



# **STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE**

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

**Staff present:**

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary  
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## **PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO E-MOBILITY SAFETY AND USE IN QUEENSLAND**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Monday, 18 August 2025**

**Townsville**

## MONDAY, 18 AUGUST 2025

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### **The committee met at 9.32 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; and Mr Shane King, member for Kurwongbah.

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 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 mobiles phones off or put them on 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 some brief comments to the committee in the last session of the hearing. I note that allocated speaking opportunities are limited and we ask that each participant keep their contributions to about three minutes.

I now welcome Adam Baillie, the member for Townsville, to give a quick welcome on behalf of himself, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Thuringowa.

**Mr BAILLIE:** Thank you, Chair. I would like to acknowledge my colleagues Natalie Marr, the member for Thuringowa, and Janelle Poole, the member for Mundingburra. I would like to thank the committee for making the time to come up to Townsville and hear from our community about the impact of e-mobility devices including e-scooters. I welcome the committee and I also welcome the Parliamentary Services staff and Hansard. This would not happen without their assistance, so we thank you all for making your way to Townsville.

I just wanted to say at the outset how much this issue could impact our region. Townsville is a growing city. With Magnetic Island being very much a tourist destination and The Strand obviously being a big tourist destination, the use of e-mobility devices is growing. We are seeing it not just in the hire space but also in the ownership space. We have seen some tragic events unfold here in recent times with a couple of fatalities unfortunately and multiple injuries. There are flow-on effects.

I think the committee has a big job ahead of it trying to find the right balance between providing people with the opportunity to get around in a fast, efficient and effective manner and providing people with safety and minimising the other impacts it has on our services such as the ambulance service, the hospital service and the police service.

Thank you so much for making the time to come to Townsville to hear from our residents in our community. We wish you a safe journey home.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Adam. We appreciate it.

### **NITSCHKE, Ms Kimberley, General Manager, Property, Fleet and Emergency Management, Townsville City Council**

**CHAIR:** I now welcome Ms Kimberley Nitschke. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before the committee has questions for you?

**Ms Nitschke:** I am here today to present the position and the initiatives of the Townsville City Council regarding the use and management of e-mobility devices within our community. As one of the fastest growing cities in Queensland, Townsville faces unique challenges in meeting the transport needs of our residents, especially given the limitations of our public transport infrastructure.

In our city, with a population of approximately 200,000 people and a geographical spread that covers both urban and suburban areas, mobility solutions are not a luxury but a necessity. Over the past year Townsville has recorded more than 600,000 trips on hireable e-mobility devices alone—an impressive number which positions our city among the highest per capita users of these devices within Australia. This figure does not include privately owned devices for which usage data is not recorded, meaning the true total is significantly higher. These devices provide an affordable, convenient and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional transport, particularly for those in areas poorly serviced by public transport. However, we do recognise the risks posed by the use of e-mobility devices, particularly when they are misused or operated without proper safeguards.

While public hireable devices are subject to stringent controls such as speed limits of 12 kilometres per hour in certain high traffic areas like The Strand and Flinders Street and a speed limit of 25 kilometres per hour in other areas, geofencing to avoid sensitive locations and mandatory helmets and reflectors, privately owned devices are not similarly regulated. The risks associated with privately owned e-mobility devices are significant as they often lack speed limitations and safety features, leaving riders and the community exposed to potential harm.

In Townsville alone, emergency services have responded to over 200 e-mobility related incidents in the past 12 months. While 85 of these were related to hired devices, over 140, or over 60 per cent, of these incidents were involving privately owned devices. These incidents ranged from minor falls to more serious collisions involving pedestrians and vehicles. Analysis of Queensland Health data shows that hospital emergency departments experience peak presentations between 2 pm and 2 am on Friday and Saturday nights often linked to alcohol consumption and unsafe riding behaviour.

In response, council has worked with service providers to implement no-ride zones and reduce speed limits within the city's safe night precinct and known party hotspots during these high-risk periods, significantly reducing the likelihood of late-night accidents. Importantly, when compared against more than the 600,000 recorded hireable trips, the proportion of incidents with these devices is extremely small—less than 0.015 per cent—demonstrating that with proper safeguards, e-mobility can remain a safe and reliable transport option.

While the responsibility for regulating private devices does not fall within the local government's remit, Townsville City Council is committed to working closely with the state government to advocate for stronger regulations that address speed control, rider behaviour and the safety of private devices. Local governments such as ours are at the front line in managing the consequences of these devices on public safety but we are not equipped to enforce all the necessary regulatory frameworks.

Council is actively addressing several other challenges that have come to light, particularly the use of e-mobility device parking and the clutter caused by incorrectly parked scooters and bikes. We are currently rolling out designated parking areas in key high-traffic locations such as The Strand to promote responsible parking habits and reduce the impact on pedestrian accessible and aesthetics. Our aim is to ensure that these devices are integrated into the urban fabric in a way that is both safe and convenient for all members of the community.

Furthermore, council is exploring new opportunities such as geofenced areas for device use to improve access to important destinations. One such initiative that shows potential is the extension of hireable devices to connect the James Cook University precinct with the surrounding areas like shopping, dining and entertainment hubs. This will provide greater connectivity for students, staff and residents and reduce reliance on cars, thus contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable city.

As part of our commitment to safety and education, we work closely with our contracted e-mobility providers to run community engagement programs that educate users about safe and responsible riding. Our expectation of the service providers include strict compliance with safety rules, with penalties in place for users who fail to adhere to these regulations. We have also embedded safety technologies in the devices themselves such as smart sensor helmets, pedestrian detection and path detection to reduce the likelihood of accidents and injuries.

It is crucial to note that, while there are calls from some members of community for a ban on e-mobility devices, the consequences of such actions would be far-reaching. Banning these devices would not only undermine the environmental and transport benefits they provide but also place additional pressure on the already overstretched transport infrastructure contributing to increased traffic congestion and limited parking options within the CBD.

Townsville City Council's E-Mobility Device Hire Scheme Policy is guided by five key principles: safety, accessibility, mobility, agility and infrastructure. These pillars reflect our commitment to community wellbeing and our responsibilities as managers of local roads. Rather than restricting

access, council is focused on a more balanced approach—one that ensures safety through innovation, promotes accessibility and acknowledges the environmental benefits of e-mobility. Our efforts to integrate these devices into our city's transport network are intended to improve connectivity and sustainability, offering a practical solution to transport challenges in areas where other forms of public transport are not viable.

In closing, I urge the inquiry to recognise that issues related to e-mobility devices are multifaceted and require collaboration between local and state governments. Townsville City Council is committed to continuing to work towards creating a safer, more accessible and sustainable transport system for our residents. We believe that with the right balance of regulation, innovation and community engagement we can maximise the benefits of e-mobility while minimising its risks.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Kimberley. That is a very thoughtful presentation. I will go to the deputy chair for the first question.

**Ms BUSH:** Kimberley, thank you so much for coming along today. For context, this is our fourth or fifth public hearing that we have had in different locations. Some of the issues that have been coming up are around the shared e-mobility devices, the ones that are privately held and then the growing use of electric motorbikes essentially. They are the themes that are coming up. My first question is to drill into the shared lease e-mobility scooters particularly. I am trying to understand the relationship between those service providers and council. How does it actually work? Do they approach you and ask for approval to service an area? Talk me through that approval process.

**Ms Nitschke:** Basically it starts with a tender process. We would go out and ask for expressions of interest, realising that these devices are needed throughout the community. We have concluded a tender process in the last six months or so. Basically we ask for providers to come forward and put their best case forward as to what options they provide in terms of devices, provide us information on safety, innovations and technologies. From there, we would make a decision on the operators we think are a best fit for our city. We then go through a negotiation process with them to enter into a contractual arrangement to allow these providers to offer these devices throughout the city. As part of that we do have certain geofenced areas. We have conditions with parking and conditions with speed. There are also heavily set key performance indicators within the contract in terms of responsiveness, safety and incident reporting so that we can keep a close circle around all of those factors.

**Ms BUSH:** You do prescribed conditions as part of the tender process around areas they cannot go, helmet use, speed controls?

**Ms Nitschke:** Yes.

**Ms BUSH:** What compliance do you then do? I recognise that you mentioned you are not the regulator and the police are, but as a contractor you do have an obligation to audit that. What do you do there?

**Ms Nitschke:** One hundred per cent. As I said, this is a new contract; it only started on 1 July. Moving forward, there will be regular performance meetings. Any sort of issues or complaints that are escalated to us from members of the community we escalate immediately to the operators. There is a responsiveness schedule set in the contract that demonstrates that the operators do have to respond within a certain timeframe, depending on the incident or the feedback we have received from the community.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Thank you, Kimberley. It was an excellent submission. There is a lot of talk about the negative side of e-mobility, but you talked about the positive side as well. Have you been able to evaluate in any way the social, economic or environmental benefit of e-mobility devices?

**Ms Nitschke:** With regard to benefits, especially with the new operators we have at the moment offering the range of devices, it is really promoting inclusivity for a wide range of users. For example, Ario is one of our contracted providers. They offer an e-bike now that allows for longer journeys, and they offer a seated option as well which really opens up the demographic of people to use these devices. From a sustainability point of view, the fewer cars on our roads, the less emissions. We are doing good things there. I think there is a lot of congestion in the CBD and Strand area in terms of car parking and things like that. Having these devices available really opens that up and gives people a different option to get from A to B.

**Mr KEMPTON:** It might be a bit early to actually quantify that in any real terms?

**Ms Nitschke:** At this point, yes.

**Mr KEMPTON:** In terms of your stats, have you been able to distinguish between private, lawful and unlawful use and types of devices in terms of injuries and accidents? Are the totally unlawful ones more likely to be involved? Do you have any numbers around that?

