



STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE

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Ms JM Bush MP
Mr TA James MP
Mr D Kempton MP
Mr SR King MP
Mr BJ Mellish MP

Staff present:

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

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 2 October 2025

Brisbane

THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2025

The committee met at 9.03 am.

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

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with its examination of e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. This hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the committee.

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

Today we will be hearing from invited witnesses. We will also have around 50 minutes at the end of today's proceedings to hear from anyone in the audience who has registered to share their views with the committee. Speaking opportunities will be limited at that time, so we will ask each participant to keep their contributions to around three minutes. Finally, please remember to press your microphones on before you start speaking and off when you have finished. When the red light is on, it is dangerous!

ASHLEY, Mr James, General Manager, Commercial and Contract Services, Public Transport Services Group, Brisbane City Council

LUKE, Ms Bridget, Acting General Manager, Transport Assets and Operations, Infrastructure Services Group, Brisbane City Council

WILLIAMSON, Ms Courtney, Manager, Policy, Strategy and Planning, Transport Assets and Operations, Infrastructure Services Group, Brisbane City Council

WINES, Mr Andrew, Councillor and Civic Cabinet Chair, Public Transport Committee, Brisbane City Council

CHAIR: Good morning. Would you like to make an opening statement before the committee asks you some questions?

Mr Wines: Thank you for the opportunity to present today. My team and I are really enthusiastic about this opportunity to talk about the sorts of things we have been doing with e-scooters in Brisbane City, and we are very keen to hear your views and to participate in a discussion about what I think is a really important part of our transport network.

Brisbane is recognised as a national leader in active transport, setting a benchmark in best practice for Australian cities embracing walking, cycling and e-mobility. Part of this has been demonstrated by our recent commitment to over \$400 million worth of new investment in bridges and active transport bridges in particular, the most notable being the Kangaroo Point Bridge, which is not far from here. That bridge has carried more than 2.8 million active transport users since its opening in December last year.

Council has also invested in separated cycling facilities on the CityLink Cycleway, which travels along Edward Street, Elizabeth Street and George Street. It is a separated bike facility but it is also very popular with e-scooters. As a result of implementing the CityLink Cycleway, we have seen

e-scooter usage on the footpath go from 87 per cent down to 14 per cent. That means they are choosing the dedicated section, which is really important and speaks to some of the issues we will discuss in the future.

In late 2018, Brisbane became the first major city in Australia to implement e-mobility following an amendment to the transport operations regulation by the Queensland government, and that decision marked an important milestone in Brisbane's journey towards embracing an environmentally friendly transport option. Brisbane has been at the forefront of e-mobility initiatives, introducing the first e-scooter share scheme in the country and developing the nation's first comprehensive e-mobility strategy. Since its inception, the e-mobility share scheme has facilitated more than 18 million trips, highlighting not only its growing popularity but also its success as an option for transport.

Council recognises the significance of e-mobility in shaping the future of the city's transportational landscape. Our vision is centred on creating a well-connected city where transportation plays a crucial role in enhancing quality of life, supporting business activities and utilising technological advancements while, importantly, ensuring safety for all users, not just users of the e-scooter device, such as pedestrians and other people in the district.

Research conducted by Griffith University and the University of Queensland has shown positive outcomes from the adoption of e-mobility in Queensland such as increased tourism spending and improved perceptions of cities. Also, by providing a convenient and sustainable transport option, e-mobility has contributed to providing more transport alternatives to the private car, particularly in densely populated areas with comparatively short travel distances.

Safety remains a top priority for the council, with specific focus on promoting safe riding practices, ensuring there are secure parking facilities and enhancing rider education. In partnership with the share-scheme operators, council has introduced geofencing to create either slow or no-go zones in selected areas across Brisbane, including parts of the CBD—notably Queen Street Mall and the Fortitude Valley safe night precincts. Geofencing effectively restricts an e-device from being ridden or significantly reduces their speed capacity. The initiative has been welcomed by the Queensland police for its positive impact on reducing antisocial riding behaviours.

To address community concerns regarding parked devices and street clutter, council is collaborating with the share-scheme operators to introduce designated e-mobility parking hubs within the inner city to encourage safe and orderly parking practices, thus enhancing public safety. Council is planning to install between 300 and 400 of these parking hubs across the inner city over the next 12 to 18 months, and we will monitor the success of these hubs to inform ourselves as to whether regulatory measures need to be put in place to address those community concerns. Additionally, mandatory parking regulations in certain suburbs have been put in place to further improve compliance and safety.

Through partnerships with the share-scheme operators, the council has been actively involved in providing information and education to riders through its website and sponsoring e-scooter safety workshops. These initiatives are designed to enhance rider confidence whilst promoting safe practices.

