



STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE

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

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

Brisbane

WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2025

The committee met at 9.19 am.

CHAIR: Good morning. I declare open this public hearing for the inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. I am Jim McDonald, member for Lockyer and chair of the committee. With me here today are: 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 Bart Mellish, member for Aspley.

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.

The proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. 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 mobiles phones off or to silent mode. Finally, I remind everyone to press your microphones on before you start speaking and off when you are finished.

BOURKE, Mr Peter, General Manager, Bicycle Industries Australia

COULTER, Mr Stephen, Founder, Zipidi (via videoconference)

GARNSWORTHY, Mr Andrew, Chief Executive Officer, Pedal Group Australia

WESTON, Ms Krystyna, Founder, Zipidi (via videoconference)

CHAIR: I welcome Mr Peter Bourke and Mr Andrew Garnsworthy, and Mr Steven Coulter and Ms Krystyna Weston who are joining us via videoconference. Good morning. Would you each like to make an opening statement before we start our questions?

Mr Bourke: I appreciate the opportunity to present before this committee again. I was lucky enough to present approximately three months ago and a lot of activity has happened in that time with the release of the Western Australian report and the activity and the announcement on 21 November at a federal level of the reinstatement of EN15194. There is also a lot of action in New South Wales. It is a rapidly moving space and we look forward to the outcomes of this committee. From everything that we have seen that has occurred, we also look forward to the alignment of the outcomes of this committee, where possible, to the other states because harmonisation is one of the greatest outcomes we can achieve out of this committee and the other activities that are happening across the states and at a federal level as well. On that point, thank you very much for having me today.

Mr Coulter: We do not intend to go through a detailed opening statement today. As Peter said, there have been a lot of developments in the last few weeks with the Western Australian inquiry coming out and what has been happening in New South Wales. There have also been issues happening with electrical safety and there has been what seems to be a rash of incidents regarding bikes, scooters, electric motorbikes and lithium ion batteries around Australia in the last two weeks, highlighting the problems that the committee is addressing. We are here today more to answer your follow-on questions than to give a big speech right now.

Mr Garnsworthy: I am the CEO of the Pedal Group, which is the parent company of 99 Bikes—the biggest retailer in Australia of bicycles and also a major importer of legally compliant e-bikes. On behalf of Pedal Group, I want to thank the committee for your work in conducting this inquiry. We feel that Queensland has the opportunity to create a world-class and world-leading e-mobility framework that balances the benefits of e-bikes and e-mobility with safety.

Ultimately we see three interconnected issues that must be addressed to establish a safer baseline: firstly around importation; secondly around point of sale for retailers; and thirdly around enforcement in the community. From an importation perspective, the most significant safety issue ultimately stems from the lack of control at point of importation. That is where the risks of high-powered, over-speed bikes come from, especially illegal bikes and illegal electric motorbikes. There are also issues with online marketplaces.

The second point is around point-of-sale loopholes. There is particularly the off-road private property use loophole that ultimately allows selling these bikes on the premise that they will be used off road or on private properties when ultimately they are being used on public roads. The third one is around I call it use and enforcement. Some of the rules are quite complicated to understand around what is legal and what is not. There is also a lack of enforcement around some dangerous riding behaviour.

Our submission is ultimately summarised in two steps: one, create a safer baseline, particularly around strengthening importation controls. This will have a knock-on benefit of helping and stopping battery fires as well. We support the reintroduction of EN15194. However, we do feel that, unless there is enforcement of those self-declarations, follow-up compliance and consequences, nothing will change. The second point is around reviewing the sale loopholes and closing them. Ultimately if they are not closed we will continue to have high-risk devices in the community. The third one is around penalties for users on the streets. That is our first point in terms of the safer baseline established through those three areas.

Our second point is around evolving the immobility framework. This is where our recommendation comes for a two-class structured regulatory system. The intention of this is that ultimately at the moment there are bikes that go up to 25 kilometres an hour. Then a lot of people are misusing and unlocking post purchase leading to dangerous bikes on the streets, particularly in the hands of young kids, and that needs to stop. Our suggestion is actually to review the pedelec standard e-bike—this is once the safer baseline is established, I should add—and shift the 25 kilometres an hour up to 32 kilometres an hour. We feel that that will be a safer way of people riding with traffic. They feel unsafe riding at 25 kilometres an hour when there are cars zipping through at 40 or 50 kilometres per hour. That would be our first step. That would enable a simpler way of enforcement in terms of any bikes over that speed would be going too fast if they are not being pedalled.

Our second recommendation is the staged introduction of a speed pedelec category. This would be a bike that could travel up to 45 kilometres per hour. This would not be used on shared pathways with the community and it would require licensing and registration. That has the benefits of the practicalities particularly around commuting cars off the road, reducing congestion, as well as those bikes not being used by minors by factor of having the licensing requirements.

Our recommendations are: establish the safe baseline through importation, point of sale and in the community, and then evolving the immobility framework so that e-bikes and e-mobility can integrate with the transport system. I also reiterate Peter's comments that we would like to see some consistency at a national level which will help in making sure there are not inconsistencies across different states or territories. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to answering any questions.

CHAIR: Thank you, Andrew. We really appreciate your submission and also the summary that you have given us. I will go to the member for Cooper.