**Ms Nitschke:** Not at this point in time. We only collect the data that is related to our contracted providers in terms of hireable devices. We do not have access to data on privately owned devices at this point in time.

**Mr KING:** You had some stats there about the 200 incidents, but over 50 per cent of them were private and you have no control over that, I understand.

**Ms Nitschke:** Correct.

**Mr KING:** I am interested in the helmets and PPE. How do you communicate the good and bad behaviour to counteract the negative perception of these things in what does work? Does council have a plan to communicate that as in 'Heroes wear helmets' or something like that? The second part of the question: obviously money is being made out of it; does that then go back into safety promotion?

**Ms Nitschke:** With regard to the first part, absolutely. We work in collaboration with our providers, Ario and Neuron. There will be some more engagement going out to the community in the coming months. We wanted to get the contract in place first and get everything running smoothly. Ario has already done some community engagement activities in terms of safety and expectations of rider behaviours. Now we are settled into the contract and things are flowing along nicely, we will work with the providers to get some further engagement out to the community. Sorry, can you repeat the second part of the question?

**Mr KING:** If there is any money being made out of them, does that then go back into the promotion of safety with scooters?

**Ms Nitschke:** Absolutely. We are also looking at investing in some designated parking infrastructure, especially along The Strand and places like that where devices are heavily used. It is a beautiful place. We do not want scooters left anywhere; we want to make sure they are parked in designated spots. We are working with the providers at the moment to determine where the best locations are along The Strand and those high-peak areas to put in some designated parking infrastructure for that. We are also looking at investment in our active transport network and obviously further engagement with the community as well.

**Mr KING:** It is such a large area. How far does the life of the battery stretch? Is it just the city centre basically?

**Ms Nitschke:** No, there are pockets of suburbia as well.

**Mr JAMES:** Kimberley, you made a great submission. We are hearing the same issues coming up generally everywhere. You mentioned incident reporting. You are collecting details and stats on all the incidents?

**Ms Nitschke:** Correct.

**Mr JAMES:** Is that between you and the Ambulance Service, for example, and the operators?

**Ms Nitschke:** The incident reporting we are collecting at the moment is with the operators, in response to our contractual obligations with the operators. That is for our hired devices only. Any incidents we are seeing reported directly through the operators' reporting obligations. Obviously serious incidents are reported to us immediately and there is a threshold of reporting timelines for the rest. We have a good relationship with Queensland Health and we work with them to get further information on incidents and things like that to try to help us inform decisions moving forward.

**Mr JAMES:** Does that pick up on age differences—details of accidents for different ages?

**Ms Nitschke:** It does. Generally, a lot of it is related, as I mentioned, to Friday and Saturday nights, obviously after people have been out enjoying festivities in the city or wherever and then trying to jump on a scooter to head home. A lot of that data we are seeing from Queensland Health is not divided into hireable versus private, so we are not able to delineate further as to which devices actually contribute to those incidents.

**Ms BUSH:** Picking up on the member for Kurwongbah's questions to you, Kimberley, you probably cannot tell us the sum that you are receiving from these service providers. I am assuming that is commercial-in-confidence?

**Ms Nitschke:** Correct.

**Ms BUSH:** Can you tell us then the percentage of that that is reinvested into active transport?

**Ms Nitschke:** I will have to take that on notice and get back to you, if that is okay.

**Ms BUSH:** That is fine. Perhaps if you could also take on notice the percentage of the total transport budget that council allocates to active transport and to public transport as a breakdown that would be great, too.

**Ms Nitschke:** I will take that on notice, thank you.

**Ms BUSH:** Perfect, thank you.

**CHAIR:** Kimberley, your submission and opening remarks were very comprehensive. Firstly, is the strategy that you talked about in a public-facing document? Is that a public source?

**Ms Nitschke:** Our policy?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Ms Nitschke:** Yes, it is. It is available on council's website.

**CHAIR:** It sounds to me like you have had a lot of experience with these things because of the detail of it. Have you done joint operations with different stakeholders, ranging from police through to Health and what have you?

**Ms Nitschke:** We have had some early discussions with Queensland Police, with Transport and Main Roads and with Queensland Ambulance Service. We work together to gather a lot of data. In the tender process and in generating the contract, we also sought feedback from other councils. Brisbane City Council was able to provide a lot of valuable information in terms of contractual obligations and requirements that enabled us to help shape our contractual obligations to make sure we have all of our bases covered and we have the best foot forward for the community.

**CHAIR:** Have the Chamber of Commerce or Townsville Enterprise been involved in those conversations as well?

**Ms Nitschke:** I will have to take that on notice and get back to you on that. There are obviously a lot of discussions with the CBD members, Chamber of Commerce being one of them, because obviously we see a lot of activity in the CBD in terms of antisocial behaviour and e-scooters and e-mobility, and there is a wide range of challenges that we are working with them on.

**Mr KING:** I will return to the technical side of helmets. I think you said there is geofencing in place to stop them from going into the wrong areas. Is there a helmet lock? We have heard that some entities are using AI to actually make sure users are wearing the helmets or the device stops. Do you have any technology or are you looking at technology? I am really concerned about people not wearing helmets, that they are given every opportunity to wear one but they do not and then the incidents that come from that.

**Ms Nitschke:** Yes, absolutely. Adam from Ario, who is up next, will have a lot of information about the tech they provide for their helmets. There is RFID technology and certain penalties associated with not utilising helmets and not returning them. I might let him answer that question. He knows more about the technicalities than I do.

**Mr KING:** Not a problem.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Obviously we are going to ultimately make recommendations. How successful they are will depend a lot upon collecting information. Some of the questions asked of you before really start to get down to the nitty-gritty. How would you recommend that that information about incidents after collection is recorded and who does it? It would seem to me to be done on a statewide basis. Is that through hospitals or councils? How would you recommend that be done?

**Ms Nitschke:** It is probably something that needs to be done more on the state level in terms of emergency services reporting, rather than local councils. I think the key thing that we are not seeing at the moment is the breakdown of incident types in terms of what has contributed to a hired device versus a privately owned device. We do see a little bit of that data. In part of the submission I gave earlier, there were some high-level statistics. However, it would be good to see a breakdown as to some stringent information collection on whether a helmet was worn, was it a publicly hired scooter or a privately owned scooter and really trying to delve into those key factors that would help initiate some decisions.

**Mr KEMPTON:** That is the purpose of the question. Without that, we do not know what works.

**Ms Nitschke:** One hundred per cent.

**Mr KEMPTON:** It might be too burdensome for emergency services to collect, collate and distribute that information. Would it come back to the local authorities perhaps?

**Ms Nitschke:** Perhaps, yes. For example, Queensland Health is already collecting the data on incident types. I think a further breakdown in the type of information they are gathering would be a great first step in informing some decisions. They are already collecting data anyway. If there were just a couple of extra questions asked at the time of gathering the data, it would give us a lot more information.

**Ms BUSH:** Picking up on the member for Cook's point that we will ultimately make a series of recommendations—and I am not going to foreshadow that; I am not going to give you a hypothetical, so I will try to think about how to frame my question—I am interested in the capabilities of council now. If recommendations were to come out that applied more obligation on council to do differentiated lanes for pedestrians, bikes and scooters, better signage and better communication, what kind of capacity do you have in your team to deliver that, and what kind of budget do you have? Would you need more budget from the state government to roll that out?

**Ms Nitschke:** The short answer is I think we would definitely need more budget to be able to do those things. It depends on the gravity of what we are looking at here. We already have designated funding put aside for parking infrastructure and safety measures in terms of signage, community engagement and things like that. If we are looking at designated lanes on roads and matters like that, that is obviously a much larger scale initiative we would be looking at. In order to do that, we would probably need assistance from the state. There are little things, such as the parking I mentioned, that we are working on already anyway, but I think the larger we go with these things, obviously the more support we will need from a state level.

**Ms BUSH:** Current matters, like fixing up footpaths so they do not have as many bumps, and some of the road signage might be okay, but to deliver anything new, you would need extra resources?

**Ms Nitschke:** Potentially, yes. If they are little fixes, then it is something we can probably incorporate into our BAU; however, for larger scale things we will definitely need support.

**Mr JAMES:** With regard to infrastructure, is council looking, as part of their policy, at where they could potentially fix the infrastructure, like dedicated bikeways, e-scooter ways, that sort of thing for future funding?

**Ms Nitschke:** I would have to take that on notice. That falls slightly outside of the department I look after, so I will take that on notice and get back to you, if that is okay.

**CHAIR:** Kimberley, just so you know, we have some good data from the public health networks right across the state. I just do not have the Townsville data in my possession. Thank you so very much for your submission. I am interested to know how complaints are managed within the council, particularly around private hire as opposed to public hire. If you receive a complaint about private use, do you refer that to the police or is there something else you do with them?

**Ms Nitschke:** We do refer to police. We acknowledge their complaint. If there is more than one facet to the complaint regarding things that council can control, obviously we would address those. If it is a generalised complaint regarding usage of a private scooter or privately owned scooters—plural—that is something that we do refer to Queensland Police Service as we do not have any authority to enforce any action over those. In terms of the hired devices, every complaint that comes through is generally sent to me and I do address those as we come in and work with the providers on any sort of actions that are required as part of that.

**Mr KING:** I have asked this question at every session and I do not mean to cause offence to anybody. I preface my question with that because it depends where you are and we have been on the Sunshine Coast. Do you have any data on mobility devices for aged people and people with a disability—and I know they are not hired devices. We have heard anecdotally that there are incidents with them tipping, speeding and interacting with the much faster scooters and those sorts of devices. Is there any data on that or is that a problem that you see? I am not asking for an opinion.

**Ms Nitschke:** It is not a problem that I have seen individually raised and it is not something that we collect data on at the moment. There is definitely an opportunity there though.