With council's role limited to the management of the share scheme and with much of the regulation of privately owned devices outside of council's jurisdiction, there is a substantial role for other levels of government to play to improve e-mobility safety. The federal government has a role in ensuring the importation of noncompliant e-mobility devices is prohibited, and we believe the state government is best placed to manage a more comprehensive approach to data collection and to enforcement. Data collection for e-mobility is currently fragmented and it is hard to get a consistent picture of what is happening across all users around any injuries involving the use of e-scooters. Either the Department of Transport and Main Roads or Queensland Health has the most thorough data collection infrastructure, and it would be good to build upon that and work with those entities.

Regarding enforcement, council believes the existing administrative arrangements and laws are sufficient but there is greater scope for greater enforcement of the existing laws. As we look to the future, key success factors for the sustainability of the share scheme include a coordinated approach to education, collaboration with scheme providers, ongoing legislative reviews, enhanced data collection and continued investment in infrastructure to improve safety and community acceptance of e-mobility initiatives.

In conclusion, I invite you to consider the important role of e-mobility not only in Brisbane's transport but also in transport generally and reflect upon the measures undertaken to ensure the safety and effectiveness of it. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you, Councillor. We had some representatives from the University of Queensland and other areas who encouraged us to have you appear here because of the best practice that you are implementing.

Mr Wines: I appreciate that, thank you.

Mr MELLISH: Thanks for coming along today and for the very thorough submission you provided. Councillor Wines, the committee has heard from witnesses such as Queenslanders with Disability Network and Vision Australia about safety issues that disabled and vulnerable users have faced since the introduction of e-scooters. Do you think there is more that the council and the state can do to support vulnerable footpath users?

Mr Wines: Can I just clarify the question: are you talking about people with disabilities using ordinary footpaths which are obstructed by e-scooter devices?

Mr MELLISH: Yes.

Mr Wines: As I was saying earlier, one of our principal focuses is ensuring the devices are neat and tidy and kept in place. We are talking about having controlled parking hubs to ensure the e-scooter devices are left in a neat and orderly manner in a shared common location, which is good for us, for people of all abilities and for the accessibility of our footpaths. Incidentally, it is also better for the e-scooter providers in our share scheme.

The designated drop-off zones in the inner city have largely been working. We have always been concerned about the clutter from the perspective of both mobility and appearance. It is not just about people with disabilities; it is about a whole range of people—mums with prams or people with bad knees. We are talking about the full spectrum of pedestrian mobility issues. It is something that we have been very concerned about. I will ask James to elaborate on how we manage parking and how we have been working to ensure things are neat and tidy and the carriageway for other pedestrians is maintained.

Mr Ashley: Under our operator agreements, there is a lot of activity that is not actually seen by the public. We require the share-scheme operators—Lime and Neuron—to have teams out on the city streets every single day moving devices. While there are mechanisms for people to make complaints and use their phones to take photos of devices that are perhaps placed in an inconvenient location, there are also teams out there actively moving devices to safe locations. They are out there 24/7 actually, because a lot of activity also happens at night. That is the additional piece of information that I would gladly share.

Mr Wines: We have designated parking zones that you can see where we expect e-scooters to be parked, particularly if they use the e-scooter scheme. New technology is coming out where the user can see an e-parking zone, but they can only see it when they open their device. The easiest way to describe it is it is like Pokemon GO, except it shows the parking zones. If you wonder how it is they are parked neatly when you cannot see a parking zone, it is because there is an e-parking zone in that location. I am happy to take further questions.

Mr KEMPTON: Andrew, obviously as the leaders in bringing in e-mobility you are also highlighting a lot of the problems simply because of the volume. Police and council involvement in compliance is going to be a big issue. James touched on this. Could you outline details of your new e-mobility contracts with providers that will go some way towards addressing those issues you have mentioned such as parking? What other issues are there around pedestrian congestion and bikeways and so on? Could you elaborate on that?

Mr Wines: I will pass to James in a moment. He is the contract manager for the Lime and Neuron contracts for the council engaged share operators. It is really important that at this point a distinction is made between the operators that the council has a contract with, that we have direct oversight of, and private contractors. I think for a lot of the issues that will come up through your investigation you will find that distinction an important one. For example, we know the accidents and incidents that happen on the share scheme but we do not know what happens on privately used ones. That was one of the reasons I made that comment earlier that Queensland Health and DTMR hold information about incidents that occur on devices that are not council contracted ones. We are hoping for information sharing to have a better understanding of that.

That being said, I think largely having a quality relationship with the provider has improved the experience for the company, for their customer but also for other members of the community because we are able to enforce neatness. We are able to say, 'You can only park here or there.' We can enforce geofencing and we can enforce speed limits. They are likely the key areas of concern for this committee. I will pass to James now.