Ms BUSH: Good morning, everybody. Welcome, Andrew. It is your first time here this morning. I know my colleagues and I have questions for you, but I might start with Peter, Krystyna and Stephen who are here briefing us for the second time. You have mentioned that there has been some change. I have a broad opening question. Since you were last here, and recognising that there has been movement environmentally in the system, what updates would you like to give us? What additional or new information do you think is relevant to the committee, and what components of the evolutions in other jurisdictions do you think this committee should be turning our mind to?

Mr Bourke: The key modification that has been made, which has been called for from around the country, was the reinstatement of EN15194 as part of the Australian Design Rules at the federal level. From our perspective, that definition needs to be implemented but that also needs to flow into the national road regulations through the National Transport Commission and then from there we would like to see TMR update their state road regulations to reflect that within the road laws. That would provide that consistency across the board.

One issue that has been identified through this process, which the federal government at this stage is I believe reticent to implement, is the current application process to import an e-bike is a voluntary application. They have indicated they have no interest or desire to move to a mandatory application. They have indicated that they have no ability. I am not sure of the mechanics of that one. Certainly from an industry point of view we would like to see that become mandatory—there is a shaking of the head. We believe that should become a mandatory application because at this point in time it is very simple. Even with the standard, without the paperwork, without the application, to go to Andrew's point, the enforcement would significantly be lacking. New South Wales has announced that they are transitioning from 500 to 250 watt which, from our perspective, provides that consistency. We are very supportive of that.

Andrew has alluded to other classes of products, as in a higher class, higher speed, or even a load-carrying capacity. We are certainly very supportive of exploring that. That has been identified in other states and jurisdictions. Western Australia was identified for the Department of Transport to review and identify opportunities. It did not identify an outcome. It just believed there needed to be further work. We certainly would support having a second class or a second category that provides for greater speed but also greater controls and restrictions around that category.

If we could have consistency of power and consistency of speed, they are probably the predominant ones that have come out. There has been interest in exploring registration for bikes, but the majority of responses to that have been negative. I believe there was also a call for that from the opposition in New South Wales on Monday or Tuesday. That is very problematic. Again, there are significant costs. The economic cost of implementing that would be excessive, there is no doubt about that, especially considering the return on investment given what the outcomes of that would be. That is something that has been explored. I believe the Western Australian government has identified more work to be reviewed on that, but as an industry we would certainly believe that would be extremely problematic if that were to go forward just because there would be minimal outcomes for a high expense. If appropriate I will pass to Stephen to allow him to continue.

Ms Weston: I would like to start by echoing Peter's sentiment about the proposed changes to EN15194. We would strongly advise the members here to not be lulled into a false sense of security around that announcement. There will be little change in Queensland and any other state as a result of that change. In our view it is really quite distracting rhetoric for all the reasons that Peter has raised. It is voluntary. We have a voluntary system now; look what we have. We are going to have a continuation of a voluntary system. The good actors will continue to behave well and the bad actors will continue to behave as they have been behaving. We echo Peter's sentiment on those changes.

Mr Coulter: The other issue with the Canberra communique is that it only reflects a small section of the market, which is pedelec bikes limited to 250 watts and 25 kilometres an hour. It does nothing for personal mobility devices where a lot of the issues are as well. If we are going to have import rules they need to cover the entire e-mobility category not just a sub segment of e-bikes.

Ms Weston: And we are seeing devices that look like bikes that are scooters so everybody is very confused about what is what.

Mr Coulter: We also have the issue that the communique does nothing about the million-plus devices and the more than one million lithium ion batteries that are already in Australian homes, offices and garages causing fires, causing crashes and causing deaths. There needs to be a coordinated policy about what happens to the existing fleet that is on the ground, not just about marginally shutting a door on imports that is not going to be effective because it is voluntary.

The other change since the last hearing is that we think there is the opportunity, particularly with the concentration of deaths amongst young people, to move to a learner's permit type approach for e-mobility. Part of the issue is that people have been playing on their screens until the social media ban came in last night—they have not grown up like we did riding bikes and scooters—then an e-bike comes along and they have no sense of the road rules because they have been caught up on their screens. They go out on roads, they do not know the road rules, they ride badly, plus they have overpowered illegal devices that Canberra is letting in. We think a commonsense approach, which some European countries have adopted, is to bring in a requirement that riders should have some form of licence. If they are 16 and above in Queensland they can apply for a learner's permit and we think a learner's permit is an appropriate minimum level for people of that age to have if they are going down the path of getting a car or motorbike licence as well.

What we have seen in Europe, and we have information on, is equivalent to a bike licence or an e-mobility licence which can be available, depending on the state's view, from as young as 12 where people go through a formal training process. It could be online training for up to four or five

hours where they have to learn the road rules, they learn about how to ride an e-bike safely and learn the safety conditions around lithium ion batteries so that when they do get onto a bike they have something that proves that they have at least the theoretical knowledge of the factors around that. We think an e-mobility licence from as young as 12 could be feasible. Right now you already have a learner's permit process in place so that is probably something that could be applied quite quickly for people who are at least 16 and then you would give the existing Queenslanders who do not have one a period of time to catch up to get that licence. It might be three months, for instance, to go through the process if they do not already have one.

Ms Weston: The distinction here is we are not suggesting 120 hours and all that comes with it. It is more the education aspect of it, not the physical parts, which will handle some of the issues.