**Mr KING:** Mobility scooters do cover those as well and we want to be broad ranging. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Thank you, Chair, for your indulgence.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. The time for this session has now ended. There are a couple of questions that you agreed to take on notice. If we could get the answers to those by Monday, 1 September, that would be great. If you have any doubts about those questions, just reach out to the secretariat and we will get clarification for you.

**Ms Nitschke:** Absolutely.

**WILLDIN, Mr Stephen, Officer in Charge, Burdell Station, Queensland Ambulance Service**

**CHAIR:** Thank you for the service you provide to our community and to your colleagues. Would you like to make an opening statement and then the committee will have some questions for you?

**Mr Willdin:** Thank you. I definitely have not prepared as well as Kimberley. I am speaking on behalf of Queensland Ambulance Service and personally as I have been impacted by an e-scooter incident myself with significant facial injuries. That was one of the hired devices. From the Queensland Ambulance Service perspective, I do not have any data or statistics; it is more observations and information that I have gathered. We do see quite a few incidents around Townsville, particularly in the city area, with regard to these devices, both hired and privately owned devices. In terms of the incidents we do see, even with the hired devices with the speed limiting of 12 kilometres per hour and the personal devices that can potentially go up to 100 kilometres an hour, we are witnessing people not wearing protective equipment. That increases their risk of significant injuries. From that perspective, that provides us with a lot of work.

As I was driving in to this inquiry there was an incident with an e-scooter versus a vehicle, although the injury was very minor. We have had a couple of fatalities within the last 12 months with regard to e-scooters and we have had one fatality in the last 12 months with regard to a mobility device in Townsville. That is all I can offer at this stage.

**CHAIR:** I will go to the deputy chair.

**Ms BUSH:** Thanks, Stephen, for turning up and for presenting. I thought you did a fabulous job, so well done. We heard in Brisbane from the Jamieson Trauma Institute and they were talking about the need for better data collection, that we are not even attaching the right tags to incidents so we do not really know the actual number of injuries. Do you have a view on that? When you go back and write that report, how do you code it? Do you see a gap or an opportunity to do better there so we can get better data on that?

**Mr Willdin:** There is definitely an opportunity to increase our data acquisition. I am unsure at the moment whether we separate traffic accidents with regards to e-scooters or mobility devices, but we do capture data such as whether the patient is wearing a helmet. That information is captured on what we call an ambulance report form. That information is captured, but in terms of how we actually break that down if it is a mobility device or a vehicle—I am not sure if that is captured.

**Ms BUSH:** Is that data capture a local arrangement or is it statewide?

**Mr Willdin:** That is statewide.

**Mr JAMES:** I had an opportunity in the last month to travel along with an ambulance and see exactly what happens with ambulance ramping—two hours in the hospital hallway. Is there an opportunity for the ambulance officers to collect a bit more data with an iPad while they are there, because the emergency departments are stretched and everybody else is stretched? Is that an opportunity to try to get this better data?

**Mr Willdin:** The data that is captured is captured on an individual basis. If we attend an incident that is where that data is actually captured. It will be only the people who attend that incident, so it would be a crew who would get that data. No, I would say we would not be able to do that. I know Queensland Health do capture that data when we bring patients in and they have some information around that. With regard to the ambulance ramping, there is probably not the opportunity to capture that data at that time.

**Mr KING:** My question is probably more for another emergency service, more the Fire Department, but you work closely together. It is around the charging of some of these imported devices and the fires they can create. Do you see much of an incidence—it would be a pretty serious fire if you guys were called—from talking amongst your colleagues?

**Mr Willdin:** I could not comment on Queensland Fire Department—but it is lithium batteries. It is not just e-devices; it is lithium batteries altogether.

**Mr KING:** It is the overcharging of them. I just wanted to ask in case you could—

**Mr Willdin:** No, I could not comment on that.

**CHAIR:** We received some horrific evidence from the Queensland Fire Department with regard to some of those things.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Are you able to differentiate across the demographic of who you are picking up the most? Is it young people at night? Is there any particular age group?



**Mr Willdin:** That data is captured and the times are captured, but I could not provide that information at this time.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Do you want to take that on notice?

**Mr Willdin:** I can take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** Stephen, thank you very much for your service. Do you have some sense of the injuries sustained from the personal devices versus the hire devices from your experience? Without quantifying it specifically, could you give the committee evidence about that?

**Mr Willdin:** We do not distinguish whether it is a hired device or a personal device, so the injuries we get are across the range. We do not collect that data.

**CHAIR:** As a member of the community here, do you think that people have a good understanding of what is actually a legal device and what is an illegal device?

**Mr Willdin:** This is my personal opinion; I would say no.

**CHAIR:** Do you have any basis for that? Is that from talking to people?

**Mr Willdin:** Just general observations and information they have provided and working within the community and just general discussions with patients. They would indicate that they have no understanding of that.

**Ms BUSH:** I have no questions, but I do want to acknowledge that it is Road Safety Week this week. I want to thank you for your work. I hope this week is a good week for you.

**Mr Willdin:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Stephen, thank you very much. You have got off with some very good questions and you have answered them very well. You should be proud of the submission you have made.

**Mr Willdin:** Thank you.

**PRICE, Mr Mitchell, Head of Government Relations, Ario**

**ROSSETTO, Mr Adam, General Manager, Ario**

**CHAIR:** Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Mr Rossetto:** Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today before you. I would like to begin by formally recognising the state of Queensland's leadership in tackling the challenge that is the rising rate of accidents and injuries related to e-mobility. Having written directly to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Transport imploring them to apply tighter regulatory controls to improve the safety of PMDs across our communities, we appear here today with the hope of working with you to develop safer streets and footpaths for our cities and towns.

The safety challenges around e-mobility are many and complex. Lack of national regulation allows for myriad devices to enter our country with noncompliant design features whether they be oversized wheels, adjustable speed controls or structural limitations that invite accidents and injury. We must also acknowledge that e-mobility is providing our communities with a viable transport alternative, one that is growing in popularity and usage, aligns with environmental and sustainability objectives, and creates jobs and cash flow for our local economies. What to do?

Our journey began with one question: what will it take to make e-mobility safer? We established Ario with the specific purpose of answering that challenge by developing an e-scooter that tackles the industry's most critical safety issues. To achieve this, we built a business that unites leading designers, engineers, executives and operators and asked them a defining question: what features must an e-scooter have to provide both riders and the community with a safe, accessible and community first service? For the purposes of this hearing I will focus on three core changes that we have implemented that we believe must become the industry norm.

First of all, every Ario comes with a helmet locked to the device. You cannot expect a rider to wear a helmet if one is not available. More importantly, Ario has introduced a helmet with an inbuilt sensor that detects if it is being worn—the first of its kind in the world. If an Ario helmet is not worn at the start of a ride or if it is removed during a ride, then the vehicle will slow down and stop. We are piloting this technology today only eight kilometres from this table on Magnetic Island and hope to roll it out nationally in the very near future. This feature alone will save lives and should—in fact, must—become the base standard for all shared e-mobility devices in Australia.

Secondly, our devices are fitted with four handlebar mounted cameras and sensors that detect pedestrians in real time. The system automatically identifies people ahead, issues an acoustic warning and slows the device in areas of high pedestrian activity. These cameras also determine whether the device is being ridden on a footpath or a road, adjusting speed in real time to comply with state regulations. The reality is such that too many accidents occur when riders travel at unsafe speeds, putting both themselves and others at risk.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, Ario is not a toy. Our vehicles with their safety and technology features are designed to be used by all community members. Ario's design with three wheels provides a safer, more stable riding platform and is accessible to a wider demographic. Its safety features support riders who value safety and respect their community while discouraging those who might otherwise cause nuisance. As e-mobility grows and further integrates into our society, we need more people of all ages and capabilities benefiting. Ario has been designed for everyone—old and young, female and male, worker and leisure rider—because one of the keys to increase safety is integrating e-mobility deep into our communities, not catering for a limited demographic.

We realise that the sector lags behind what Ario can do in terms of safety and accessibility, but I hope that what I have said provides this committee with an indication of what is possible and what should surely represent a new baseline of safety expectation. Ario is passionate about keeping riders accountable and supporting safe public spaces and building true social licence. Based on what I have explained as well as our operational experience in Queensland and interstate, I would like to make the following recommendations to the committee. No. 1: mandate baseline safety technology for all shared operators including helmet detection, tandem-riding prevention, pedestrian and path detection and real-time compliance tools—systems already proven and successfully deployed in Queensland today. No. 2: promote regulatory consistency across local governments so rules are clear for riders and fair for operators who value safety over income and revenue, making enforcement simpler. No. 3: strengthen Commonwealth-state cooperation on importation controls to stop unsafe, high-powered, noncompliant devices entering the country.

No. 4: introduce retail penalties for misleading advertising and the illegal sale of unsafe e-mobility devices. No. 5: avoid mandating full-face helmets or seated scooter models without clear evidence-based proof of safety benefit to prevent or reduce compliance and access. Lastly, set a clear uniform minimum riding age of 16 years for all e-scooter use, supported by a statewide education campaign to address parental misconceptions and discourage unsafe purchases for children. These steps will lift safety outcomes while protecting the accessibility, affordability and sustainability benefits micromobility already delivers.

Importantly, we must not let issues in the unregulated private market lead to over restriction of the regulated, accountable, shared e-mobility sector. This would risk undermining a transport option that is already delivering strong safety results and real sustainability benefits for Queensland communities. Ario is committed to working with this committee, government and councils to keep lifting the bar. The technology to address key safety issues exists today and can be deployed at scale. With smart consistent regulation in Queensland and nationally, Ario can lead the world in safe, sustainable e-mobility. Thank you and we welcome your questions.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Adam.