Mr Ashley: One of the things we really focus in on with not only our operators—we also have third-party oversight apps. Just to explain that a little further, each of the operators provides data feeds of all of their devices live to a third-party organisation, which then provides a series of analytical platforms for us to manage location and distribution of devices across Brisbane. Using those platforms we are able to set geofencing locations, which can actually create no-parking zones or go-slow zones or no-travel zones. A great example is Queen Street Mall. Queen Street Mall is nominated a no-travel zone. If someone approaches Queen Street Mall on a device, the device will warn them they are approaching a no-travel zone and they will know, 'I should not go down Queen Street Mall or the device will cut out.' It cuts out safely. If someone does attempt to go down Queen Street Mall, it will simply slow down. It will not throw them off. It will be quite a safe transition to a stop.

On top of that, it will also control where people can park and leave devices. Queen Street Mall is another good example for no parking. If someone does put a device in Queen Street Mall, in the public right of way, they cannot actually end their trip there. If they walk away from the device, they are being financially penalised, essentially, because they are still paying for their trip and it will time out after a period of time. That geofencing is really important for us as contract managers and enablers of this program to manage the distribution of devices around the city and to manage some of the poor rider behaviours that we might see.

Mr KEMPTON: As a result of this inquiry there will be a clear demarcation between unlawful and lawful operators. As council, do you see that you have a role in assisting the police to police that outcome?

Mr Wines: That is an interesting one. Typically, enforcement has always fallen to the state. I think at its heart we are talking about speed limit enforcement and the conduct of people operating a motor vehicle which has always been a state concern. There has been some discussion over the years about council having the power to enforce speed limits generally. Some years ago we had a discussion about council having the capacity to enforce school zones, for example. That was declined at the time when we asked the state to engage with us on that.

There would be a significant operational requirement on us to be able to do that sort of thing. To enforce speed limits on e-scooters would require us to raise new work units inside council which do not exist, so there would be significant associated effort and cost with that which would have to be considered as part of how we did such a thing. We are always happy to have these sorts of discussions, but historically the state have guarded their right to enforce quite jealously. We are happy to engage on it, but at this point the state government is much better placed.

Mr KEMPTON: The problem is that we are getting onto footpaths and into public places and not just on roads, so it is going to be complex.

Mr Wines: Just before we proceed, we have maps of the zones James talked about which we are happy to table.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr KING: I was glad you were talking about geofencing. It is something I am passionate about, having experienced it myself when an e-scooter stopped and I did not know why. RACQ has called for the implementation of increased technology like artificial intelligence for offences such as not wearing a helmet. Has council done any investigation into that and would council support the adoption of further integrated technology in the hire schemes for these purposes, so it is a deterrent rather than a punishment?

Mr Wines: I will pass to James in a moment. As a general comment, there are always three issues and we are basically talking about them: safety of the user and safety of pedestrians near the user; protection of the carriageway for when they are parked; and then maintenance presentation when they are parked. These are the three issues. Safety is a huge issue I think for a whole range of reasons.

When it comes to new technology to enforce wearing a helmet, we would be more than happy to support such a thing. The hows, whys and whats we will leave to people who specialise in these technologies. My understanding is that technologies are being developed—which I believe this committee may have been presented with—that allow that sort of thing.

My view is increasingly that e-scooters are comparable to bicycles up to a certain speed. Once they exceed the capacity to go to a certain speed, they are more comparable to a motor vehicle. What we would expect of a cyclist we should expect of an e-scooter user. I think that would be a general

principle. We expect recreational cyclists and transportation cyclists to wear a helmet. Therefore, we should expect an e-scooter user to wear a helmet. If there is a way of using technology to enforce that or to create an environment where that is expected then I think that is a good thing. I will pass to James because I think there were more specifics as well.

Mr Ashley: I am really glad you brought up the topic of AI. Under our operator agreements we have a requirement for operators to develop initiatives in technology. They are essentially a technology company with assets. One of the initiatives they are working on right now is using AI to manage safe parking of devices. Again, we are talking about virtual parking hubs. Taking a photo of a parked device in a hub can actually inform you that, yes, you have parked that correctly and you can end your trip. They are already looking at AI in safety. I am sure there is a lot of space for development in the helmet space as well because that is a critical safety element to making these e-scooters and e-bikes work for our city.

Mr KING: It is important that e-scooters are under some control by councils. We have spoken to quite a few councils. If they are doing the right thing, it could set the standard for private users. Are there any plans for enforcement because you hold the contracts with these people to say, 'If this technology is there, we would encourage you to use it'?