Mr Coulter: To reinforce Andrew's point on the private use privilege, right now in Australia private use is seen as a privilege. People walk into a shop and even some retailers—not 99 Bikes—will do the wink, wink, 'Is this for private use?', and if they get the nod back they will let people unlock the device to a speed. The issue with private use is firstly the moment they ride it out of the store they are breaking the law. It is only for use on private land. We think that privilege should be totally removed and replaced with a permit. If someone really does have a case for a private use electric motorbike and they want to ride it on a farm out at Roma, let them prove it and apply for it. Have a process that allows them to apply for a private use permit where the process educates them that it is only for private use on their farm or on their private property and do not let them ride out of a store and break the law within seconds of buying the machine.

Ms Weston: And then police have a way of enforcing it because they will ask for the permit and either the permit exists or it does not.

Mr Coulter: More broadly, too, Queensland now has regulations in place that allow a lot of enforcement. It is good to have seen the blitzes that have occurred recently. Right now anything that does more than 25 kilometres an hour and anything that is throttle only is illegal and can be confiscated or impounded and the rider can be fined. It does not need new laws for that to happen. It is good to see that it is happening. Anybody claiming private use riding it in public is breaking the law which gives equal rights to fine them and to confiscate, impound and even destroy their device. The laws exist. It is difficult, but the laws already exist. They can be made much tighter, but the framework is there now to do a lot of enforcement that will send messages if it is done in blitzes so that people get the message.

CHAIR: Andrew, did you have anything you would like to add to that?

Mr Garnsworthy: I think reinforcing the point around the importation laws, echoing the need for actual review, compliance and penalties. I think without that not much changes. That would probably be the main point to reiterate.

Mr KEMPTON: Andrew and Peter, you talk about this two-tier system. I worry that that does not really solve the problem of modifying engines to make them go faster. It then creates more policing problems. If all e-bikes that had a 250-watt and a 25-kilometre-an-hour limit remained e-bikes and everything over that became an electric motorbike, and it really does not matter about the capacity or the speed, it is actually an illegal implement, is that not a simpler way of dealing with that issue?

Mr Garnsworthy: What we have seen in parts of Europe especially is that second category. There is a substantial difference between an electric motorbike, which is purely throttle and does not have any pedals and the practicality of some people still wanting to ride a bike, get exercise and get cars off the road. It could be a way of approaching it. It was probably only 12 months ago that the Queensland government rebate encouraged e-mobility—e-bikes and e-scooters—and if we are wanting to keep going down that pathway of there is significant environmental, health and transportation benefits of people riding bikes as opposed to encouraging more motorbikes, that is probably the point of difference there.

Mr KEMPTON: But it only changes the classification. Once that goes beyond a particular speed or capacity then it comes under a different category in terms of licensing and controls and regulations. It does not mean that you cannot have one, it just changes the status of it because it is going faster and it is more dangerous. Of course you would have the restriction of 16-year-olds perhaps subject to some other licensing. It just seems to me by having these different categories we are just compounding the problem.

Mr Garnsworthy: Ultimately if it is a simpler way of getting to the same result then we are open to that as being a sensible recommendation.

Mr Bourke: Further to Andrew's comments, what has been shown in Europe is these bikes are used specifically for extending the commute. It actually increases the level of what is still considered active transport because they must pedal to do it. They do have significantly more controls than what we are seeing in these products as we see them on the ground right now. Utilising the European model, they do have a form of registration, they do have an age limit, they do have locations which they are limited to—they cannot go on shared paths. They are, as Andrew said, able to interact with traffic at a more appropriate speed because the speed differential between the bikes and the vehicles is smaller, and it does encourage more people to transition to, as we say, e-mobility for the commute and that is pretty much the target that we are talking about. There is also a licensing component which does limit the desire for the people who are using it in ways that we do not appreciate at the moment not to use it. It does have that structure around it which does very much promote the commuting element and that is the specific market that that targets. It has been in Europe for, I would estimate, about 10 years so there is certainly a significant amount of evidence of how it is used, where it is used. There are certain countries, such as Switzerland, which are hillier where there is a much stronger market. Germany is a smaller market. It depends on the restrictions that are placed around it, but there is certainly support for it.

CHAIR: Stephen and Krystyna, do you have anything to add?

Mr Coulter: To add to that, in Europe the category of speed pedelecs comes into the same broad category as electric mopeds which are throttle only. It basically makes it an automobile or an automotive device that has to go through what is called the type approval in Europe. In Australia we have Australian Design Rules for different vehicle types. It needs to have a certificate of conformity to be a speed pedelec. It also needs to have a vehicle identification number like a car, like a motorbike. To the member who suggested it is like that, it really is just like that. If you have 25 now and you have brought in this category like Europe has it would just be like an electric motorbike or an e-moped where it needs design rules, it needs a VIN, it needs those sorts of elements that a car or a motorbike has.

Mr MELLISH: Thank you, Peter, for appearing again and Stephen and Krystyna. It is good to have you along. Andrew, I know you have been really active in this space so it is good to have you before the committee. Since we have started the inquiry, we have seen the New South Wales government finalise their inquiry and they have taken action. We have seen Western Australia actually start and conclude their six-month inquiry and come down with their recommendations. We have seen the federal government make some changes and I know we have heard some really big caveats around that today, which is good for the committee to know. Given the increasing number of incidents—I think we are up to about 14 deaths so far this year—as a committee do we have enough information to put some recommendations forward to take some action now or should we still be sitting and talking in March and April next year? That is a question to each of you.

CHAIR: Member for Aspley, that is a matter for the committee. It is not up to the witnesses to give us that advice. That is something that we will be discussing. Do you have another question?