**Ms BUSH:** Thank you, Adam and Mitchell, for coming in today. Are you local to Townsville? Do you have a base here or are you based somewhere else?

**Mr Rossetto:** Personally Mitch and I are based in South Australia, but we do have a warehouse and operations here in Townsville.

**Ms BUSH:** I will make the same comment I made to Lime when they presented to us. I absolutely see a place for the devices particularly as we proceed towards the Olympics and we are trying to reduce traffic. One of the concerns I have—and I have spoken to people in the audience today—is that there is a waning appetite for them at the moment because they are being left everywhere, people are not riding with helmets and they are speeding. I like hearing that you are looking at technology to try to fix some of those things. Where do you see councils or cities, either nationally or internationally, that are doing great work in safety and e-scooter safety? In picking up some of those recommendations that you have mentioned, is there somewhere that is leading the pack at the moment jurisdictionally?

**Mr Rossetto:** Thank you for the question. I think it is a great question. Without being too colloquial, I think Townsville, in all honesty, is leading this direction. The council has taken a leadership approach to adopting Ario, a new operator—only nine months old—with technology that has not been proven but comes with safety technology that is literally world first. It is here in Townsville and it is happening today. I believe that they have taken a risk in giving us an opportunity to showcase this technology at scale, and we are doing that already. We are testing piloting technology on Magnetic Island. We have the helmets with sensors over there. We are also testing our pedestrian and path detection.

What is quite remarkable is that the council's progressive approach has allowed us to develop and test remote piloting technology. That enables us to remotely log into a vehicle and move the vehicle to an area that is not causing an obstruction on the footpath. We do that every morning. At five o'clock our remote team will log into vehicles all across the city and move them into position so they are not in harm's way. This is world first technology. It is not being deployed anywhere else globally. Townsville has taken a leadership approach.

**Ms BUSH:** I am curious now. I have a thousand other questions. I have just driven in and I have seen them in driveways. How is that happening?

**Mr Rossetto:** There are two ways that we address parking compliance. The first is that in the morning we make that operational decision to move those vehicles into place. Over the course of the day riders are leaving them in areas that are not considered compliant, blocking pathways and roadways. At the end of the trip the rider will leave the vehicle. The vehicle takes an automatic 360-degree photo of where it has been parked and it will log it with our remote team. Our remote team will log into that vehicle over the course of half an hour and remotely move it to a position that is then compliant. That may be one metre, two metres or five metres, but it is an approach that is sector leading whereby we are working against legacy operators that have to deploy a van and it might take three or four hours to move that vehicle. I agree that it is not perfect yet, but we are seeing incredible advancements in that space.

**Ms BUSH:** It is a good idea. Finally, would you ever look at any kind of penalty such as banning or restricting people who are routine offenders rather than manually having to move the vehicles?

**Mr Rossetto:** I think there are two sides to the coin. We need to have the technology—the ability to move them when we need to. You are absolutely right: we need to be able to keep people accountable. We do have the ability to fine users. In other jurisdictions we have a graded education and suspension program. For the first offence we will educate someone. For the second offence we might fine them. For the third offence we might suspend them for a week or four weeks. We ran a trial in Auckland late last year where we would suspend, on average, 20 people a week for doing the wrong thing, not just parking but it might be tandem riding or riding irresponsibly in an area.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Adam, do you sell your product to private users or is it only for the hire market?

**Mr Rossetto:** It is only for the hire market.

**Mr KEMPTON:** In terms of the technology, could you tell us a bit about its evolution? Is it an entirely Australian product? Are there models overseas that are working? I am interested in how we got to where we are.

**Mr Rossetto:** Ario is a new company. While we are a new company, we are seasoned experts in this space. Mitchell and I have been in the sector since it started. In fact, Mitchell introduced micromobility to Australia. Broader within our team we have shared experience of over 50 years. That is from engineers to operators to designers as well as the people you see before us. We as a company are very young. We are three years old. Here in Australia we have been operating for nine months.

As a vehicle type, we have built this from the ground up. This vehicle that you see on the streets of Townsville is the first version of our product. We looked at that problem statement of what are the things that we need to solve that are causing challenges within the community and safety issues for riders. We have addressed those with the design and technology that we have built into those vehicles. Currently we are looking towards second and third iterations of the model, making them slightly lighter, creating a better turning circle and improving the technology capability of the vehicles.

**Mr KING:** I have a burning question. You are only referring to e-scooters, not e-bikes. Do you have e-bikes as well?

**Mr Rossetto:** We do. We have a version of an e-bike which we operate to scale in Sydney. There are 3,000 in Sydney today.

**Mr KING:** Not in Townsville.

**Mr Rossetto:** We have 50 e-bikes here in Townsville.

**Mr KING:** When you say you can shift e-scooters—on your webpage I see that they are moved out of the way—e-bikes lie over. There is no gyro that stands them up. That would be amazing.

**Mr Rossetto:** We would love to get there. There might be a way. I think there is technology in the market that can do that but not within our sector. You are right: we do not have that advancement in the e-bikes.

**Mr KING:** I just wanted to clarify that for myself. I have discussed the illegality before. Nothing is illegal. It is illegal how you operate it. That is where the technicality comes in. I think you talked about—and I just want to clarify—banning the importing of the ones that are noncompliant that can be used illegally. That is a federal issue. We do not have the jurisdiction to do that, but you would be positive towards that?

**Mr Rossetto:** Absolutely. I think that is a key loophole within the broader market. Mitchell, do you want to talk to your experience on the Gold Coast over the weekend?

**Mr Price:** I spent the weekend on the Gold Coast seeing firsthand the issues that the community and the mayor have raised—the Fatboy bikes and the electric motorbikes that are zooming everywhere. It is out of control. Certainly Adam and Ario have written to Minister Catherine King and the Prime Minister to convene some sort of working group between the states and the federal government because the community are crying out for solutions.

I could count 100 times that a bike nearly hit me on the weekend. These things are unsafe. Through Adam's evidence today, we operate in a regulated market. We are regulated to within an inch of our operations. We cannot turn left or right without there being some form of rules in place, but the import and the use of these illegal devices—we claim they are illegal, but currently under the framework they are not illegal because they are able to be imported—

**Mr KING:** They are illegally operated.

**Mr Price:** That is right, exactly. We do need to have more harmonisation. Our request to the state would be to join the call. There are a number of industry bodies calling for it. Bicycle Queensland have called for this. Bicycle NSW are calling for it. Bicycle Network are calling for it. Communities are calling for it. We were chatting with council before. It is not an issue here in Townsville yet, but we are seeing that across coastal communities—on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast and even Townsville

in Brisbane on Friday when we were there—it is a rising concern and it is certainly something which is giving the industry a bad name. Everything has been lumped together with these devices. Parents are buying devices for their children to use, whereas with the regulated scheme of hired devices—our users are not always perfect but we have tough restrictions in place. As Adam said, we have a system to follow for banning users and addressing behaviour, whereas personal devices do not.

**Mr JAMES:** I am not an e-scooter rider. Can you run through the process? If I wanted to hop on one, how do I register? What data do you collect on me, for example? How does it work?

**Mr Rossetto:** As a new user, typically what you do is download the app, similar to what you do with Uber. You put your credit card details in and you sign in with what we call single sign on. If you have an Apple account or a Google account, you will sign in with that information. That information is automatically encrypted, so we do not see that information. All we have is your credit card information. When the user scans the vehicle, obviously we know when that person is scanning and we know the location of that vehicle. We have that data which is consistent across the sector. What is important is that the data that we do have is just enough to ensure that we know who is riding and what they are doing on the vehicle. We do not collect any other data that we do not need. The data that we do collect is stored locally in Sydney on Amazon Web Services servers.

**Mr JAMES:** Is there an opportunity to collect more data?

**Mr Rossetto:** Always. There is an opportunity to collect more data. I think one of the considerations of the sector is how much data do we want to collect to ensure the safety of the rider, the safety of the community and what data do we need to ensure that we can address any noncompliant behaviour such as causing a serious accident. On the vehicles themselves we have cameras, as you are aware. Those cameras will detect if there is an accident in real time. We have had incidents in Christchurch, where we operate, where the police have asked us, 'Can we please see the camera vision that has been part of this accident?' That has helped prosecute the cause of a serious accident. That is a benefit of what we bring to market. It is no different to CCTV across all our communities or Tesla cars or BYD cars. This is part of our community. What is really important is how we manage that data. We are working currently towards an ISO certification for data security.

**Mr JAMES:** Everything we are hearing points to these illegally operated devices that are imported. Operators like yourselves do not seem to want to get into the private market. Is there an option to get into a subscription-based service like Netflix or something like that to look after the private market that would make inroads into these issues?

**Mr Rossetto:** That is a good question. We have seen operators in the past where they have attempted to bring to market at scale subscription services. As part of the model that we operate, we have what we call a pay-per-use model whereby you pay \$1 to unlock the vehicle and 50 cents per minute to ride it across the community and within the geofence. There is a second option where you pay for a pass. You might have a pass that gives you access to 200 minutes across the week, for example, to provide better flexibility. The model that we bring to market is about convenience. People tell us, 'We want to take a scooter.' For example, they are staying at The Ville and they want to ride around the community. They want to leave the vehicle and have lunch in the city. They want to do their thing and then get back on a different scooter and keep riding around. To answer your question, yes, there is an opportunity but I think what we have in place is a model built for convenience and flexibility.

**Mr Price:** As a supplementary to Adam's point around data, Ms Bush referenced the Jamieson Trauma Institute. They have done some work recently around the capture of data. When an injury is presented at an emergency department, I cannot stress the importance of that simple question: was this a hired or private device? That is going to go a long way to rebuild the trust with the community. When you read in the *Courier-Mail* or the *Brisbane Times* about an e-scooter injury—we get hundreds of notifications every day, 'E-scooter injury, e-scooter injury'—when you drill down, 99 per cent of them are private devices.