Mr Wines: I think the contract requires them to consistently improve. If they can do it, we would expect them to begin rolling it out. Is it fair to describe it like that?

Mr Ashley: Correct.

Mr JAMES: Andrew, you have given a very glowing report of Brisbane City Council's experience with e-devices so far. Could you embellish on the bad experiences you have had on this journey?

Mr Wines: I think some of them I am not permitted to talk about.

CHAIR: They do not have to be personal experiences, Councillor.

Mr Wines: There are always two sides to the story. Largely, it is about balance. There are a lot of people who think these devices are wonderful—they are a key part of their life, they are a key part of their daily commute and they rely on them. We have a lot of people who make the counterargument—that they are fast and quiet, they sneak up on you and they make you feel unsafe. That is something we hear.

That probably leads me back to one of the points I made earlier. Building infrastructure that separates cyclists and e-scooters from pedestrians I think is a real advantage for cyclists and e-scooters. We have seen big improvements in community acceptance when there is that separation. There are a lot fewer opportunities for incidents between the two.

Like I say, at its core it is about balance. You want to embrace the new technology and the people who support it, but you do not want people who do not necessarily support it to feel left out or, in some instances, to feel in danger, which they will sometimes say to you when you talk to them. How do you respond to that? As I have said many times already this morning, safety for the user and safety for the nearby pedestrian is a major concern. We have had contractors—is this our second or third contract?

Mr Ashley: This is our third generation.

Mr Wines: This is our third-generation contract. We have had different experiences. I am probably more inclined to talk to you privately rather than here about some of them because there are other mechanics in place that prevent me from speaking about some of the things that happen. The experience has not always been great with all of our contracted external entities, but the ones we have at the moment are very good. I will put it that way.

Ms BUSH: Thank you for coming in today and thank you for your submission, which I have read. Your submission states that you have up to 7,000 devices. James, is that correct? Is that what it stands at?

Mr Ashley: That is correct—7,100 currently.

Ms BUSH: What is the revenue that 7,000 devices generates for the Brisbane City Council per annum?

Mr Wines: That is commercial-in-confidence, but we are happy—

Ms BUSH: Sorry, Councillor. I am asking James. I will remind you that commercial-in-confidence absolutely applies to the contracts, but it does not apply to the quantum funding that that would generate for council.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, the witnesses are entitled to answer the question as they see fit.

Ms BUSH: I have put the question.

Mr Ashley: The revenue under the contracts is commercial-in-confidence, and that is because we run an open-market tender process.

Ms BUSH: The revenue is not reported anywhere in any statement or is not released publicly anywhere in your revenue statements as part of your requirement to publish that?

Mr Ashley: It is published as a consolidated figure.

Ms BUSH: What is it consolidated with?

Mr Ashley: It is consolidated with other transport partnership activities that we undertake such as advertising activities and bus activities.

Ms BUSH: My understanding is—because other councils have spoken to us—that the devices generate for councils around \$2,000 per device. So \$2,000 per device at 7,000 devices is around \$14 million. Would that be an approximate arrangement?

Mr Wines: Again, these matters are commercial-in-confidence. We have contractual arrangements. This is a competitive space. Also, the contract companies are not that nice to each other. We are trying to maintain a fair environment.

Ms BUSH: Absolutely, and I do not want to interfere with that. What I am picking up is that a lot of the submissions have come to us with concerns around not knowing what councils are generating from these devices. It is quite a big contract that you have. Council is potentially generating tens of millions of dollars. What percentage of the tens of millions of dollars that council generates from these devices is put directly back into active transport infrastructure? I am happy for you to take it on notice. I am happy for you to point to where it is published in the budget papers.

Mr Wines: Is the question: what percentage of the revenue associated with e-scooters is attributed to e-scooter infrastructure?

Ms BUSH: Correct.

Mr Wines: I will take that on notice for the time being, unless, Courtney, you have it at hand?

Ms Williamson: One thing we can say is that over the past four years we have spent \$400 million on active transport infrastructure across the city. That is substantially over the number you have brought.

Ms BUSH: They are major projects. What about the suburbs?

Ms Williamson: I think we can take some further direction on that.

Mr Wines: I suppose Courtney's point is more that even the number you speculate here is dwarfed by the number we spend, and—

Ms BUSH: With respect, Councillor, we do not know because we do not know what that is.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, you have asked the question. Let the witness answer, thank you.