Mr MELLISH: With respect, Chair, I am asking them if they think we should take action or—

CHAIR: Maybe the question should be: what other action can we take now? It is a matter for the committee to decide whether or not we are going to do things; it is not up to the witnesses.

Mr MELLISH: What action should we take now instead of waiting until next year?

Mr Bourke: Thank you for the clarification. To reiterate the point, obviously we cannot talk about the mechanics of this committee. You obviously have to go through that process or the Queensland government itself. From an industry perspective, we would certainly support action more rapidly. There have certainly been incidents on the ground. To reiterate that point, over the past two years I believe there have been four parliamentary inquiries that involved e-bikes, there have been seven individual state reviews, there have been three different reviews at a federal level with various elements through the Productivity Commission, through the NTC and through the CFFR—whatever that committee stands for. There has been a lot of work and a lot done in the background.

I obviously cannot talk to what you have been presented with. As individuals, you have to make that decision. It is a topic that has been reviewed and approached across the country so we would certainly support movement as rapidly as possible to achieve outcomes that we believe would be better for the consumer, for the industry and everybody involved. As the chair alluded to, it is something that we support but we have no influence in that discussion.

CHAIR: Stephen, Krystyna or Andrew, do you have anything to add?

Mr Coulter: In terms of things that could potentially be done sooner, we think mandating the standards for sale and use in Queensland. The standards exist. New South Wales, through Fair Trading, have already identified one way of doing that, which could be applied in Queensland relatively quickly. We think around learner's licence requirements, 16-plus would directly address the age issues that are being seen with children and, in the meantime, a 12-year-old plus one could be developed but that is going to take longer than applying a mechanism that is already in place. We think making private use a permit rather than a privilege could be something that could be done relatively quickly.

The other thing cannot be done overnight but we think action should be taken soon to start progressing on the path of looking at how digital verification can be used to prove a product's safety and compliance. Europe is doing this. It is happening across all product categories starting with lithium ion batteries from 2027. It just seems remarkable to us that, having worked in other industries where digital technologies have applied three-factor authentication to humans, when this technology exists on products why governments in Australia and the industry are resisting its application when it can solve the issues and make it very easy for the quality players to prove their credentials and incredibly hard for the bad actors to do the same. It is a really logical outcome, whether it comes from technologies that we are using or others. It is just a no-brainer, but there seems to be some government and industry resistance to taking the most commonsense approach.

CHAIR: That is why we are here, to have a very healthy conversation and we will get some great nation-leading outcomes. Do you have anything to add, Andrew?

Mr Garnsworthy: The main point for us is alignment of the standard from importation to point of sale. If we can get that clear, aligned at a federal level and across states and be clear in terms of that EN15194, then that is many steps forward. The second part, which does seem to be happening per discussion with Peter yesterday, is around the enforcement on the roads. I think a big number of fines have been issued on the Gold Coast. I think communication and that sort of proactivity will also be helpful in terms of pre-Christmas.

Mr JAMES: Stephen, further to what you were talking about, could you expand on the digital fingerprint software that you have developed? I presume that is what you are talking about.

Mr Coulter: We have not developed that technology. This is global technology that has been around for a number of years. There are tens of millions of products around the world that already have digital fingerprints. We have identified how it could be equally applied to e-mobility. It gives a unique mark on a product that cannot be counterfeited, unlike a QR code which is readily counterfeited. When you have these digital fingerprints, they are issued and they link back to production records and certification records that can instantly identify that this is an authentic device, the date of manufacture, its full life history, the certifications it has and if there has ever been a recall on the product it can flag that instantly as well.

In the last week, QBikes, which is a well-known quality brand, have had to issue a major recall not because they are a poor quality manufacturer but because one of their components proved not to have been manufactured with the same materials as it should. Because they are a quality manufacturer, they have a recall process in place and they have registered owners. A digital product passport takes that to a platform that every product has that makes it easy for regulators to control products and makes it easy for Fair Trading and others to recall products that are dangerous because it is a fingerprint that is linked to a product passport that enables all these things. It is not new technology; it is simply new to e-mobility.

Ms Weston: And it is right down to model level and device—

Mr Coulter: Serial number level.

Ms Weston:—so you know exactly what is legal and what is illegal. We have no harmonisation across Australia in terms of what is acceptable and what is not. It will reflect the rules in the land where it is being ridden or used and account for all the variations and specifications that each state currently has so that enforcement knows whether something is legal or illegal.

Mr Coulter: In Europe, every battery, whether it is a carbon battery, whether it is a lead-acid battery, whether it is lithium ion—every e-mobility battery—has to have a digital product passport by February 2027. Many manufacturers have already implemented that ahead of time because it was legislated in 2023. These digital product passports in Europe are applying to every product category. Other products are being added between 2027 and 2030. Every e-bike and every EPMD has to have a digital product passport by 2030 in Europe so we are not asking manufacturers to do anything that they do not already have to do for Europe. We are going to see other countries going the same way.

It is going to become like having three-factor authentication for your banking. This is just going to be the way products work in Australia. We are just laggards at the moment in recognising and implementing it.

Mr JAMES: In terms of the police using this technology, it either has a digital signature or it has not and if it has not then it is illegal; is that basically it?

Mr Coulter: Pretty much.

Ms Weston: They scan the fingerprint with their mobile phone and it has a digital twin in the cloud. It would bring up a photograph of the device that is allegedly registered. If, in the real world, it does not look like what has come up on the scan with all the information then you will know whether it is legal or illegal.

