. To date, I have not seen any change. Some would be getting stolen, but when you see 17 in one area I do not think they would be stolen.

CHAIR: One of the lessons the Gold Coast and Brisbane learned is that if they do not make them dock the devices at a set place they are left higgledy-piggledy, so that might be something you can consider as well. It is something else we can think about. Do your kids have e-scooters or just scooters?

Mr Olds: My 19-year-old has two of them. One of them is dodgy, and I said, 'What are you doing, mate!' I never allow my kids to have them while they are still at school.

CHAIR: Thank you for your honesty.

Mr Olds: I do not think they know the road rules. My daughter is 11 years old.

CHAIR: How well do you think people know the rules? Do they know some of the devices that are ridden on the road are illegal? Do they know about helmets? Is it a cultural thing? I appreciate your earlier advice about education and the example you gave of Click, Clack et cetera, and I look forward to your further consideration of that. Tell us about your experience and how well people know the rules around these things.

Mr Olds: Most kids, especially those in primary school, know they are supposed to wear helmets. That has been a cultural shift over the last 30 years. It is just the norm. You will see kids not wearing them or riding with the helmet on the handlebar. You are always going to have some doing that. The majority understand they are supposed to wear a helmet. Some of these kids are riding on the road and they do not stop or look both ways before they cross; they just fly out. I see near misses in Trinity Beach almost on a weekly basis. A couple of times a month at least you will see them doing something dangerous.

I am a motorbike rider as well. I have driven all around the world—probably in 35 different countries. I have probably driven more than most even around Australia. When I got my motorbike licence six or seven years ago, I did the course. Doing that course made me a better driver of a car. There are so many things you have to think about when you are on a motorbike compared to when you are in a car. I am 48 now. I was probably 41 when I got my motorbike licence. I had all of those years of experience and I was still learning new things. We have 11-year-old kids, 10-year-old kids and even 17-year-old kids jumping on something that can go 60 or 80 kilometres an hour and they do not have their driver's licence or have not done the extra course to get a motorbike licence. I encouraged both my sons when they got their licences to get their motorbike licence as well. Some parents say, 'Don't let your kids ride motorbikes,' but I say it will make you a better driver, even if you do not want to ride a motorbike afterwards. I know you can limit their speed and govern them to 15 or 20 kilometres an hour, but people will always be able to get around that.

One of the things we put in our submission was about importing. There has to be a national standard for importing devices. You cannot just have whatever you want. You can buy them on the internet and get them going 100 kilometres an hour, 80 kilometres an hour or 50 kilometres an hour. I do not know if you will ever be able to get a kid under the age of 15 to understand how serious it is. When you are in a car, it is a lethal weapon. When you are on a bike or a tiny scooter, you are not the lethal weapon but you can hit something that can kill you. I do not know how you can get that age to understand. I really do not. You would have to get them all limited to go at a really safe speed.

I was talking to Damian, the other councillor who is here, and told him that when I was a kid I rode everywhere. I was a fat little kid too, but I rode everywhere. If it was 20 or 30 kilometres it did not matter. I do not know why kids today cannot ride that far. I grew up in North Queensland and I never had a problem whether it was hot or it was raining. I actually feel for the state government for having to try to come up with solutions for this problem. I do not know how you can fix it. All you can do is try to educate people about battery disposal and try to get into parents' heads that if they love their kids they will do everything they can to keep those things as slow as possible and teach them to look both ways when they cross the road.

I do not think we can stop them. They are here. The horse has bolted. You don't know what you don't know. You cannot have life experience unless you live life, and these children have not lived life yet. You learn by making mistakes, but these are costly mistakes.

CHAIR: Your analogy of riding a bike and getting better and getting faster is out the window with these because they jump on them and away they go.

Mr MELLISH: You touched on the importation of some of these illegal devices. From what we have heard so far, it probably relates more to the e-bikes than the e-scooters, but it does affect both of them. We have heard a bit about how the federal government changed some importation rules of e-bikes in 2021. They have said they may be a fair way off being able to change them back. While we are waiting for the federal government to do that, is there a way for the state to do it? We have heard that it may be something that could be done through the Office of Fair Trading or some other means. If there is a way for the state to change the importation rules around these devices, should it?

Mr Olds: That is a hard one. You have me in a loaded position again. I think the answer is yes—if someone is not doing it then, yes, you should jump in—but I said before that if something is not being done I do not think council should jump in. It is a bit unfair for me to put that burden on you guys if it is a federal government responsibility. Generally, if someone is not doing something then you get in and do it yourself or you get loud. We have the media here. Let's get on to the federal government and tell them to pull their finger out.

CHAIR: You talked about helmets before and said even young kids know they should wear a helmet. What about the devices? The devices under 250 watts are legal to ride. Do you think there is an awareness about the illegal motorbikes and riding them on the road and what have you? Are people just ignoring the rules, or do you think there are people out there who are buying these things and genuinely do not know that they are illegal?