Mr Wines: Well, the number provided by Courtney is accurate on those two major projects and, as I said in the statement I just made, the number you speculated is dwarfed by the amount we actually spent. When you say in 'the suburbs', there has been significant work done in the last few years over the Kedron Brook Bikeway and the Downfall Creek Bikeway. There is significant work being done on a range of community bikeways in Coorparoo and in Doughboy, the suburb of Cannon Hill—

Ms BUSH: The question I would like asked and answered—and I am happy for you to take it on notice—is: what percentage of the entire transport infrastructure that council has goes to active transport? I am not referring to just the major projects—I understand that they are sizable, and we welcome those—but the evidence that this committee has heard is that it is the suburbs and it is the surrounding connecting infrastructure that is sadly missing, and that is where the incidents are happening. I am trying to get a—

Mr Wines: As you well know—

Ms BUSH: Sorry, if I could finish. What I am trying to get—

Mr Wines: Well, I am trying to answer as well.

Ms BUSH: I am still going, sorry. What is the percentage of the total transport budget and then how much of the revenue generated from these devices is put back into active transport? I am happy for that to be taken on notice and provided to us.

CHAIR: Again, the witnesses can answer that as they see fit.

Mr Wines: Thank you, Chair. As Ms Bush would well know, council's commitment to active transport exceeds that of all other councils and, in many instances, exceeds that of the Queensland government. I, as a councillor with lord mayors Newman, Quirk and Schinnerer, have been part of what must be more than a billion dollars contributed to active transport across this city over that period. This includes significant active transport infrastructure that has been opened in the most recent of years. The Kedron Brook Bikeway has gone from a recreational link to a key transport link which has seen millions and millions of dollars invested in it. That experience has also been felt in the Enoggera Creek Bikeway and Downfall Creek Bikeway.

The Kedron Brook Bikeway goes the width of the city. It goes from Ferny Grove all the way to the bay, and it is a key link for all kinds of reasons. There are some issues, I will grant: the creek lines that we use for active transport tend to run east-west, and a lot of the commuter journeys would like to go to the city and it is sometimes difficult, because of the geography of Brisbane, to get people around some of the hills.

Better cyclists can take on some more difficult routes, but the incidental user or the modestly involved cyclist requires significant infrastructure, which we have built. As I said before in terms of the number that you speculated, even if we were to accept that to be correct, the amount we spend as a percentage is many orders greater than that. There have been no councils more committed to active transport than the current one. The only ones we beat are other ones that are also us. We come first, second and third. Any sort of speculation that this council or any of its earlier incarnations has been neglectful of active transport is not true, and it is not an honest reflection of our commitment to active transport which is significant and has been going for many years. As you well know, as you are well experienced yourself, this council is an exceptionally committed organisation to active transport infrastructure in particular, not only for cyclists but also for e-scooter users and pedestrians.

Ms BUSH: Councillor, firstly—

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, we will come back to you.

Ms BUSH: My question has not been answered. Given that great news story, all of my questions were taken on notice.

Mr Wines: You have got your answer.

Ms BUSH: So they will not be taken on notice?

Mr Wines: You have received a more than thorough answer.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, we will come back to you if we have time. Councillor Wines, thank you very much for the presentation and for sharing your expertise. Brisbane City Council obviously has a good news story, as other academics have outlined to us. Councillor Wines, in your opening you talked about the challenge of private devices. I think we have come to understand that the share devices, the hire devices, and all of the learnings from that are continuing to improve. It is a cultural problem that has got away from us. I have seen young children on the footpath riding their e-scooters and ringing the bell at people ahead, going at a pace much faster than the pedestrians. Obviously, these are very complex issues. Do you have some advice for the committee as to how we can assist that cultural change back to respectful use of footpaths for those who need to?

Mr Wines: That is a great point. The issue is, again, balance and shared use of assets. With the ones that are under contract from us, we can intervene and set and enforce speed limits, and, as we discussed earlier, an expectation of helmet use. Once you move beyond the contractual control of council and into that private realm, the power of enforcement I think then does move to the state and the QPS. The question was: what and how? As I said earlier, the concomitance is cycling. If you are a high-level, quality cyclist, we would expect you to wear a helmet and be on the road, but if you are a low-level, introductory cyclist, we would anticipate you would be on the footpath. If you have a six-year-old with their second bike, you are fine to be on the footpath. If you are a 30-year-old with an elite, multi-thousand dollar bike, you probably should be on the road. How, in a legislative sense or a regulatory sense, do you draw the line? I think that is probably the challenge.

Then there is enforcement and expectation. We ask a lot of police. What is the expectation on that, from a community and also a governmental position? What is the line? I suppose, for mine, it would be—and I think RACQ touched on this when they presented—that there is a speed point. I think that is fair. It transfers from where it is effectively, as I think RACQ used, 25 kilometres an hour, whereas below 25 kilometres an hour it can probably be compared to a self-propelled bicycle. Above

that, it starts to look a lot like a motorcycle. I am not sure whether or not it is within the scope of this committee, but increasingly you see delivery riders using e-bikes in urban areas and, quite frankly, in a pretty dangerous way a lot of the time. To what extent and scope will you be considering that sort of thing?