Mr Coulter: You will know all of its capacity. At the moment, a scanner could instantly say it complies with Queensland laws regarding motor size and speed limitations et cetera. If it has been monitored riding faster than its registered, manufactured manifest speed then you know it has been modified and you know it is illegal.

Ms Weston: The other important thing around all of this is that there is lots of talk about EN15194 but that is not the only standard that we need to be concerned about when we are talking about e-mobility. We need to be concerned about standards that impact standalone batteries and battery packs, chargers and PMDs that are very different from EN15194. There is an enormous amount of talk about those numbers and those letters, but there are multiple standards that we need to ensure are in place that will capture the entirety of the ecosystem that is being used and is on sale in Queensland and more broadly in Australia.

Mr Bourke: Regarding the digital passport, absolutely it is coming. There are no ifs, buts or maybes. It is coming to Europe. We are very supportive. Under the European Union, under their right to repair, there will be a requirement under GPSR—I believe those are the letters and I apologise if I have them wrong—that the replaceable components of all bikes will need to be marked with the manufacturer's details. There is not just going to be a single digital passport for the bike; there will actually be several markings across the bike required for batteries, for motors, for brakes, for cranks. I believe that is under the same timeframe. The digital passport is about electrical safety. This is about product safety as well, the right to repair element. There is actually a whole system coming in place as well. There are several elements to that.

To extend on Krystyna's point, absolutely standard EN15194 has currently been the leading e-bike standard in the world, which also has the leading battery standard in the world as a compulsory requirement. It 100 per cent is for bikes. It is not for scooters. It is for nothing else. One of the challenges across Australia is that there is no equivalent scooter standard that covers all elements of the bike. There are some very good scooter standards, and Stephen and Krystyna could talk to them, but there is no leading standard to cover all elements of the scooter or all elements of the PMD. That is one of the challenges for people on this side of the table to go through.

CHAIR: Stephen, you shook your head. Did you have something that you wanted to add?

Mr Coulter: I guess there are a couple of things. Around the world you have the EN standards, which are predominantly out of Europe, you have the UL standards, which predominantly come out of the US but are being also adopted in some other countries, and there are IEC standards. There are three big standard houses around the world and they are all at different points. They tend to leapfrog each other from time to time. We deal with some of the people on those committees and some of them are on multiple committees. Where these standards are actually going is that they are converging on the same things, which is really good for the world. Any of those standards are better than none. If you say that there is no conformity and the standards are different, yes, they are but even the weakest standard, from whichever one at the time is the weakest, is better than no standard in terms of safety.

Ms Weston: And authenticated and verified against that standard and not just a self-declared conformity, marking your own homework.

Mr Coulter: In our submission, we also referenced two reports done out of Europe by Transport Research Labs. Transport Research Labs are a UK-based consultancy that have been employed by both the UK government and the EU commission. They did very detailed reports into e-mobility—e-bikes, PMDs, Speed Pedelecs, the whole lot. They did a detailed analysis of those standards and identified weaknesses in EN15194 and the weaknesses in EN17128, which is the PMD one. They also identified the strengths in those and also the UL ones and what could be done to bring them together. There are some very detailed reports that we referenced if the committee wants to dig further but it is a lot of alphabet soup. Once you get in there it does your head in.

CHAIR: I read some of that last night.

Mr Coulter: The simple thing is that we need to mandate standards and they need to be digitally verified so it is proven that they actually exist and they are not just a lie.

CHAIR: Peter, you had something to add?

Mr Bourke: What Stephen has said is correct. IEC and UL are fantastic standards but they only cover the electrical. As an industry we would prefer to go down a single path. EN is a single whole mechanical and electrical. The second part to it is certainly not a short-term fix. As of October, there is now what is called an ISO, International Standard Organisation, working committee to align all of these standards under one banner. To take a slight sidestep, there is currently an ACCC review of the bicycle standard in Australia. They are proposing to adopt ISO 4210 parts 1 to 9. Part 10 of that is the e-bike standard. That is the one that is currently under review to align with EN and UL. We will hopefully—I would love to say three years but reality says five years—have a situation where we have as our bicycle mechanical standard ISO 4210 parts 1 to 9 and then the opportunity to adopt ISO 4210 part 10 as a universal, hopefully, standard that covers UL, IEC and EN all under a single international standards banner. That is our long-term aim as an industry. The reality is that is a five-year process. We need action before then and we support that, but that is our long-term aim that we would love to see.

CHAIR: That is great information. Thanks, Peter.

Mr KING: We have heard a lot of things. This committee has gone through a lot and we have a lot to go through yet. Hearing about the injuries and deaths we have had up until now and even hearing the evidence again today, would you support some sort of advertising campaign so the public are aware of what they are buying in the lead up to Christmas? Knowing that these things have been escalating in the some six months that we have been doing this inquiry, would you support some sort of advertising campaign in the lead-up to Christmas?

Mr Garnsworthy: From a 99 Bikes' perspective we 100 per cent would. We are partnering with the Queensland police around an educational campaign on the Gold Coast. In our stores we have point-of-sale material around posters, what is legal and what is not, stickers on bikes saying, 'Do not modify,' and communication on the website. We also have a significant database and reach from that perspective, if that was something that would be helpful from a customer education point of view. A lot of our education is focused on our consultant in-house training. Before selling any e-mobility products we have a mandatory course that needs to be completed. We have some controls within our business to educate as customers come in the door. However, there could be an opportunity to be more proactive with that message from both a business perspective and a media perspective.