Mr Olds: It is a great question. I think if they sat down and thought about it they would know it is the wrong thing, but in the moment they are not thinking. They are just thinking, 'I want to go from here to there. I will just go that way.' You just reminded me that I watched a video last night of a couple of kids in a tinnie. They were both watching a video on their phone and they ran straight into a pole. I do not know if kids have them on their scooters or not. I had not even thought about that. Are they looking at them while they are riding their scooters? That is an extra point of danger. We cannot make phone calls when we are driving a car, but are these kids doing that while they are on their e-bikes? You reminded me about that video when you mentioned the devices.

To answer your question, I think at the core most people know the difference between right and wrong. I honestly think that when they jump on these things and they are going fast their mind is taking in so much that they stop thinking about right and wrong. They just think, 'I need to go there.'

CHAIR: As the member for Aspley said, there is a place for making sure people are selling legal devices. I would be encouraging people in the community to make sure they are buying a legal device, especially in the lead-up to Christmas.

Mr KING: The onus could be on the retailer to provide that education and let the parents know what they are actually buying.

Mr Olds: There are a lot of weak parents in the world these days and the kids want what their mate has or better. I know there are some kids out there who would not even ride the little compliant 15-kilometre-an-hour scooter their parents bought them. There is pressure from both sides. If there was a standard, I would support that 100 per cent.

Mr KING: I remember that when my son was very young he had a restrictor on the throttle of a Peewee50. He wanted that restrictor off, but he was not game to take it off himself. It could be something that simple. You are right: it is about education.

Mr Olds: One hundred per cent.

CHAIR: The time for this session has expired. Thank you very much for appearing before us today. There are no questions on notice so you have no homework, but I appreciate you and your fellow councillor from Douglas being here. You are welcome to stay with us while we continue our inquiry.

PROOF

ANDERSON, Mr Don, Private capacity

LUDERS, Mrs Connie, Private capacity

MARRON, Mr Michael, Private capacity

MATHEW, Mr Brynn, Private capacity

REED, Ms Helen, Private capacity

CHAIR: Welcome. Please keep to about three minutes. You can get a lot of message out in three minutes. We have heard some consistent themes across the inquiry, but if there is something that is very important to you, something you would like to stress or some solutions, we are all ears. I will keep a check on the time, but if you go slightly over it will be okay.

Ms Reed: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I appreciate being able to share some views and thoughts. I think it is important to acknowledge the severity of the trauma that can be caused by incidents and collisions with e-bikes, e-mobility scooters and so on. All people have a responsibility to ensure whatever they are doing is done in a respectful and mindful manner. We tend to blame different sorts of people, but I think we all should be responsible for our actions.

In Cairns we are very fortunate to have an amazing network of pathways. Again, these are shared pathways. I emphasise that because, as a bike rider myself, a lot of people do not know that they are shared pathways. Whether they are walking, running, riding, pushing a pram or in a wheelchair, I think it is important that people understand that everyone has a place on that path and that if we all respect each other then there should not be issues.

It is important to consider the great advantage of e-bikes. So far this afternoon there has been a concern about the risks associated with them, but it is also important to emphasise that people who are physically disabled or do not have the money to access a car can opt for a scooter. That is really important. An e-bike has been a great advantage for me to be able to get around and do things I would not have physically done otherwise. For people's mental health and for people who are physically impaired, the ability to jump on an e-bike or a scooter is just the best thing. It gives you that sense of personal freedom.

From the data we can see that things go wrong. That is with everything—even with the legislation we have for one punch. It is not necessarily due to the speed of that item. Somebody running or walking could run into a person and they fall over and hit their head. It is not necessarily just the speed, particularly in high pedestrian traffic areas. I emphasise, as others have: illegal imports is a big thing. I think Australians have a culture where we want to get around the law. If we can make it go faster then we want to do that.

Again, education is important. Funnily enough, I wrote down 'Slip, Slop, Slap' as well, because I think we need a saturation of education. People do not understand the rules for these things that have changed our lives. Whether it be a personal mobility scooter or a wheelchair, you see them going alongside the road the wrong way, into the traffic. That is really dangerous when people are backing out and all sorts of things. I think there should be a big saturation of a marketing campaign to educate people—and not just people who use the scooters but generally—so they understand: 'That is allowed on the footpath,' or 'They should not be going that fast,' or 'I'd better be considerate, too'. There needs to be a targeted program to educate in schools and across the community, without compromising the education of our children. Schools have so many things to do—they educate them on eating and behaviour—so do we dump another thing on the school? It is really important to take a balanced look at that.

Like I said, I think we have great paths here, and I want to ensure that the benefits of a scooter or an e-bike are not overshadowed by those incidents. I again emphasise personal accountability, which does align with education. Parents are buying their children illegal equipment, but then they are going to say, 'Oh, my child was injured.' Kids want the next best thing because Tom or Mary has it. To me, that is not an excuse. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children are doing the right thing. It is the same thing with a bike helmet. Whether you are horseriding or bike riding, you wear a helmet and that is enforced by parents.