It is a new technology that we just have to bring in line with the standing expectations. I would say that the regulations should say, 'This is what we expect from a comparable experience; therefore, we will bring it into that, permitted within a set framework.' Does that answer the question?

CHAIR: I think your point about the speed is very clear. I do not want to see these things banned from footpaths—they need to be sometimes on the footpath—however, if people are around pedestrians they should be slowing down. I think about personal watercraft: if there are people in the water around, you have to travel at six knots. I am thinking something around that. Culturally, how can we get people to go slow around pedestrians and not expect to go fast?

Mr Wines: That is the challenge, isn't it? Courtney, do you want to add to that?

Ms Williamson: At council, we are working to improve the safety across a number of fronts. With the share devices, we have speed limiting and geofencing to ensure they are staying in the safe areas. I refer to the statistic that Councillor Wines mentioned earlier about the CityLink Cycleway. When we separated the devices, share-scheme devices on the footpath dropped from 87 per cent to 14 per cent. I think the fact is that e-scooter riders are unlikely to want to be surrounded by pedestrians. If they have the facility that separated, they would like to use that. We work towards setting up a good network of bikeways and separated and safe facilities that can be used, and that is something we aspire to and work to daily.

CHAIR: I think the geofencing and that technology is very good. I wonder if there is an ability for the tech to be transferrable to private devices—that they must have those if they are going to be in the CBD or whatever, or be compliant with that. I do not know. That might not be a question you could answer for us, but it would certainly be good if all of those devices had that similar arrangement.

Mr Wines: I cannot speak to the technology and the ability to enforce it with externals, but we absolutely can enforce it on internals. I will pass to James on that, but that is something we contractually compel them to do and they put in place. It is not imposed by us; rather, it is imposed through the contract.

Mr Ashley: That is correct.

Mr Wines: Do you want to talk about how geofencing works?

Mr Ashley: Essentially, we used to have the broad guidelines for geofencing. Now the operators themselves come to us. Where they are seeing high-traffic areas or where they are seeing high interactions between e-mobility devices and pedestrians, they will come to us with recommendations on where they would like to geofence for safety. We hold them to account for coming to us with their insights. Bear in mind, these are global operators. They are based in Singapore and San Francisco. They have operated through the Paris Olympics. They have operated worldwide, in very dense cities, so they have a huge amount of experience they can bring to us, and we are tapping into that to make sure we are getting the best.

Mr MELLISH: What are the timeframes for the reopening of the Story Bridge footpath, and is council properly maintaining its other active transport assets?

Mr Wines: As you well know, the footpath has a new solution; it has been constructed. Once again, it is in the shadow of the brand new Kangaroo Point Bridge. That provides in many ways a superior offering for active transport with a shared origin point at Kangaroo Point, and a comparatively close destination point. The asset maintenance program is, as always, ongoing. We are consistently reviewing it and consistently reviewing all of our assets, whether they be active transport or not, to ensure they are always in a condition worthy of our city. There is significant work to ensure the footpath users there and people who are using public infrastructure nearby can do so with absolute confidence. I will invite Bridget to make further comment, please.

Mr MELLISH: And just to the first part of that question as to when it will reopen?

Mr Wines: I think much of the works for the construction of the footpath is concluded; however, when you do these sorts of works there are always linking works to do. I understand it is not very far into the future, but there is ongoing work to ensure the final product is safe for all users and all nearby pedestrians as well.

CHAIR: Bridget, did you have anything to add?

Ms Luke: As part of the footpath closures for Story Bridge we did extensive investigation into what that meant for e-mobility and cyclists—cycling users, I suppose—and I know there was a lot of discussion around taking a lane off the bridge for that. As Councillor Wines said, we are finalising the work on the footpath and we should have an announcement on its opening very soon.

Mr JAMES: You mentioned you have had some success with separation lanes; the statistics are coming down. Do you have a strategy in place or are you working on something to resolve the issue when streets are too narrow to have separation lanes?

Mr Wines: Space is always the big challenge. Your average traffic lane is somewhere between 3.23 and 4.5 metres. A full, proper bikeway is sort of in that 2.5- to 3.5-metre width anyway. When you have narrower streets, the challenge always comes back to the word 'balance'. How do you maintain access and use for everybody in a safe and predictable way? We put the CityLink Cycleway in. Largely because of the e-scooter experience it could be seen as a dangerous success, because it has been able to channel a lot of that usage in a very clear way. E-scooter options are all part of a greater network of active transport. We are dealing with a city where the layout was set out some time ago. The motor vehicle was not even imagined when the streets were laid out, let alone the way they are at the moment. We would have had convicts pulling carriages with mules. The idea that it would be like this was not conceived at the time the city was laid out. My comments largely deal with the inner-city environment. There are other questions, of course. We try to create an external environment where we try to separate cycling infrastructure from road infrastructure for a range of reasons, including safety for everyone, but it is a challenge. Courtney, do you want to add anything to that?