Mr Bourke: Andrew can talk for 99 Bikes but universally across the industry there is no doubt we would support education. Whether we call it a promotion, education or communication campaign, there is universal support for that.

CHAIR: Thanks, Peter. There certainly is and it is something that the department is—

Mr KING: I wanted to add to that for a bit of background. In a previous parliament the member for Aspley and I were involved in an inquiry which reported in July 2020 into transport technology and where we were going. Uber were talking about flying taxis and everything like that. A very small part of it back then was personal mobility. In five years look what has happened. Thank you. I really appreciate it.

CHAIR: An issue that we have come across time and time again is the confusion. We have Transport and Main Roads coming in after this session. They will be able to outline some of the things that they are doing, but we appreciate the efforts that you are all making as well. My message to people is that at Christmas by a pedal or person-powered device and take all the guessing out of it. You will have a bit of fun and get some exercise. Certainly these things have a place, but we want to make it safe and get the changes right.

We heard from Palm Beach Currumbin State High School and about some of the experiences they have had and some of the lessons they have learnt about wanting to remove the anonymity of people riding bikes so that when people get on a bike they know that it is their bike or their e-mobility device and they are identifiable. In Cronulla in Sydney they saw a big change in culture when people were aware that they were riding a legal bike for a start and that they are identifiable. Do you have any suggestions for the committee about how that could be done?

Ms Weston: We are aware of one organisation that is already doing something along those lines working with the school system. I think they are called E-Bike Safety Australia. They are working down Cronulla way. They are using a number plate type system. I think if that was, over time, Brisbane

augmented with a digital product passport—they do not know whether the bike is safe or whether it is legal; they do not have any of the tools or skills to determine that. It is a numberplate type system that gives passers-by the ability to report them and it gives students the ability to park the bikes on the school grounds. There is work underway in that space. Ultimately, it would be really good to harness it all so that all the pieces came together, not just, 'Well, this bike looks okay and therefore we'll let it into the school grounds.' Over time we need to have a bit more of a robust system around all of that.

Mr Coulter: The form factor of bikes and particularly scooters and some of the smaller PMDs does not always lend themselves well to having a numberplate big enough that anybody can actually read it if it is going past them at 25 kilometres an hour. It is not an easy problem to solve. With some of the transport issues around Australia we looked at some solutions where people would have to prove that their device was safe to go on public transport and they would be issued with—

Ms Weston: A transit permit.

Mr Coulter:—a transit permit that would be attached probably as a sticker around their bike or scooter somewhere. Again, it would not have a visible number. It could be scanned to prove who owned it, but it would not be something that a passer-by could instantly see and write down to report to police.

Ms Weston: Going back to the digital product passport concept, with that technology you can connect devices to owners if they are pulled over for an enforcement issue. It is not a visible thing from the distance that we can go, 'Oh, here's the numberplate. Let's report that child to the school or to the police,' but there is a connection. The digital product passport does allow you to connect ownership and transfer ownership to devices.

Mr Coulter: If you look at the rental fleets like your Limes, they have numbers on them but they equally have GPS tracking. If an incident occurs, as you would be aware, they can go into their records and see who was renting that device at that location at that time, but that does not exist on privately owned vehicles.

CHAIR: Did you have anything to add, Peter or Andrew?

Mr Garnsworthy: It is about trying to understand what the problem is that we are trying to ultimately solve here. Having kids ride bikes, get off screens and ride to school is pretty good. If ultimately we can get to a point around having a safe and legal product, we should be encouraging it as opposed to having too many barriers, particularly around higher costs for people to get a legal product. If that is a barrier, then there are potentially other knock-on negative consequences. I think there is a fine line. For compliant legal e-bikes, if we can get that baseline through both importation and point of sale then hopefully that knocks the dangerous bikes out of the mix without actually discouraging kids riding bikes.

Mr Bourke: I will make a comment about the EBSA program out of Cronulla. They have reported a reduction in poor behaviour, but it has also increased confusion because the products they are registering are not road legal and the police have been issuing warnings to the people that have numberplates. The children/parents believe that their bikes are legal as they have now registered them and done the program. Police have actually visited the school and issued not official warnings but put notices on each bike and said, 'If you ride this again, you are eligible for up to a \$3,000 fine.' Any registration program like that, if it is not an official registration program, opens up the door for bigger problems because of the confusion it does create.

CHAIR: Andrew, with regard to the efforts the minister has been making around importation—I spoke to him yesterday and I confirmed that he is doing that—can you talk to the committee about the detail of that change that we are requiring at the federal level?

Mr Garnsworthy: Yes. Prior to 2021 there were quite clear requirements upon importing e-mobility products into Australia in terms of a self-declaration around compliance with standards. That was essentially removed three or four years ago and has recently been reinstated. Given that it is self-declaration and it has been clear for the last 12 months that illegal dangerous products have been brought into Australia under declarations that are potentially questionable in line with the standards, ultimately there is a lack of enforcement or action to stop that from happening. Unless there is a change there then ultimately the reinstatement of EN15194 for importations will not move the needle.

CHAIR: No. It has to be mandatory for sure and enforceable.