I hope we get a balanced approach to the inquiry, not just legislation. I emphasise: if we do have legislation change, we need to resource that. We see people going around now without helmets on. We see people doing the wrong things and there is no-one who enforces that legislation. Just putting new legislation in place is not going to fix it unless it is enforced, and the police have heaps to do.

CHAIR: That was a great summary. Thank you very much, Helen. I can assure you, we have heard much of that—you very much reinforced common themes—but I appreciate you stressing the importance of personal responsibility again for us. Don, I offer you the opportunity to grab the mic.

Mr Anderson: Hopefully, I can be fairly succinct. I have a couple of points. I do not need to add to what Helen said about the health aspect. At a personal level, I was not a bike rider. I had a heart attack when I was pretty fit. I had a cardiac arrest. Fundraising from the Cardiac Challenge I believe saved my life. As a part of rehab, I was encouraged to ride a bike. The only way I would get on a bike was to get an e-bike. I have just finished my fourth Cardiac Challenge to Cooktown. I have done a relay on a proper bike with my daughters, which was very special, in the half marathon. I emphasise that the opportunity would not have come without an e-bike.

The other thing that is mentioned a bit is the economic opportunity. I have gone trail riding in Victoria. I have friends who come up from Brisbane to do trail rides around here. There are gravel trail rides in the Tablelands that are really developing. I think there is a huge economic opportunity for Australia related to bikes. We want to push that. A lot of people are riding e-bikes because they are older and retired and have some money to waste.

Counter to that, I cannot overemphasise all of the idiots who are on e-bikes. They are a bloody danger to us riding e-bikes. You have all heard the stories and they are absolutely true. I ride to Palm Cove from Edge Hill with a friend every Friday, and there would not be one day when we do not have an issue. Sometimes it is cheek clenching and other times it is a bit of a frustration, but often it is quite dangerous. I celebrate the effort that Cairns puts into the bike paths that are here and the continued work to keep them in good order, but the reality is that, in terms of connectivity, to get the flow on a bike you often end up going on the road, and you have to work out which road is safer. People use the bike lanes as permanent parking. I can name the caravans, cars and things that have been there for a number of years. There are a number of people who think we are the enemy because we are on a bike. The great majority of people are really good, but those people and those weapons that are not good are really a danger.

For about 40 years I was a school principal and an executive director of schools, and the previous speaker's comment just made me think. Teachers always complain about the overcrowded curriculum and say that you cannot dump more on schools, but I think that is overstated. We took on 'no hat, no play'. Please have 'no helmet, no arrival' or 'no overcooked e-bike'. I do not want kids to have e-bikes, but that is another thing. Also, we have just taken on mobile phones. If we can take on mobile phones at school, we can take on illegal e-bikes. As a parent and a grandparent, I discourage my children from riding a bike. They have e-scooters. They ride a bike to school some of the time but, because of the dangers that I face as a bike rider, I am hesitant. We can complain about an overcrowded curriculum, but I was a principal, a teacher and an EDS of schools for longer than most, and I would encourage you that there is space to prioritise that.

CHAIR: Don, thank you very much again. We appreciate it. Thank you for the work that you have done in raising many of our future leaders through the schools. There were a couple of really good thoughts there. Michael, would you like to go next?

Mr Marron: Thank you. I got interested in the topic because of the statistics for injury and death. That was my main focus, because I thought they were a pretty good machine. I would like to ride one. Does anyone know where I can get a cheap one? My thoughts have gone through to control: how do the police force control the current laws that are being broken regularly? I do not think they can identify who is on the e-scooter or e-bike or what bike or scooter it is. I think it needs identification. I cannot report anything to the police other than 'Black hoodie, small bike, sounded electric, went past'. That is not going to go anywhere. To make rules enforceable, the e-mobility item needs to be identifiable visually and it also has to fit in with traffic light cameras—all of the other technical equipment we have for trying to control our road users—because riders are becoming road users. That is about all I have. Control has to happen.

CHAIR: It is a very good point. We have heard that a couple of times before but it was well articulated. We will now move to Brynn.

Mr Mathew: Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you today. I am in the Cairns Bicycle User Group and have been for over 20 years. I have been a long-distance cyclist for many years. I have ridden all around France following the Tour de France, I have ridden from Sydney to Melbourne and I have ridden from here to the coast out to Karumba. I cannot do that anymore, though. After I had a hip replacement and a knee replacement, I got an e-bike which I bought from Melbourne. It is totally legal. It is a pedelec standard e-bike. I then bought a trike because I am looking at a second knee replacement. It is not legal, even though I bought it locally from a business in Brisbane.

I think the main problem that is not being addressed is the lack of control over what is being imported and sold. All of these e-bikes should not go any faster than 15 kilometres an hour. That is what the Queensland transport regulations say, but it is rubbish because they are out there doing 60. They are passing cars and doing absolutely ridiculous things. They only have to hit the smallest thing on the road and they are dead. There is a real problem in making sure that what is being sold is legal and then you can start to talk about controlling it. I know people who have bought an e-bike and tweaked the electrics to up the maximum speed from 25 to 50. You do not need to be much of an electrical engineer to do it, apparently.