The industry is faced with this social licence, which is where I personally believe community pushback comes because that is the only information that the community is being fed. They are seeing it on TV; they are seeing it on the news and on the radio: e-scooter, e-scooter, e-scooter, e-bike. I know Jamieson Trauma Institute is actually in line with this saying we need to capture better data. Having that simple question as it is presented, whether it is at a doctor's surgery, hospital or an ambo, 'Was this a hired or a private device?', will go a long way to change the direction of how e-mobility in Queensland is perceived and whether or not we can bring the community back for those people who have lost trust.

**CHAIR:** That is a good point.

**Ms BUSH:** Good point. I like your recommendations. I have taken a look at them all and I thought they were quite sensible. One of them is a focus on education for everyone but particularly for youth. I was also interested in infrastructure, and you probably heard my questions to council. One of the other issues that seems to come up is where there is competition for space on footpaths. There are people who are walking who do not hear these coming up behind them. Part of that is education and part of it sometimes is about an investment in infrastructure. I am after your views on that, whether that would help, whether you have seen cities doing that well, whether you think it is truly about education or whether we do need to start shifting towards really prioritising active transport at a council level or all levels of government?

**Mr Price:** I am happy to take that. There are a couple of layers there. To break down in terms of cities that are doing that really well, here in Australia what we are seeing, particularly around the use of space, is New South Wales is putting a big focus on how we use on-road as parking for e-mobility devices. Just like if we allowed cars to park on the footpath, drivers are going to drive on the footpath; if you allow e-scooter and e-bike riders to park on a footpath, they are going to ride on a footpath. Nine times out of 10 people ride on a footpath because there is no safe space for them to ride.

I think Australia—and I say this with all love for Australia—is caught with having complex bike lanes that are costing multiple millions of dollars. I have just come back from leading our global plan in Barcelona, London and Amsterdam where cities are really making infrastructure simple. It is not multimillion dollar bike lanes; it is simply some separated bollards and it is some concrete blocks that are on the road space. We are not talking five metres wide or four metres wide, and that is where you start really interfering with cars and drivers. It is simple: what is enough for one or two single-file users. Barcelona was probably the stand-out city that I saw. It has introduced infrastructure which is really changing the way that people are using it. They are not then riding on the footpath.

I know in Queensland there is a slower speed for footpath use, but that is put back onto the rider. In more regional communities footpaths are wider; that is a natural piece. In a city metro like in places like Brisbane, space is hard when you have prams, disability scooters and walkers. We really urge councils to look at how we reuse space. The exercise in New South Wales at the moment is identifying on-road parking spaces that are no stopping areas or where you cannot fit a car space and that is being repurposed. Waverley Council at the moment is rolling out 65 parking spots across their LGA—obviously Bondi Beach is there—and the City of Sydney is doing a very extensive program as well. I know that the state government and Minister John Graham are doing a comprehensive review at the moment on how to repurpose road space so we can park devices safely and also then encourage users to use the road. If it is a 40 or 50 kilometre per hour road, we should be using e-mobility on the road rather than on the footpath.

**Ms BUSH:** It has also been put to us that thinking needs to be given to the fact that you have pedestrians walking at five kilometres an hour, scooters are licensed to 12 kilometres an hour but 25 kilometres an hour on the road and there are people driving at 50 kilometres an hour. A bit more consolidation across that is needed including—not for Townsville but in some areas of Brisbane—reducing inner-city speed limits to 40 and having everything on the road that can keep up with 40 and that kind of thinking. Is that the kind of thinking you believe we should be doing?

**Mr Price:** I do think that having reduced speeds in metro cities like Brisbane makes perfect sense—40 and 30. In regional communities I think it is very different; it is a case-by-case scenario. I do think that 25 on an e-scooter is a speed that is comfortable for people to ride at. I think anything faster than that is something that has not been studied before, but definitely should be off the footpath. If you set a limit for an e-mobility device at five kilometres an hour, a user is not going to be using it. That is when you will start seeing antisocial behaviour from riders.

**Ms BUSH:** That is useful to know that anything over 25 is not being tested.

**Mr Price:** It has not been tested, no.

**Mr Rossetto:** Just a point to your question around best use case of infrastructure globally, I know that Paris has been particularly successful in transferring their city from a car dominated community to a micromobility or active transport community. I was researching the other day Rue de Rivoli which is a central thoroughfare which is almost like a bike superhighway. It is the busiest superhighway for active transport in the world, and that has only come about in the last 24 months. We are seeing cities making real, determined, considered efforts to change the fabric of how people move around cities, and that is particularly a good one to look at.

**CHAIR:** Adam and Mitchell, thank you very much for the evidence you have provided the committee today. I would be interested to understand a couple of those other learnings you have had

from around the world. We look forward to being able to share that. I am particularly interested in your suggestion about convening some sort of group to harmonise the importation. You are very well versed in this space. Can I ask you to share with the committee your thoughts on why the federal government is not imposing restrictions on what would be illegal devices if they were used on the road?

**Mr Price:** It all dates back—and Adam made a point that we have both been in this industry far too long—

**Ms BUSH:** I think it was the Morrison government, wasn't it?

**Mr Price:** The year 2021 was the last time the federal government stopped what used to be an application through the federal department of transport. Operators like ourselves and importers of private e-scooters and e-bikes needed to apply for what was a DIRD approval and Border Force would then—unless you had that DIRD approval you would not have your shipment approved to leave the docks. Suddenly after 2021, around COVID times when the world was a different place, that evaporated. Now you can import anything as long as it meets the standards of the ADRs that are set and get reviewed every 10 years.

Up until now the federal government has really been hands off. It has been, 'This is a state issue and it is a local council issue,' which is a very unfair position to take, which is why Adam wrote to the federal minister encouraging a conversation to happen around the table of transport ministers but it goes even deeper. Transport ministers are dealing with metros, trains, buses, rail—a range of certain things. They are not the subject matter experts when it comes to e-mobility. I refer to Bicycle Queensland's call, which I think also had—we are part of the group called eMobility Australia, which has called for this; Queensland Walks has called for this; WalkSydney is calling for it. There is a lot of community-based advocacy groups and if you put their member base organisations together, they would have 100,000 members representing that concern. It has probably been put in the too-hard basket, but it is a growing concern that I think really needs to be addressed. Having state ministers address this and actually crack down is going to go a long way to rebuilding community trust.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. The time for this session has expired but we look forward to catching up with you. If we have some other questions we will send them through to you. We will have a five-minute break and then we will resume the hearing.

## **KRUGERS, Mr Thijs, Representative, Townsville Bicycle Users Group**

**CHAIR:** Good morning, Thijs. It is lovely for you to be here with us. I invite you to make a short opening statement and then the committee will have questions for you.

**Mr Krugers:** Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Thijs and I represent the Townsville Bicycle Users Group. I am also a professional who has worked with Townsville City Council and Queensland Police Service on the unlawful use of off-road motor vehicles, the issue at the heart of today's discussion.

Firstly, I want to tell you what legitimate e-bike use looks like in Queensland. In my family, we own no less than five electric pedal-assist bicycles. In our climate, they are a godsend. We ride more often, further and longer. Two of the bikes are cargo bikes—a front loader with a big box in the front downstairs and a long tail. Each can easily carry two kids and a week's shopping. I have ridden about 16,000 kilometres on mine, mostly doing kindy drop-offs, around our neighbourhood, all year around, even in the climate here. I can count on one hand the times I have had to use a car for that job. I have many fond memories, such as when we stopped to watch a cement mixer and the guy operating it passed us the controls for my boy to start the pour.

We also own e-mountain bikes. We do not clock as many kilometres on those as I would like, but the pedal-assist lets us ride safely during the hotter parts of the day and juggle our busy lives as parents of two beautiful boys in that way. You still work hard on those; your heart rate goes up, but not as much, so you ride more frequently and more safely.

We also have a converted pedal-assist bike with a simple motor. The kit came with a throttle. I did not install the throttle. I believe a clear outcome of these hearings should be to remove front throttles from e-bikes and e-assist kits designed to fit or able to fit on a bicycle. No throttles.

I even have an e-scooter in the shed, too. It folds up neatly. It is handy for short errands—to pick up a service car, drop off a service car. It does not get as much use because of the infrastructure mentioned before. It is terrifying to ride, even scarier than a bicycle.

I also want to acknowledge riders who rely on e-assist for health reasons. A friend with a deteriorating condition has been able to keep riding for much longer than anyone expected because of the pedal-assist. That is independence, dignity and wellbeing. This is the face of legitimate e-bike use—one less car on the road, more local trips with a bike and healthier, more productive Queenslanders.

To the problem we need to solve: the arrival of cheap electric motors has lowered the barrier for unlawful motor vehicle use on and off road. Some of these high-powered electric motorbikes are being marketed as e-bikes just to dodge the obligation of registration, just to get sales. They look like bicycles, but they are motorbikes on the roads and the trails. They include throttles, no safety standards of road-legal motor vehicles and they are sold to children without clear information to parents, as we all know. That is not a bicycle problem; that is a motorbike masquerading as a bicycle problem. I urge the committee: do not ban electric bicycles. Instead, draw or maintain the bright, enforceable line between pedal-assist bicycles and electric motorbikes.

Here are some points I suggest to help: maintain the definition of 'pedal-assisted bicycle'; it is great. Keep it. Prohibit throttles on bicycles. Get rid of them all together. It cuts a lot of the grey-area products out. Require registration for high-powered, throttle-controlled vehicles. It is already required. Enforce it. There should be retailer accountability. It should be clearly advertised at point of sale. We spoke about the difficulties for this. We need to target enforcement. When I grew up, we had dynos on the side of the road where the cops would stop our small mopeds and they would be put on the dyno to see their power output—that sort of thing. But please do not target people dropping off their kids at school on a cargo bike.