Mr KEMPTON: I need to clear this up because it is a critical issue and I want to be clear in my own mind. We have e-bikes, which are bicycles that you pedal that have an electric motor. We obviously have cars and we have motorbikes. If go-karts suddenly turned up on the streets with electric motors, that would not be tolerated for a moment. If we had an electrical bicycle—a pedal-assist bike and whatever we have in terms of wattage or speed or licensing—set that aside as it is good for getting people out and so on. If we had electric motorbikes, which is anything above that specification—you said that what we are talking about may limit sales—that are legal, so they have an ADR standard and there is registration and a licence, then that opens up opportunity. It does not close it. We are doing it with cars. We transitioned to cars really well. We are transitioning to electric motorbikes. We seem to be confusing the two. If we set e-bikes aside, the RACQ said, 'No problem. Leave it alone as it is.' If we look at the issue of what is an electric motorbike, which is a vehicle under the act, and then start dealing with these issues, I think it is going to be much simpler. I am trying to be clear about why we seem to be messing the two up so much.

Mr Bourke: There is definitely a very grey area in between, and we know that. As an example, an LMCT licence is required to sell a motor vehicle. I would love to say there are very clear definitions on whether you need a licence to sell a motorbike. You need a licence to sell a motorbike. Where we have a very grey area right now in between is are these overpowered bikes motorbikes? If they have pedals, are they not? You are correct. We actually need to make it black and white. That is probably the answer. That is a long-winded way of saying, 'We need to be black and white.' Whatever we decide—whether it is speed pedelec, whether it is pedelec, EPAC, electric motorbike—we actually have to make very black and white definitions. Whether it is you, me, the person selling it or the person using it, that is pretty much the outcome. Whatever that definition is, it has to be clear. This has crept up on us. As was alluded to, the member mentioned that five years ago it was such a minor element. It has crept up on us in five years and now we need to make it clear.

Mr KEMPTON: In five years time it will be many times worse.

Mr Coulter: We tend to agree with you. There is a framework now. If something goes less than 25 kilometres an hour it should be legal provided it meets safety and quality standards. We would also probably take a broader definition that there is use cases for throttle-only devices that go less than 25 kilometres an hour because that opens up more use cases for the elderly, for people with disabilities or for people who are working all day and relying on it for transport for their job. There are very high-quality and safe proven devices that are legal in most parts of the world other than in Australia that can actually perform that. We agree that you could have an under-25 category which is pedals, PMDs—some things get pedalled and some things do not. Then we have an above-25 category where road regulations and standards exist. Then you could look at how that could apply to speed pedelecs. Have a close look at Europe and how their speed pedelecs are actually regulated, requiring VIN codes, requiring type approval. That is what the member essentially covered.

Mr Garnsworthy: I will add to that. There are examples across other industries, whether it is drug selling through pharmacy or gun selling through licensed gun dealers, where there are solid controls, enforcement and clarity around distribution. We would fully advocate and support, if there are electric motorbikes, the selling of them through registered and licensed motorbike dealers. That is the place; that is where the controls are around following through with registration and that sort of thing.

Ms BUSH: Andrew or Peter, I am not sure how much you have been following the committee, but one of the strong themes of the evidence given to us has been around investment in active transport infrastructure, and that in fact some of the conflict is from too many devices on a cramped footpath and bikes being ridden on roads with no dedicated lanes. Something that comes to mind is a potential interim recommendation. Something that is on my mind as a direction we could follow would be publishing data. We have had some struggles with getting the data out of councils on the degree of funding they provide into active transport. Brisbane City Council refused to give us an answer on how much of their budget goes into active transport. How important is transparency in that space? How important do you think it is that we know how much funding is allocated to growing the active transport network across Queensland? How important is it and how important then is transparency around it, Andrew or Peter?

Mr Garnsworthy: I will have first go at that, Jonty. We feel investment in infrastructure is the single biggest thing that will enable more people to ride bikes in a safe way. We see other parts of Australia where there is not investment in infrastructure. It is dangerous, there are more accidents, and there is not that separation with pedestrians on paths. We see it as a massive and very important factor. If some transparency helps with actually making it happen, then that would be fantastic, from our perspective.

Mr Bourke: To extend on what Andrew said, there is no doubt infrastructure is key to unlocking the ability for all e-mobility to achieve its outcomes. There is no doubt about that. That is universal across Australia and across the world. We know that we have underinvested for many years, and I understand there is always a challenge between conflicting priorities, but if we want to achieve outcomes, whether it is reduction in emissions, increase in health benefits or increase in transport, we definitely need to be doing it. Transparency is very much part of it.

However, that also leads to a slightly bigger comment with regard to data in general. When it comes to e-mobility space, it is lacking significantly. We do not know how many people own these devices. We do not know how many people use these devices. We do not know whether or not they are legal. It is such a grey area when it comes to the data in general. With regard to the places they are riding them, they need to be safe and for it to be of quality. The products that they are on need to be safe and of quality. A much bigger question for me is the clarity in the whole mobility space in what is happening, when it is happening, where it is happening—all those elements—and that includes from federal government, state government, local government; it does not matter which level we are talking about. That is probably a bigger, broader answer.

Mr Coulter: By way of contrast, the federal government made a lot of noise about a year ago about allocating \$100 million to active transport over four years. That equated to roughly 25 cents per citizen per year. If you look at the Dutch, their annual budget is \$100 per citizen per year for active transport, so 400 times a year what Australia's federal government allocates under a special grant. There is no comparison. People just use the excuse, 'We are not the Netherlands,' and we are clearly not, but they were in our situation in 1970 and it is long-term planning, investment and prioritisation that has got them to where they are.

Ms BUSH: Good point.

CHAIR: Are there any international examples where identification of bikes or e-bikes or what have you is, in your experience, promising, Andrew?