I think it is really important for the mix of people who are using the bike paths that everybody knows the maximum speed of an e-bike and an e-scooter. If you have this ridiculous mix of pedestrians and cyclists who are doing 10, 15 or 20 kilometres an hour with e-scooters who are doing 30 or 40 kilometres an hour, it is very unsafe. You might as well be out on the road. There have been a number of times when I have stepped out my front gate and almost been bowled over by an e-scooter because they come barrelling along from Trinity Bay High. It is just crazy. They are not legal.

You are not responsible for it and neither is the department of transport. Somebody is, whether it is federal or state, and they need to get on and do their job properly. Until you can control the maximum speeds and power outputs of all of these things that are being sold, you cannot manage them.

CHAIR: Thank you for your advocacy for the bicycle users of Cairns over many years. Connie, you are our lucky last and you have three minutes to talk to us. Thank you for being here.

Mrs Luders: Thank you for having me. I did not expect to get the invite to come so I have not really prepared anything. I am pausing my professional career to raise four young ones. I have transitioned a little from being a driver to using a pram a lot and navigating ramps. I share this in common with a lot of elderly people who need to use those ramps, but there is a risk that comes from these e-scooters. As Brett was saying, the small wheels do not go off the path like a traditional bike would so that is when you get the danger. I am sure you are all very aware of lots of stories like that.

That is where my interest stemmed from. I was wandering through the Botanic Gardens in Brisbane with my toddler. He is only just learning to walk so I felt that was a safe space for him to be wandering in the gardens, but an e-scooter very nearly hit him. I suppose you have a heightened sense of these objects that are whizzing past creating a risk.

This issue is so multifaceted and I applaud you for taking it on. It is complex and there are going to be lots of issues. As you mentioned, the control factor for me is a big one. Do we have any database of what is coming into the country? There is no registration and there is no demerit system. I think we need better control of what is out there.

I know it has already been discussed, but I think there are typical at-risk groups. These include: people who are unlicensed—so they have not done the background licence requirements; disqualified drivers—they have already shown no regard for road use and have been disqualified time and time again, and this is the perfect vehicle for them to get around unsafely, putting us at risk; and under-age riders. I see kids with no helmets coming down bitumen roads and I think, 'Where are your parents?' I think the onus should be put back onto the parents. If kids do not have their seatbelt on, the parents get disqualified or lose a demerit point. Why should it be any different if they are letting their kids out of the house to be a threat to the 80-year-old lady who is trying to navigate the footpath? They may be unaware or oblivious or they do not have regard for the rules.

I always think about the risk versus benefit. You are going to have to meet in the middle and find a solution. At this point I think we are asking all of our police force to assist, but they are trying to catch up with what they are doing already. You look around and realise they could not begin to make a start on what is going on with the e-scooters. Thank you for allowing me to talk.

CHAIR: Connie said to me that she was nervous and I said that we all are, too. You did very well and you made some very good points about your experience as a parent. We have a bit of time for questions.

Mr MELLISH: This question is for whoever wants to jump in, and I appreciate that you have already made pretty fulsome presentations. This inquiry still has about five or six months to run and then it will take some time for actions to presumably come out of that. Are there any actions you think the state should take now, while the inquiry is still going, instead of waiting until it has concluded?

Mr Anderson: I will say more enforcement of the rules that are already in.

Mr Marron: Education.

Mrs Luders: With the education component, I agree and it feels good but does the evidence really back up the education component? If we were to look at it from a scientific level, I do not know if the education component is going to solve that problem now. It is going to take a long time to get to that point, just from a factual perspective. I agree that it is a good component, but I do question whether the evidence is there that it is actually going to hit home and create change and prevent incidents.

Mr Mathew: Many years ago, Main Roads used to pay for an education officer to go to schools and teach kids how to ride bicycles around little roadways laid out within the schoolyard. That taught them road sense and so forth. There are a number of schools in Cairns that already run bike classes, where the kids all gather together on their bikes and ride to school together. There are some walking buses as well. They learn road sense and skills through those means, and that is really important. Transport and Main Roads could perhaps look at reinstating those training programs.

Ms Reed: I think signage is important. I know it is down the hierarchy of controls, but there could be signage on pathways with the speed limit or saying that it is a shared pathway. It would just be those little triggers. It is like what you see on the speed sign, where the little smiley face comes on to say you are not going too fast. They have a little sign on the Esplanade that regulates the speed of a vehicle and everyone has a lot of fun with that. Kids will run along to beat the timer and people on their bike try to go faster. There could be little initiatives like that which make it more fun, even though it is a very serious subject.

CHAIR: You have all made interesting responses to that question. I think it is a good question and it reinforces that there is a cultural problem out there and there are all these little steps that we need to take to have an impact.

Mr KING: Connie, I agree with what you said about education and how we are going to catch up. We have talked a lot during this inquiry about what we would do differently if we could go back and start again. Do you think it is enforcement and education together? Obviously, you are educated in that space and you know what you are talking about there. It is the carrot and the stick as well, like the Slip, Slop, Slap and the other things we have talked about. Do you think there is any benefit there?