Ms Williamson: We are planning for the cycling network and the active transport network generally. As Councillor Wines said, it is about understanding the conflicts between different users. Driveways are often a challenge, as is having enough space to make sure there is safety for cyclists and e-mobility users. Obviously, there is conflict there with driveways and vehicles. We are constantly assessing and looking for opportunities to put in bikeways. We bring it in with road projects and look for opportunities to incorporate cycleways as part of those as well.

Mr Wines: The inner-city environment is very challenging because—sorry, do you mind if I keep talking?

CHAIR: We have run out of time.

Mr Wines: As I said, we are always happy to talk. Can I conclude by thanking everyone for the opportunity to appear before the committee. I really enjoyed it; my team has enjoyed it. This was a great opportunity to talk about how wonderful the e-scooter experience can be when it is done well.

Ms BUSH: Chair, I had a couple of other questions. In other hearings we have allowed stakeholders to take those questions on notice or to consider them. I wonder if I can either send them through the secretariat or run through them with you now.

Mr Wines: In writing is more than fine. We are happy to take whatever questions. We are more than happy to participate. We look forward to the questions being provided.

CHAIR: We will send them through the secretariat. Obviously, with e-scooters and e-mobility devices we want to make sure we get the best outcomes for the whole community. Thank you very much for being here today. Unfortunately, the time for this session has expired.

ANDERSON, Ms Melanie, General Manager, Strategy and Advocacy, Queensland Tourism Industry Council

CHAIR: If you would like to, you may make an opening statement, after which the committee will have questions for you.

Ms Anderson: Thank you very much for having me here today, Chair and members. I am here to provide a tourism perspective on micromobility, tourism and the visitor economy.

Tourism is the cornerstone of Queensland's prosperity. According to the latest Tourism Research Australia data, visitors spent nearly \$35 billion across Queensland in the year to March 2025. That is around \$96 million every single day. Tourism contributes to \$37.6 billion in gross state product and supports around 277,000 jobs in Queensland. Brisbane alone attracted \$10.7 billion in visitor spending in the year to June 2024, going up to \$11.3 billion by the end of last year. These are record figures. As we head towards the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this demand will only intensify. Managing the safe, efficient movement of millions of visitors during the games and in the lead-up to the games will require every available transport mode, including micromobility.

Micromobility, including e-scooters and e-bikes, is already a valued part of the visitor experience. Griffith University research found that tourists who use e-scooters and e-bikes visit more attractions and spend significantly more than other visitors—in some cases up to 40 per cent more than the normal visitor. The University of Queensland's Micromobility Research Cluster found that around one-third of shared micromobility users are visitors. Tourists consistently describe e-scooters as the highlight of their trip. They say they can see more and do more, accessing authentic neighbourhoods and local businesses. Importantly, 80 per cent of the visitors who use e-scooters and e-bikes say it enhances their view of the city as a vibrant, cultural and active green space. Infrastructure like this not only supports safety; it enhances the tourism experience.

I do acknowledge the RACQ report and community concerns that underpin this inquiry. RACQ did report nearly 6,300 emergency department presentations since 2018 and 15 deaths since November 2022. These figures are aggregate. They do not distinguish between tourists on shared scooters or bikes and locals on private machines. Clinical surveillance from the Jamieson Trauma Institute and Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital shows that the majority of serious injuries involve private, often tampered-with devices, not tourists using hire schemes. That distinction is critical.

International best practice shows us what works. Two examples are London and Singapore. Transport for London's trial has introduced strict controls: borough limits—or suburban limits—and permits; mandatory designated parking bays; geofencing and speed limited areas; and a robust evaluation framework. These measures are keeping footpaths clear and ensuring tourists and locals alike can use devices safely. Under the Active Mobility Act, Singapore enforces clear national rules on where devices can ride, speed limits, device specifications and even a mandatory theory test for riders. This is backed by strong education campaigns and enforcement, giving confidence to both residents and visitors alike. These examples demonstrate that, with infrastructure, rules and education, micromobility can be integrated safely and successfully into busy cities.

For Queensland the solutions are clear: invest in connected, separated pathways around major attractions and games venues; roll out designated parking and geofenced no-ride, no-park zones in high-use precincts; provide simple, tourist orientated education through hire apps, signage and visitor touchpoints such as airports, cruise terminals and other main entry points statewide; and focus enforcement on illegal high-powered devices and unsafe behaviour, not tourists who overwhelmingly use compliant hire fleets.