Queensland can keep cars off the roads, support health and independence, which is one thing these kids are wanting with these bikes, and keep people safe by banning the problem product, not the productive one. Do not take away this technology to help families with health challenges and live active lives. Stop these electric motorbikes that masquerade as bicycles. It should be about five minutes.

**CHAIR:** Well done. There is some quality information there, Thijs. You obviously understand this sector very well, and your community should be proud of having you represent them.

**Ms BUSH:** That is a great example of the utility and the benefit of pedal-assist e-bikes. I am not going to get this terminology right, so bear with me, but a few of our submissions have talked about, particularly with cargo bikes, some of the limitations that they have on being able to get up hills and that they have had to do a bit of work to modify bikes in order to do that. They seem to suggest



that there was an issue with either the importing, the manufacturing or the selling of e-bikes. Is that something you have noticed? Is that a conversation that is happening in the bicycle user groups, that the strength or the power attached to the e-bikes needs to be changed or strengthened or increased to help get up some of the hills?

**Mr Krugers:** The regulations allow for nominal 250 watt output. I am not sure what peak power is. That is how to get around it. The motors are not able to sustain peak power for a long time, but the rest you just need to solve with gears and balance. It takes a bit of practice. I think 250 watt nominal power output is sufficient, coupled with gears, especially when it is a higher quality motor that comes installed by the factory.

**Ms BUSH:** Do you have many hills? I know you have kids and you are very loaded up, but have you had to test it at that level? I know you have Castle Hill.

**Mr Krugers:** Yes, I have taken this bike everywhere with the kids. It is super fun. It has been up Castle Hill. The greater issue with the hills are the brakes. When the bike is loaded up, if you have two kids, a dog and some groceries or some kids' toys and yourself, you are going to cook the brakes. If the motor cannot take you up the hill, it is for the best because your brakes will not survive the descent.

**Ms BUSH:** So you feel the current regulation around all of that with the technical specifications are adequate right now?

**Mr Krugers:** Absolutely adequate, yes. You just go slow.

**CHAIR:** Sorry, Thijs, I am smiling because of the comments you made and the brakes burning out coming down the hill, as I had a picture in my mind of the Beverly Hillbillies with a heap of different people balancing on this cargo bike.

**Mr Krugers:** I can fit my two boys and two medium-large dogs in the front and a bunch of things. Yes, it can carry heaps of things. It is one less car. The picture is correct.

**CHAIR:** Good stuff.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Thank you, Thijs, for your great submission. The RACQ does not recommend changes to the current specification around e-bikes; they think it should be left alone. Apart from gears, brakes and other minor modifications, is it your position that there should be no change to the power output or the performance of those bikes? As soon as that happens, then of course there has to be some form of regulation about how much you can modify it. Essentially, are e-bikes, as they are, adequate for the purpose?

**Mr Krugers:** Yes, they are absolutely adequate. I am not sure how the peak power thing is going to go. I am not sure. I do not know what the limitations are on the peak power output, but that is kind of the grey area, I think, in the current set-up. No change is required, but it would be good to look into refinement. The peak power is just a little push to get you going, and then you do not have to work as hard once you are moving. It is required to have a higher peak output than the nominal output as allowed right now.

**Mr KING:** My question is probably more a statement, but I invite you to comment if you wish. You talked about the importation and the ability to make them illegal. We were just having a conversation about that with some people during the break. There are businesses that purely sell modifications to make what could be a legal e-bike or e-scooter illegal. Do you have any comments on that?

**Mr Krugers:** Yes, I think there are a couple of things you can do. You can change the software.

**Mr KING:** A throttle for a pedal bike?

**Mr Krugers:** You can change the software on the computer so the limitation is removed. Suddenly the scooter thinks it is in Singapore or something, and it allows it to draw maximum power from the battery. You are never going to stop these modifications. That is easy to do. You can put a bigger battery on. You can put a throttle on, for sure. If you can enforce those things not being sold, that would be good.

**Mr KING:** Their argument at the time was that they sell them for off-road use. You can buy products for a car as well. It just seems there is a whole market out there to modify these things. That is part of the importation that we are looking at. As I said, it was more of a comment than anything else.

**Mr Krugers:** My thoughts on that are that anything that could fit on a bicycle should not have a throttle input, even on property. I think it is a loophole that is left there. I think about 98 per cent of our region here is grazing—in the Burdekin, dry tropics region. I do not know any of the graziers who are going to buy bicycles with a throttle to ride around their properties.

**Mr KING:** I just Googled cargo e-bikes. I had not seen one. Amazing!

**Mr JAMES:** You said you own six of these e-devices. Collectively, what are they worth?

**Mr Krugers:** The cargo bikes new are between \$7,000 and \$8,000. The mountain bikes—\$10,000 to \$12,000 each. The scooter is about 1,000 bucks. The e-bike conversion kit is 1,000 bucks. The bike it is installed on is about \$2,500. Yes, you want to keep these sales going. That is productivity.

**Mr JAMES:** Nearly as much as a car.

**Mr Krugers:** Yes, but a lot lower running costs.

**Mr JAMES:** That is correct. Having said that, would you be happy to pay for a rego or some sort of subscription fee to better fund the infrastructure for any or all of these devices?

**Mr Krugers:** If you, as the government, and me as the ratepayer or taxpayer can give me a complete business case that shows that these fees are going to cover the costs of maintaining the licence system and you can enforce it meaningfully—if you can show that in a complete business case—I will cry a tear, but I will happily do it because it may help. I just do not believe it is possible.

**Mr JAMES:** Fair enough. If that is a no, is that fair to non-e-bike or non-e-mobility users?

**Mr Krugers:** As government representatives, I think you all know very well how our roads are funded and how the licensing goes into general government funds and separately funds are assigned to maintain roads and that sort of thing. I assume you all understand how the system works, so my response is based on that. I would say it is not really an issue about fairness; that is just not how it works.

**Ms BUSH:** I will pick up on that question. I do not know what your experience is like here in Townsville, but where I am in Brisbane, I think a lot of people would be happy to pay for registration or insurance if they could be guaranteed the same level of infrastructure and investment that are given to vehicles. It is certainly not equitable, from what I see in Brisbane. A lot of people who are using bikes and e-bikes tell me they feel very unsafe having to compete on roads or forced onto footpaths. I am interested in your view on that around what the appetite is. What is the culture at the moment? As a bicycle user, competing on roads with cars and safety around that—we are in Road Safety Week—do you have any views around what more could be done to educate drivers about looking out for cyclists and sharing the road more and a bit more about general compromise in that space?

**Mr Krugers:** There are no safe road users; there is only safe road infrastructure. That sums it up. I think everybody has a wobble every once in a while and behaves unsafely. That is why we have the infrastructure to keep people in their lane literally. It is very scary riding a bike here. Coming from Holland and hearing about this, I am very jealous of these other cities that used to be terrifying to ride bikes in and now are quickly catching up and overtaking in some ways Dutch infrastructure. It is definitely possible here, too. We know that for the stadium it returns 80 cents to the dollar, but we know for road infrastructure if you put cycling infrastructure up, it returns \$1.60 to \$2. The roads are not safe and we should invest more just to keep the traffic stream separate as is best practice.

**CHAIR:** I have a couple of questions. I want to unpack some of the things you talked about, firstly, removing the thumb throttle. I understand thumb throttles already make it an illegal unit. Am I incorrect?

**Mr Krugers:** I do not know the full extent of the legislation, but I believe it is pedal assist. I believe it is pedal assist only at a 250 watt normal output.

**CHAIR:** When you say 'thumb throttle', is that both thumb depression as well as using your wrist? Are they both included in that description?

**Mr Krugers:** It depends on the model but, yes, when I talk about thumb throttle, that is the most common one you will find. However, I would include any form of manually engaging the motor rather than sensing of the pedal movement or pressure on the pedals.

**CHAIR:** Obviously e-assist is a different process. That would come to almost the definition of what is a bike versus what is a motorbike.

**Mr Krugers:** I think so. If you move the pedals to go it is different to if you push the throttle to go.

**CHAIR:** Your earlier comment, 'We don't have an e-bike problem; we have a motorbike problem,' was very well articulated. In terms of your experience growing up, you said the police had a dyno on the side of the road. Talk to us about that.

**Mr Krugers:** In Holland we have seen this problem many times before and I am sure you have here as well. I think we had Solex before, a little motor on the front wheel of a bicycle. Then we went to mopeds, which are tiny little motorbikes with a 50cc engine. Of course, children want to go places themselves and they also want to go fast—probably most of the boys. How did we police these things in the past? The police had small dynos set up. When motorbikes were going around the neighbourhood they would funnel all the bikes there and then put them on the dyno to test their power output to see if it was below a maximum of five horsepower.

**CHAIR:** If it was above was there a process?

**Mr Krugers:** Impound and destruction.

**Mr KING:** As a former police officer, you would be very interested in that.

**CHAIR:** Very excited. Sorry, I should not say excited, but it is a practical example. Thank you.

**Mr Krugers:** There is a lot of work and here we have also seen the problem with unlawful motor vehicles on the beaches that allow motor vehicle access. It is really important that we encourage lawful use of motor vehicles because success breeds success. If you see successful behaviour in a neighbourhood, more people will pick it up and there are more people doing the right thing to pull up people who are doing the wrong thing. It becomes a community effort.

**Mr KING:** I want to talk about public transport and it is more scooters being used for that last mile. People will have a scooter rather than owning a car and they can get to the bus and then go. Is there much of that here in Townsville? It is very popular in places where we have held other hearings.