Mrs Luders: I think we are hopeful that education would solve it. When I see the road users who are causing the risk, I know it is a generalisation but I do not think that is the demographic that is going to take on what you are going to put out there.

Mr KING: We ran a thing at one of my local schools about bad parenting behaviour during school pick-up, and the kids went home with this thing that was made up to educate their parents about it and the local police endorsed it. I am always hopeful.

Mrs Luders: When you buy the e-scooter, though, there is nothing in place. There is no record.

Mr KING: That should be part of the education: the retailer has a responsibility.

Mrs Luders: When you buy cigarettes, there is the picture. There is no follow-up here. There is no consequence for not accepting the risk that comes with it.

Mr KEMPTON: I have a mountain bike and there are very few places in Cairns that I cannot ride that bike for exercise and enjoyment. If I want to go to the top of the Pipeline, obviously an e-bike would get me there quicker. I get that e-bikes help people who are infirmed, disabled or too old to ride normal bikes. I do struggle with the argument that it is a healthy option for young kids to be scooting around on illegal scooters in a very dangerous way. I think they would be better off on pushbikes, to be honest.

The emerging problem—and we certainly saw this today—is that all this freedom comes at an immense environmental impact. These scooters end up on the dump because the batteries cannot be taken out and they pose a really toxic and hazardous risk to us. You as ratepayers are paying the bill for that. I did mention to Councillor Olds that perhaps the people who produce these things should be paying a levy towards the disposal of them at the other end. That would get paid via the users rather than by the wider community. How do you feel about these young kids? A lot of parents abrogate their responsibility to take their kids to school, sport and everything else and just stick them on an e-bike or e-scooter and let them go. What are your feelings about young people on unlawful devices who are having a great time in our community? Is that acceptable or not?

Mr Anderson: We think Facebook is too dangerous and we are going to bring in legislation to stop it. I think what you are saying has merit. I do not want my grandchildren riding an e-bike for fitness and exercise. I think if you are geriatric or impaired, they provide an alternative. I do not think they are the starting point for exercise.

Mr Mathew: I think there is some confusion about what an e-bike is. A lot of people talk about illegal e-bikes. An e-bike that is legal is a pedelec e-bike. It only assists if you pedal. If you do not pedal, it goes nowhere. The problem is all of these illegal ones out on the road with a throttle on them. This is why my e-trike is illegal; it has a little thumb throttle. I did not know it was going to be illegal when I bought it, that is for sure. I just assumed that if it was for sale in Australia, in Queensland, it would comply with Queensland legislation. It does not. That is your problem right there. With the scooters and the things the kids are buying, they are being sold things that are illegal and noncompliant.

CHAIR: That is good information. Thank you for that. It actually highlights a point around mobility for people with disability. It has a lower power thing. It might be powered by a throttle.

Ms Reed: I have had two knee replacements with arthritis and an elbow replacement, so that is why I have an e-bike. It is exactly as was said; it is pedal assist. I do not think we should be penalising everybody and saying everyone is lazy because they have an e-bike, because there are different levels of e-bikes for those health benefits. Children definitely should not have access to that, in my opinion.

Ms Luders: Would it be feasible to consider redemption on those batteries so that the onus is on the user to do something with them after the fact to get their money back? If not, then, instead of polluting, perhaps someone else can see an opportunity. At least they are then getting back to one central space.

Mr KING: You raised the point that a proper pedal e-bike is not an illegal bike.

Ms Reed: No.

Mr KING: Up to 250 watts is not illegal. From 12 to 15 with parental supervision and from 16 on your own, it is a completely legal device to use. There is nothing wrong with it. E-scooters up to 250 watts are legal, with the same age brackets. TMR has all of these rules out there for people to see. That is part of the education space.

I forgot to ask the councillor about whether there are any incidents with disability e-mobility scooters. It is not that they are being hotted up or anything, but some of them have a single front wheel. Have there been any incidents with the transition from footpath to road? They are registered. They have a VIN number. They are able to be registered.

There are the illegal devices and the legal e-mobility ones. The disability and age pensioner ones are quite slow compared to the others. Is that a problem when it comes to interactions between the two? One is able to be registered. That is the difference. If these illegal e-bikes had a VIN number and were able to be registered, then they become a motorbike and they can ride on the road under registration with a licence. That was more of a comment than a question.

CHAIR: Does anyone have a response to the member for Kurwongbah?

Mr Anderson: It would certainly save a lot of abuse that you cop regularly: 'You don't pay any registration,' and 'You're banning me from being on the road.' I would happily have a VIN number and pay some registration if it stopped me being the public enemy because I happen to be on a bicycle.

CHAIR: Thank you all for being our first open session today. Thank you for appearing today. Enjoy the balance of your day.

ELLERY, Mr David, Private capacity

GOULD, Mr Greg, Private capacity

McVINNISH, Mr William, Private capacity

MEADOWS, Mr Damian, Private capacity

CHAIR: Welcome. You have heard from others today. We welcome any input you have. We are tight on time. You have three minutes each, but you can share a lot of information in three minutes. If there are some points that you would like to make, we are all ears.