Mr Garnsworthy: More in the speed pedelec categories in Europe, I would say. They are 10 years down the path of having that identification. There are many registration plates on those faster bicycles, and they have not gone down the path of needing that sort of identification for standard e-bikes.

Mr Bourke: It has been tested around the world and it has been actually rejected in general. Switzerland introduced it, I believe, in 2019 and threw it out in 2021—I believe they were the dates. Japan has a slight mandatory registration of an engraving number, but that is purely for theft management. It has nothing to do with management. I believe China is the only place that is really pushing for the registration of bikes, if you want to go down that path, but in general across the world, e-bikes have been treated the same as non-e-bikes in terms of the registration.

Ms Weston: I think it depends on whether we are talking about e-bikes or PMDs, and the experience varies around the world. Singapore, for example, has quite a strict system for scooters and for other PMDs. I echo Peter's comments that Japan has gone very strongly down the safety path. I was just in conversations with the share operators. They have had to go through a very strict safety regime to get their devices registered and legal in Japan. Of course, we have already spoken about Germany. Often it is correlated to requiring insurance and like registration, but the experience varies in different jurisdictions and across different classes of devices.

CHAIR: The more we go into it, the more complex it is. The simplest thing is if it has an 'e' in it, it is a challenge for us.

Mr MELLISH: Given what we have heard in the testimony today and indeed over recent weeks, I move that the committee resolve to provide an interim report to the parliament before 24 December this year.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Aspley. We will deal with that in a private session. Gentlemen and lady, the member for Aspley is entitled to move a motion, but we will not be dealing with that in the public session, so unfortunately that behaviour means that the committee members will go to another location to deal with that matter. We will be back very shortly.

Proceedings suspended from 10.22 am to 10.24 am.

CHAIR: Thank you for your patience. Do you have a question, member for Kurwongbah?

Mr KING: I do. There has been a bit of confusion around electric vehicles being cars with voltages and whether or not you need an electrical licence for the ability to immobilise. I wanted to clarify the voltages of e-mobility devices that we are talking about, that they are all under 120 volts DC, therefore an electrical licence is not required, whereas you do for cars which are 400 or 350. I wanted clarification of the actual voltages used in these devices.

Mr Bourke: I cannot talk for the PMDs or the scooters, but certainly from the perspective of a bike, if we are talking road legal and compliant—and, of course, we always have to clarify that point—what we are talking about is under the limit. Of course, with regard to those that are not necessarily brought in legally or by other means, we cannot talk to those.

Mr JAMES: My question is for everyone to comment on. We have heard a lot of good ideas over the course of the committee hearings, but in terms of priorities, the first challenge I would like you to comment on is stopping importation of the illegal products at a federal level. Would that be correct?

Mr Bourke: Certainly from an industry perspective, 100 per cent. That is our immediate focus. Of course, that will not have an immediate on-the-ground outcome, there is no doubt about that. Even though we might say it is our No. 1 priority, it is certainly not in isolation because on-the-ground activity must follow at the same time.

Mr Coulter: Our position is that that is imperative. We have written to both Catherine King and to Jim Chalmers on this. Jim now has digital verification for product safety across all categories under his brief. We received a letter back from him saying they would not be doing importation, handballing it back to Catherine King who has handballed it back to the states. So, nothing will happen quickly at a federal level. We think the quickest actions can be undertaken by states by mandating standards for sale and use and doing enforcement.

Mr Garnsworthy: If importation goes with enforcement, compliance and penalties, we would agree with that. Then we have a similar point with Stephen around the point of sale.

CHAIR: With regard to the purchase of devices. I am wondering whether we should bring in a regime of identifying, with a driver's licence or learner's permit, the purchase of an e-device at point of sale so that we can actually identify who owns that device. Do you think that is something that you would be able to have capacity to deal with easily through your retail outlet?

Mr Garnsworthy: For every bicycle purchased from 99 Bikes, we record the serial number, the consultant who has checked the bike from a safety perspective and handed that bike over to the customer with a record in our point-of-sale and ERP systems. We have that now.

CHAIR: It would be a simple matter of recording a driver's licence or something to that vehicle?

Mr Garnsworthy: Yes.

Mr Bourke: I would like to extend on that. 99 Bikes is one of the largest and probably the leading retail business in Australia. One of the challenges is that very likely they will have the best system. I cannot guarantee that the remaining retailers—this is not disparaging of a number of retailers—will have the same level of record keeping. This would be an administrative process for them that would be new. We believe they should be keeping this information, but I cannot guarantee that they would be. The second component of that is in that element, you are introducing an age limit on who can buy it. If a 15-year-old does wish to buy an e-bike which is 100 per cent legal at the moment, they will not have a licence, so that actually extends to the age limit on purchasing a bike which is obviously another conversation to have as well. I reiterate that not all businesses will have the record keeping that 99 Bikes will have.

CHAIR: I appreciate that, Peter. Time for this session has now expired. There are no questions to be taken on notice, so no homework for everybody to do. Thank you for the information you have provided to the committee. There is maturity of thinking around these things and we are gaining clarity around standards and design. We are trying to overlay a simple system to be able to get the best safety outcomes for Queenslanders. Certainly, as chair of the committee, I want to make sure we get this right and set the standard. Thank you very much for appearing today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters, broadcast staff and secretariat staff. A transcript of today's hearing will be available on the committee's webpage in due course.

The committee adjourned at 10.29 am.