**Mr Krugers:** There is no public transport to speak of in Townsville.

**Mr KING:** Okay, so no bus or Translink?

**Mr Krugers:** We are still stuck with the old Translink buses that get dumped here from Brisbane, poisoning the very air we breathe. The scooters are very popular with children and that is really where the risk is. I think limiting the age to 16, to kids, would be really good. When I mentioned I was coming here and I spoke to a few people, that is what often came up—people worried about the kids.

**Mr KING:** That has been my other question I have asked in other hearings. The kids ride them to school and some of them are very expensive, as the member for Mulgrave highlighted earlier. In terms of the security of these things, obviously you need a way to start it, a key or something. What forms of security are there, because I imagine they could be taken fairly easily?

**Mr Krugers:** Like with anything valuable. The only thing that works is a solid lock with a chain. You can also lock them via bluetooth connected to your phone.

**Mr KING:** It is concerning that kids are riding these things that cost \$3,000 or \$4,000 to school and leaving them in the school grounds.

**Mr Krugers:** That is right. That is a school infrastructure problem as well. What school grounds look like is very different in other countries. Often half the outdoor area is taken up by bicycle parking, a wonderful thing.

**Mr KEMPTON:** I am just tidying up my previous question. If an e-bike as defined has a specific performance and it does not require registration—just as we have always had—and if registration is one way of dealing with these other e-mobility devices, if you modify your e-bike so that it performs to a higher level, then is it fair that it should then be registered?

**CHAIR:** Or considered a motorbike?

**Mr KEMPTON:** Anything outside the description of an e-bike would need to be registered, so if you buy one and then modify it yourself to increase performance, should it be registered?

**Mr Krugers:** I am thinking practically about how that would work. I think it is the point of sale that we really should be looking at. We do not check the modifications to cars. I see cars going around the corner with the sway bar removed, a massive bull bar on the front, one wheel up in the air and belching out clouds of diesel because the emission restrictions have been removed. Should that be removed from the road? Yes, it should be removed from the road, but it is not enforced. I think you should start where the real harm occurs. About 700 people die of air quality problems caused by cars and motor vehicles every year. It is an enormous number that dwarfs the issues that we are looking at here. It absolutely dwarfs them. I think it is a waste of effort. The point of sale is when we should qualify things as motorbikes. After that, no.

**Mr KEMPTON:** The other option is then if you modify its performance beyond the e-bike specification, the description, then the thing should be forfeited if not registered?

**Mr Krugers:** Yes. I think that is a clear signal.

**CHAIR:** You have obviously thought well around some of these things so it is probably a tough question but I think you will have thought about this. Whatever changes we might make down the track—and there are no presumptions in that—there is a lot of what can be considered illegal bikes if they are ridden on the road. Is there a way of changing those back to be legal by governing bodies or what have you so that people's investment in that bike that is currently illegal if it is used on the road could be legal? Was that a technical question?

**Mr Krugers:** You can definitely immediately remove the thumb throttles. That is the easy way for a police officer to pull someone over and check, 'Oh you have a thumb throttle there,' or for somebody, say a principal, to walk around the school grounds and go, 'Okay, all these bikes here have thumb throttles on them,' and give them a tag. After that yes, I think you can easily reduce the power output of these devices with the settings on the computer that comes on it. It is absolutely possible. They were illegal at point of sale; people just did not do their research and they should not be rewarded for that.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. I am pleased I asked that question. That was great evidence before the committee today. As I said at the outset, your community should be very proud to have you representing them. Thank you very much.

**Mr Krugers:** I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak and for listening to the community and the various perspectives.

**CHAIR:** It is now time for the open mic session for those who have registered.

**BURCHETT, Mr Arthur, Private capacity**

**RICHARDSON, Mr Reuben, Private capacity**

**CHAIR:** You have heard the evidence presented to the committee today. I am not telling you to curtail the evidence before the committee, but we do have a limited time. If there are some points you really want to stress or some things that have not been spoken about today, it would be really helpful to mention them now.

**Mr Burchett:** I am speaking as a person from the public. I own a registered training organisation and I also used to do Uber. I have talked to a lot of the community and a key topic that comes up is e-scooters. A few things that I was interested to hear before were that we had no stats, but e-scooters have been going here in Townsville for five years and there is talk about a new contract from July. That was interesting.

I respect the committee and thank you for coming up here and giving us our voice. I used to also run pubs. When there were the coward punches, government made strong choices in the best interests of the safety of everyone. With the e-scooters, on a Friday or Saturday night they are absolutely out of control as mentioned before regarding The Ville to Flinders Street. They are left anywhere and everywhere. People are intoxicated. There is no accountability. This morning I was talking to some people while driving here and they are left over people's driveways. Some people I have spoken to are elderly people who do not feel comfortable walking along The Strand anymore—and my mother is one of them—because that scooter that comes up behind thinks they have right of way.

For myself I think there are some solutions we need to look at—and I do not want the outcomes to be a burden on the taxpayer or the ratepayer. It has to be like when we went through the pubs: the pubs had to pay when those changes were made. It has to come back to the actual companies that provide this. Councils are making revenue out of it so they have to embed it into the contracts. Based on things I have heard this morning, that is not happening out there. Often the helmet use is not happening. That is where we have to look for solutions.

I loved hearing the ideas of moving forward the research. Instead of Magnetic Island, let's do it in Townsville. Let's do the trial and let's do it quicker because at the end of the day lives are more important than the revenue that is being made by council and the providers. Some of the students I deal with are from low socio-economic families. They are not comfortable using e-scooters because of the danger. That is an interesting thing that I heard from them. Once again, it could come down to education. I had heard about registration or some sort of licensing of something with a motor and being educated about it.

**Mr Richardson:** Thank you, Chair and committee members, for the opportunity to speak this morning. My name is Reuben. I am a principal engineer and business owner here in Townsville. I am here regarding my submission No. 1179. As a professional who commutes regularly and values sustainable transport, I have been fighting this battle since 2023 when my employee, a recent immigrant without a car, was fined \$172 for safely using a bike lane on a 60-kilometre-an-hour road. He was told to ride on the footpath instead where, as you would know, you can then run into people. That absurdity sparked my ongoing correspondence with the government which I have attached in the submission.

Queensland's PMD regulations are not just discriminatory; they are counterproductive and dangerous. By banning e-scooters and other PMDs from bike lanes on 60-kilometre-an-hour roads you are forcing riders onto footpaths at crawling speeds of 12 kilometres an hour which they will not adhere to. Why? It is to protect pedestrians according to the 2022 reforms, but the data shows the opposite. These rules have made things worse, fuelling the very pedestrian crashes that have the public up in arms. From the analysis of the submissions, approximately 750 to 800 of the submissions were against e-mobility, with 80 per cent focusing on dangers like injuries and death, 70 per cent on reckless youth and 50 per cent on pedestrian risks, and 20 per cent to 30 per cent called for bans on footpaths or rentals.

Considering the evidence, before the reforms PMD deaths were low. There were about 10 since 2018 averaging two per year compared to 10 annual bicycle fatalities and 280 from cars. PMDs are a safe, cheaper, greener alternative, reducing car use for commutes well within their range. Post-2022, when riders were pushed off safe roads and bike lanes and onto crowded footpaths, injuries have skyrocketed, albeit usage has also likely increased. According to the Queensland Family

and Child Commission, there was a 171 per cent increase in scooter and e-scooter injuries for children aged zero to 17 over the past five years, with nearly 6,300 emergency department presentations for e-scooter crashes since 2018. Many involve speeding or no helmets on footpaths. The Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit report more frequent and severe crashes including pedestrian collisions that were not even classified as road incidents. There have been eight deaths in 2024 alone from PMD crashes—five so far in 2025—and over 8,000 infringements since 2022 mostly for helmet or speed violations on those same footpaths. Is this safety or is this a policy failure that turned footpaths into hazard zones?

Worse still, these urban-centric problems are unfairly dictating laws that hammer regional Queensland. Most incidents, such as e-bikes speeding over 50 kilometres an hour in inner Brisbane and the Gold Coast, are concentrated in dense populated regions with shared e-scooter schemes and crowded paths amplifying the risk. Yet the regulations apply statewide, so they are punishing places like Townsville where bike paths are less crowded and e-mobility is a lifeline due to inadequate public transport. In regional Queensland low patronage means fixed route bus services are unsustainable and they strain public funds, as noted in reports on regional transport spending. Brisbane itself has the worst public transport access among Australia's major cities, with only 33 per cent of residents within 800 metres of a stop and 1.5 million lacking frequent all-day service. Regional areas fare much worse. They force reliance on personal vehicles.

Why should incidents from Brisbane's busy paths be driving blanket rules that make communities in the regions harder, pushing people back to cars and worsening the environmental impact? A reasonable number of inquiry submissions agreed with this view. Out of the 1,113 that I analysed, approximately 200 to 250 were positive—optimistic though frustrated with overregulation. They highlight PMDs massive benefits: slashing emissions; easing congestion; and boosting health and accessibility for families, low socio-economic communities, younger people and the elderly, and those in hilly and regional areas. Submitters argued for high-speed limits up to 32 kilometres an hour. I am at my five minutes, so I will leave it there.

**CHAIR:** Reuben, you obviously have a document there that you are reading from. We have your submission. Would you like to table that additional information?

**Mr Richardson:** Yes, I completed an analysis of the 1,200—

**CHAIR:** Would you be able to provide that to the committee?

**Mr Richardson:** Yes, I can do that.

**CHAIR:** That would great. Is leave granted to table that information? Leave is granted. Thank you, Reuben. [REDACTED], welcome to the microphone. We look forward to your advice, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]: It has been interesting to listen to these conversations. As we all know, this sort of activity from government has been a long time coming because this problem has been bubbling for a while. It is good to see something happening. Hopefully, for the public, some good will come from the lawmakers who we elect to run our society and provide the rules and regulations that are sometimes unfortunate but needed.