Mr Meadows: I thank the chair and the committee for coming up to listen to us. I look at this slightly differently. I had 35 years of policing before I became a councillor. There are a lot of barriers with policing, particularly with mobility devices. Kids are so agile on them. It is a major problem in the CBD of Brisbane when they are trying to do enforcement. These kids are lost in no time.

I live and work in the Douglas shire. I live in Port Douglas. We were against a commercial operation. They did exactly the same thing there as they did here in Cairns. They set up on private property. However, the commercial operation that operates in Port Douglas does geofence those devices to keep them out of the main street, Macrossan Street. That has been effective in keeping them off our main thoroughfares and our footpaths on Macrossan Street.

On the other side of the coin, the majority of people who are utilising them are low-income hospitality industry workers and people who are intoxicated on holiday. You can hire one of these things—tap your phone and pay the bill—and be .15 and head off down the road. The only enforcement is police being in the right place at the right time. That is a major contributor to the significant injuries and deaths that are happening throughout the state. You cannot put an Intoxilyer on a scooter, so how do we manage that?

The biggest issue that we are now facing is the ability for people to go beyond 250 watts. It is not a state issue; I think it is a federal issue. I think you need to advocate significantly to the feds and say that we need an Australia-wide set of rules and regulations so we are all singing from the same hymn book—that is, if you purchase one in Victoria, the same rules will apply across the board in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. I speak fluent expat Victorian as 50 per cent of our population is expat Victorians.

Mr KEMPTON: Can you give us an example?

Mr Meadows: On AFL grand final day I am perfect. I think that is a major issue in the sense that there is no uniformity Australia-wide about how we enforce the rules. If you are going to have rules, they have to be Australia-wide. My children do not ride them and never have. They both go to a school where the school enforces the utilisation of mobility devices—e-bikes and e-scooters. If you are 16 years and over, they will allow you to ride one to school. If you are not, you are not allowed to ride one to school. That comes from the principal themselves. There is enforcement by the school, and they are very big on enforcing helmets. The basic problem is that parents are apathetic.

CHAIR: You must have a very good internal clock because you met the time perfectly. Thank you very much for your advice. I can assure you that we have written to the federal government about exactly that point.

Mr McVinnish: My first point is about lithium batteries. I have seven e-bikes. I have 24-, 36- and 48-volt bikes and there is no standard with the plugs. I have to be really careful. I have put tags on the chargers to make sure I do not plug the 48-volt charger into the 36-volt battery. I have a friend whose garage is a real mess and you have to find the right charger. It is an accident waiting to happen. Standardisation of plugs per voltage would probably help a lot with battery fires.

Secondly, with the operation of the bike, a lot of this discussion today has been about limiting the bike or trying to control the actual machine. Good luck with that one. You do not have different rules for a V8 car or a little Hyundai. It is about the operation of it. Because your e-bike is electronic, it is easy enough to reprogram. I have ridden in today on one. Within seconds I can tell it whatever speed I want it to go. I support the 25 kilometres an hour speed. I think it is a valid speed. I also have a motorbike. I would never ride my motorbike dressed like this. At 25 kilometres an hour you would only lose a bit of skin.

I believe the operation of the bike should be controlled inasmuch as a bike should always give way to pedestrians. You cannot expect the pedestrian to know you are coming. It is rare to ride along the Esplanade without having someone step out in front of you. I think there is a bit in this week's

local paper about a guy on a scooter who ran into an eight-year-old girl. An eight-year-old is one thing but you have to just not do it. The fastest moving object—in this case that is the scooter—must always give way to the slowest moving object. Brett said he passed someone doing 80-odd kilometres an hour on their scooter today. It is obvious that that is wrong. You can enforce that but, as far as trying to control the bike or program it, that is a can of worms.

CHAIR: You have made a really good point. I am going to ask a question now but then go to the others to give you some time to think about it. I do not think anybody during the inquiry has talked about the standardisation of plugs. I think that is something we could pick up on. You obviously have some expertise on that. I will come back to you for some descriptions re voltages or wattages that you can share with us to expand on that. David, welcome. You have three minutes.

Mr Ellery: I am not a really good public speaker.

CHAIR: You have started very well. You have a great tone. I reckon you are underselling yourself.

Mr Ellery: My background is that I am a commercial loss adjuster. One could call it a midlife crisis, for want of a better word, but five years ago we decided to set up a skate shop and sell some e-mobility devices after test-riding them down in Brisbane. We do that here in Cairns, and I believe we do it well. We educate everyone we sell the product to. Everyone is given links to the current rules et cetera.

There has been a lot of comment about the retailers needing to educate. The biggest retailers of these items are the likes of JB Hi-Fi—the big-box stores. I am not sure how that is ever going to happen. In our little shop here in Cairns it does happen, absolutely, on every sale. How that would happen and why the onus would be put on the retailer I am not sure. From that perspective, Toyota do not educate you on how to drive your car.

When it comes to speed regulation, as you touched on, good luck trying to regulate that. My Corolla can exceed the speed limit. It is back on me. Safety-wise, I believe you should be looking to go to full-face helmets, especially on e-scooters. It is no different to a motorbike. You must wear a full-face helmet on a motorbike.

If we go down the line of registration, again, as Brett touched on, the legislation has to be for the whole country. I believe that I am reasonably educated. When I can argue about the rules with the police and they do not know and I do not know because I do not understand it, how can a 12- or 15-year-old kid understand it?

Looking at it as a whole, we have spent I do not know how much money locally building the cycle path from Gordonvale all the way to the rubbish tip.

Mr McVinnish: It goes all the way to Palm Cove.

Mr Ellery: There is no way that you can ride down that path without breaking the rules to get into town. There is no physical way you can do it on an e-scooter. On a pushbike, yes, because you are on the road. There is a huge disparity. If you are going to regulate, I do not think you can regulate the speed.

If we go to registration then you need to register a pushbike as well, because all e-bikes have integrated batteries. Who is to determine what an e-bike is, especially with centre crank models as opposed to hub drives? I think you have a lot of work ahead of you, but you need to get back to education in schools and smash the parents with, 'This is what you need to know.' I have plenty of comments on other points.

CHAIR: Thanks, David. We appreciate it. Thank you for your time and for obviously doing the right thing when selling these devices in town. Welcome, Greg. Thank you for registering to appear before us today. We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Mr Gould: Thank you for having me. As a very avid user of e-bikes in our family, I thought I would come along and share the experiences of our family. My comments are going to be overwhelmingly positive; I will just tell you up-front. We are a family of five—wife and I and three teenage sons. I bought my first e-bike in mid-2019, so six years ago now. I primarily use mine in lieu of a car, so travelling to and from work, meetings, site inspections and that sort of thing, and as a secondary thing for social and recreational use. By 2022 we had three e-bikes in our family, with the older two boys riding them. They would be using them to ride to and from school, part-time jobs, weekend sport. I want to stress I am specifically talking here about e-bikes. I am not talking about

powered by battery and I am not talking about bikes powered by internal combustion engines or bikes with a throttle; I am talking about bikes that move when you pedal them. That is what I am referring to. The other things are just motorbikes; that is all they are.

I am probably doing in the order of 30 kilometres a week, maybe a bit more—just me personally. The older two boys have P-plate licences now so they are driving cars a little bit as well. My estimate would be that it is probably saving us about 3,000 kilometres a year in car journeys. In fact, that would be light on; it is probably more like 4,000. Over the six years I think in total it has probably saved us 25,000 to 30,000 kilometres in car journeys out of those three e-bikes. That is effectively another vehicle. We would have had another vehicle at our property now. We still have the two vehicles. We would have had a third vehicle by now.

In relation to safety, the entire family is now using those e-bikes, it is all shared, and we have only had the one accident: the oldest boy. Three or four years ago, a vehicle pulling out of an angled car park reversed into him. It was a brief hospitalisation. He had grazes and some severe bruising. It was only one day, in and out, at the hospital. That is the only accident we have had. We are pretty safety conscious. Everyone always wears helmets. Our overall experience has been overwhelmingly positive. Those bikes are now integral to our lives and the way our family operates. We recently went down to Magnetic Island for a couple of days—just the last long weekend. We threw two of the bikes on the back. You can get around and explore the island safely and conveniently.

In terms of point-to-point riding in traffic, I have ridden down here today. I am out at Edge Hill. I have ridden down here this afternoon. They are faster over a five- or six-kilometre distance because of that ability to go point to point and park directly out the front. They are faster than a vehicle by the time you park and then walk from your car, so there is a serious convenience there. They are very cheap to operate, so there is a big cost saving there. Based on our lived experience, I could not recommend them highly enough for convenience, transport costs and recreational use. On the environmental side, obviously there is a very big saving on CO₂ emissions.

I would encourage the state to really go all in on e-bikes. I think there is a big potential. E-scooters are a whole separate issue. We do not own any. They are obviously a safety issue—that is pretty clear—but they are a different vehicle altogether to e-bikes, which are much safer. For the advantages they offer, I would overwhelmingly say: invest in safe infrastructure to ride them on and encourage people to get on them. I have probably exceeded my three minutes. I am sorry about that.

CHAIR: You did, but I am pleased that you spoke up today for the points that you made. Certainly, there is no intention of the committee changing anything to do with those sorts of bikes. They are well supported.

Mr MARTIN: This is probably a question to William, David and Greg as avid e-bike or e-scooter users. Would you support the state bringing in registration for these vehicles, whether there is a fee involved or not? I know there already is a requirement to register the four-wheel ones with the basket on the front, but the registration is free. They have to meet Australian Standards as well. I think they have to be less than 170 kilos or something like that. Would you support a rego system?