I only have an awareness of my own situation that I am here to present today. It sort of follows on from Reuben a little bit. The point is that footpaths are footpaths. Read the name—they are footpaths. That is what they were designed for many years ago. They are narrow and particularly in cities they are congested with people, ladies with prams, elderly people with walkers and, to the other extreme, fit and young people like myself—maybe I am not so young. The key word is that they are footpaths; they are not for motorised vehicles.

I live in the suburb of [REDACTED] on the riverfront. The council has done a beautiful job providing parks and walkways for people to enjoy, relax and recreate, walking their dogs, having conversations, unwinding at the end of the day. We have an issue there at the moment, as you know because it is over the whole state, with electric scooters. They are high powered. They are getting modified. I do not know why the parents are allowing this. They are mostly juveniles and kids on these things. Other people are using them respectfully and quietly. They are a great invention, but there will always be an element in society who will want to tinker with these things for their own ends. They are high powered. They have been modified. They are a flat board with two little wheels on it with an engine that can drive them along at 40 to 50 kilometres an hour which is nuts.

We have an explosion of e-motorbikes at the moment. They are also in the hands of these juveniles. In our particular area—I have been talking to the police about it and the Assistant Minister for Community Safety, Janelle Poole—there is a little bit of a gang forming in our neighbourhood. These kids are congregating and not even going to school.

It was interesting to listen to the guys who have the hire outfits and to hear about the technology that is coming in. That technology should be used to shut these things down in whatever way. The kids on these e-scooters and e-motorbikes are wearing full-face helmets. They are doing that so they cannot be identified. They are as quick as—they can get in and out of little places. The police have no chance of shutting them down.

Maybe we could have some sort of public instrument where people who see things while out walking can take a photo of these kids so that gradually an identification can be built up. The photo could be uploaded to a QPS specialist site for this kind of activity. I am not a very technical person but there are lots of technologies that can be applied to this problem that need to be taken up, as well as talking to people who are at the coalface.

I have a real problem with kids on e-motorbikes now. They are aggressive. They are insolent and ignorant. There is going to be a real problem. Some of the people I know in my neighbourhood have had incidents where they have nearly been run over. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Fortunately no serious damage was done. The police cannot do anything about it either. There is a lot of policing that needs to be taken up.

We could use the public. I do not know the technology but we have all these phone towers around. You hear stories in America where they can shut down a car when some guy is going nuts on the road. They can electronically close it down. We could have areas like walkways and footpaths where if these vehicles should not be there or if they are speeding then we can shut them down that way. I do not know. I just know that things need to be done and done quickly.

As I said, this juvenile gang in our neighbourhood now is creating a lot of problems. They are breeding criminals really. The police are just powerless to do anything about the situation at the moment. Good luck and I hope you can do something.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, [REDACTED]. Can I encourage you and your community, if you do see people doing the wrong thing, to please make sure you contact the police on 131444 or triple 0?

[REDACTED] I will be talking more about it to Janelle, being an ex-police officer herself and the Assistant Minister for Community Safety. Hopefully we can organise something, even if it is dobbing them in. If that is what it takes, that is what it takes.

**CHAIR:** We look forward to continuing to work with the community to get some good outcomes. [REDACTED], Reuben and Arthur, thank you very much for your time today.

**PHILLIPS, Mr Colin, Private capacity**

**ROVERTS, Ms Marianne, Private capacity**

**CHAIR:** I now welcome Mr Colin Phillips and Ms Rovers. I invite you to make a submission. Marianne, would you like to go first? We have limited time, so perhaps you could mention new things or important points to offer.

**Ms Rovers:** I have come today because I am a retired clinician who spent many years of my working life in the ED, in the operating theatre, fixing up people from their facial trauma. Quite often it was a bike related accident. I am also a resident of Sir Leslie Thiess Drive which, to fill you in, is the connecting road which runs from the end of The Strand on the eastern end down to the casino. It is a very busy thoroughfare. I would like to flag a few points to you. Many of my points have already been mentioned by the other three speakers, just a moment ago, particularly Arthur's comments. I would like to say that the residents of Sir Leslie Thiess Drive are probably impacted as much or more than anyone else in Townsville by the introduction of the e-scooters.

I reside in the complex opposite the ferry terminal. There are 50 apartments. We share the drive with the units on the waterfront which are another 26 villas, so that is over 75 residences. There are another 35 or so residences on the drive, many of whom have two motor vehicles, so there is a lot of traffic and we are trying to use our driveways. Many of us also use The Strand pass daily. We like that environment for a walk. We overlook the Anzac memorial which is managed by DVA. The Strand is busy with dog walkers—I am one of those—strollers, runners and pushbikes. Sir Leslie Thiess Drive has the casino traffic and ferry traffic and it also is the long-haul and local bus terminus, so you can see it is pretty intense there. You add e-scooters to the mix and it is getting very hazardous.

I have identified basically a few separate groups of people who are using the e-scooters. I have noticed that most of the e-scooters I have seen would come from two hire companies. I would like to take the opportunity to say that, in my personal opinion, I opine that the Ario company is much more responsible than the other operator, Neuron. I was very impressed to hear what they said about the advances in technology they are hoping to introduce.

Most of these e-scooter users try to use the footpaths to drive rather than vie with two lanes of cars and buses on Sir Leslie Thiess Drive. They have no choice. The only place they could safely go is the footpath. The problem is the footpath is not very generous in size and so there is a conflict with pedestrians.

The users that I have observed seem to be backpackers on hire scooters, most of them not wearing helmets—I would say nine out of 10 on the days I have counted—but they also have a sense of entitlement that they are allowed onto the footpath, so they think they have priority over the pedestrians. I also see a lot of young single adults or adult couples using them as transport to and from the casino. I suspect that their use is because of the parking issues and people do not want to drive their motor vehicles. I would suspect that quite a few of them are under the influence of alcohol when they return from the casino. You see females in dresses and high heels riding tandem on a scooter. It is obviously their means of getting home.

I see a lot of youth using both hire and private scooters. The record number I have seen on a Neuron hire scooter is four young girls about 12 to 13 years old, which means they have half a foot each of space on the foot plate and they are all hanging onto each other, with no helmets. There are young boys who go out for a ride, not old enough to drive. They are having fun. Sometimes they are using the hire scooters, sometimes they are using their own. They are having fun doing wheel lifts, wheelies and tricks, with no helmets. They are not doing any harm, but it is a risky behaviour. Some of them, as I say, own their own scooters.

A third group of youths are the destructive ones. They are hanging out down around the Anzac memorial. They are hanging out at the end of the drive by the entertainment centre. The Anzac memorial area is sometimes vandalised and there are scooter tracks over the carefully manicured lawns. Those lawns and those grounds are given a lot of gardening attention, and it is a shame to see them destroyed. Out the front of our properties, we also have a communal area that is maintained by the council. That has scooter tracks through it.

I think these youth who are destructive are using the scooters to move around. I do not think they live in the suburb. I think they are using the scooters to access where they want to go to hang out.

QPS have a constant problem with hoon cars on Sir Leslie Thiess Drive and, as Arthur said, it is especially Friday and Saturday nights. They compete for space with the scooters, so the scooters are on the footpath. The footpath outside the casino is congested with parked scooters. One Friday



about 5.30 pm there were 70 or so scooters from the two hire companies just sitting, waiting for clients. Scooters are joining the shopping trolleys in the marina exposed at low tide. Every day I would see seven to 10 or so abandoned helmets. Some have been destroyed on the drive or The Strand. I have seen six people come off outside our complex and two collide with things. The footpath cannot sustain this amount of fast traffic. This morning when I went out for my early morning walk with my dog, someone had thrown a hire scooter over our fence and knocked some of the tops off our fence railings. I am saying this has been introduced to the mix and there is not the capacity in the space and in the systems that are in place to absorb the capacity of the e-mobility scooters, and they impact other people excessively. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. I am just having a look at where Sir Leslie Thiess Drive is to orientate. You live in a nice part of the world, and I can understand what you are talking about. Thank you, Marianne.

**Mr Phillips:** Thank you for coming up and doing this because it is a bit of an issue. I basically have two points: to be able to ride one of these you have to be 16 years old and children do not seem to have any idea of road situations. I would suggest that anybody who is operating an e-scooter or e-mobility device be required to have passed a PrepL or written road rule test, just like any other licensed driver on the road. I am seeing people even riding on the wrong side of the road—they are coming towards you as you are driving down the road—with no helmets, obviously. Yesterday I saw a woman on an e-scooter, with a helmet on, obviously trying to comply, but with no idea of the road rules. She stopped in the middle of the intersection and waved through a car that was stopped at a stop sign before she proceeded on the main road. That was a little ridiculous.

Last year I went for a holiday in three Asian countries, and in all those countries every e-scooter or e-mobility device had a registration plate. We do not have registration plates on them. Perhaps there should be a numberplate, maybe not even paid for—I do not know how you get around an actual compliance plate—but a numberplate to tie the owner to the behaviour that is demonstrated on these vehicles. The police cannot chase them. My issue is there are basically mavericks out on the street who have no idea of the road rules. I live in town locally where there are tight footpaths. This is why the people are on the roads. With the speeds that the private ones are getting up to, I do not know, but I think a registration plate and a learner's permit to know the road rules would go a long way to solving a bit of the issue that we do have on the roads. Thank you for coming up.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Colin. It is a pleasure. That concludes this hearing today. Thank you to everyone who has given evidence and participated today. I thank our Hansard reporters and our secretariat staff for all of their assistance. A transcript of today's hearing will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this public hearing closed. Thank you, Townsville.

**The committee adjourned at 11.37 am.**