Mr Gould: Personally, I do not have any particular objection to it. I think it is tricky. It is like trying to catch smoke. The only people you are going to get registering them are the people who are wanting to act honestly and legally. It is not going to stop all of the illegal devices going around at the moment. I am not sure that you are going to solve the problem with registration, but I do not have a problem with it.

CHAIR: David or William, did you have anything else to add?

Mr Ellery: I do not have any issue with the registration of anything. The point is that it is trackable, that we can work out who is doing the wrong thing. Anyone who is registered is typically doing the right thing to start with. I do not know how you manage it and where you draw the line in relation to what is required to be registered and what is not. I understand four-wheel mobility devices do have that concessional registration on them. Why?

Mr KING: Because they go on the road.

Mr Ellery: Whereas I see 90 per cent of them on a footpath.

Mr KING: Because they can go on a road. That is why I asked the question about the transfer between the footpath and the roadway in relation to the gutters.

CHAIR: Did you have anything to add?

Mr McVinnish: I have no problem with identifying them. As a rule of thumb, I am anti paying more registration. I actually tell people that I pay four registrations already and ride an e-bike. I would rather not pay more.

Mr KEMPTON: I could make an educated guess at this, but what is the difference between a centre crank and a hub drive?

Mr Ellery: A hub-drive bike has a brushless motor built into the wheel itself, which is in your hub, and your centre crank as your brushless motor built into the crank. The crank drive drives chain to rear wheel and the other drives rear wheel to chain.

Mr KEMPTON: In both cases there is a separate battery somewhere on them.

Mr Ellery: Absolutely. Not in the bikes that are being modified, but in off-the-shelf bikes typically these days the battery is integrated into the frame.

Mr KING: I agree with you about the registration. I can get on eBay or Temu and buy a motor or a hub wheel for a bike with a battery and make my normal pushbike into an illegal e-bike. In some areas geofencing does work well with hire schemes. We have seen in another location where even if they get close to people they slow down. They cannot go near certain areas. If only you could do that with any electronic device, but then someone will drive past in their Tesla and it will stop that as well. Technology is always increasing and maybe that is something down the track that would work. The other thing I want to raise is the disposal of these batteries. There is a whole lot of electronic waste that needs to be disposed of. I am a tradie. I have been using battery drills and power tools for years with lithium ion batteries and those batteries have been going into the bin for a long, long time. It is a problem that we all have to face. It has been highlighted by this inquiry. It is something we really are aware of.

CHAIR: William, I am coming back to you with that question I asked you before about the standardisation of plugs. Tell us some more.

Mr McVinnish: With my e-bikes I have four different plug types. They typically use a three-pin, which is a 240-volt cable—the one that goes into the back of computers, with a square three-pin. I also have one that uses a three-pin microphone cable and another two with different single-point plugs. One is a five mil and one is about a 6½ mil. These plugs are just readily available at Jaycar and they are not consistent across the particular voltage ranges. If you plug a 48-volt charger into a 36-volt battery, you are likely to have an overheat and a problem. I even have Dymo tape stickers all over my chargers to say '48 volts only' and identify the bike that it goes in. As a generalisation, unless you are reading the fine print on the actual charger, there is no reason one charger does not go in a different hole.

Mr KING: And when the charger dies and you go to Jaycar to buy a replacement charger, are you getting one that defeats the smart-charging system in that e-vehicle and cooks the battery?

Mr McVinnish: That is right. They all have a battery controller and the good ones will have one that will turn itself off, but some of them do not, apparently.

CHAIR: Are they different voltages for those different types of plugs?

Mr McVinnish: No, they are just common-use plugs that have been taken up to be used. One of my bikes uses a microphone plug, one of the round ones here—the same as that. They have just been readily available so they have used them.

Mr MELLISH: This is probably a technical question to David. On the hub motor versus the crank motor, presumably the crank motor is the legal one, the pedal-assist one, whereas your hub—

Mr Ellery: No, hub is still pedal assist. It still requires the chain. With a hub motor, the pedal assist—and with a centre crank—there is a crank sensor where the crank rotates and it requires the crank to go past it for the magnetic sensor to pick it up and that is what beats you up in speed.

Mr MELLISH: Would the ones that people are modifying privately, or the ones that people are putting a throttle control on, be a hub or a crank motor?

Mr Ellery: Both. Electronically, all you are doing is removing the crank sensor and putting a throttle in its place.

Mr McVinnish: Can I make a point on that? With the front motor, that is more suited to mountain bike riding because it uses the existing gear system so you can take off in low speed, use your gears and go through. A hub motor is better for riding around on flatter roads because electric motors do not like being dragged really slowly. There is way less wear from a hub motor because you are not putting any loads through the chain. On a front motor, all your load is going back through the chain and they typically wear out.

CHAIR: Councillor Damian, thank you very much. William, David and Greg, thanks for being here today and sharing your knowledge with us. We really appreciate your input. This concludes the hearing today. Thank you to everyone who has participated. I hope you enjoy the balance of your day. Thank you to our Hansard reporter and to our secretariat staff. A transcript of today's hearing will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I now declare this public hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 4.13 pm.