Micromobility is no longer a novelty; it is a legitimate, sustainable transport mode that supports everyday mobility, enhances tourism and will be critical to moving visitors around efficiently during the 2032 games. The evidence is clear: tourists are using these devices, they are spending more because of them, and they are leaving with a stronger impression of our cities and regional areas. I urge the committee to put in place guardrails that protect pedestrians and communities while preserving these benefits. If we get the balance right, Queensland can set the national benchmark, delivering both safety and a stronger, more sustainable visitor economy.

CHAIR: Thank you. That was very good. We appreciate your submission.

Ms BUSH: Thank you for coming in. Obviously, we have some major events coming up, particularly turning our minds to 2032 and the excitement around that. How significant is the role of hire scheme e-scooters in supporting tourism around major events?

Ms Anderson: I think they are critical. I lived on Grey Street at South Bank for two years and I have lived amongst the hecticness of micromobility. I am also cognitively aware that it is such an easy way for our visitors to get around, particularly if they do not understand bus and train routes and how to get on and pay. Now that we are moving to the tap system, it will become a little bit easier. I think visitors want to be outside and they want to be able to stop and go wherever they want, whether it is to stop for lunch or to have a look at a museum. It is a really curated experience for a visitor, as opposed to using public transport or putting another hire car on the road.

Ms BUSH: What kind of infrastructure do you think the state and councils could be investing in to elevate that experience?

Ms Anderson: I definitely think the delineation between pedestrians and any sort of moving vehicle needs to happen. I know that is starting to roll out, but it is still a highly critical issue. A lot of pathways are high use. Because this is Queensland and everyone loves being outside, residents are riding and walking or running to work, so I think separation of pathway needs to happen. We did put in our submission to the 100-day review of Olympics infrastructure that there need to be clear loops right around the river, perhaps even from Jindalee through to Hamilton, that are connected and separated so that in the future there can be almost a loop that takes micromobility users all the way around the city to get out and about. Once Brisbane sets that precedent and has rules and regulations around it, they should be rolled out across the whole of Queensland, because a traveller will obviously start or end in Brisbane but also travel the length and breadth of Queensland, so having familiarity already with our rules and regulations across the state would be a benefit.

Mr KEMPTON: You make a compelling case for the value of e-mobility to tourism and the industry as a whole. Would the council support a levy to underpin education and safety in respect of the use of these machines?

Ms Anderson: I think that is an interesting proposition. It is definitely worth thinking about. Currently in tourism we are talking about a lot of different levies to fund our sustainable future. Tourism is an industry of 65,000 businesses and the majority of them, around 90 per cent, are micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses, often families working in the business, not on the business. We are sort of debating and researching the options of a bed tax—that is probably not a good term because no-one likes that term—or a visitor levy to help sustain the industry into the long term, with less reliance on government and local governments. Levies are always a challenging area to get into. I think we could perhaps work back with residents and hire companies. Obviously, they have a global footprint. They are multinational businesses. Perhaps we push back a little bit there as well. If it is a levy on rates or however else we do it, specifically and clearly state that it is for our communities' benefit as well as tourists, because having that sort of flexibility and safety for our own residents is probably the most important thing.

Mr KING: I think the previous question is a good segue into talking about training. You mentioned in your submission that people coming from different jurisdictions can be confused about the rules. Obviously, training is one area to look at. From your experience in tourism, are there any other ways to make it safer for everyone who comes here to understand our rules?

Ms Anderson: We can definitely do that through marketing to our tourists and working with Tourism and Events Queensland. We also have things like QR codes. When the natural disaster season is upon us, we use them so our visitors can connect into support mechanisms, training and help. Maybe we could have something like that in hotel rooms. There are lots of different mechanisms we can use to help educate our tourists before they even step onto a device. We would absolutely be open to that.

Mr KING: It is a constantly evolving technology to keep abreast of.

CHAIR: Thank you, again, for your submission. You mentioned the clear loops around the city in your 100-day review. I do not remember that being in the submission for this inquiry. Would you like to expand on that?

Ms Anderson: It was not done as any sort of practical research or feasibility study.

CHAIR: It makes practical sense, though.

Ms Anderson: That is right. It is really about creating that pathway as we move towards the games. Everyone can see that we have precincts that will be important during the games such as South Bank, Woolloongabba, Suncorp and Hamilton. It just makes sense to loop them and have them connected. We already have fantastic pathways in New Farm. We have the footbridges starting to come along such as the Kangaroo Point Bridge. Hopefully, we will have the Toowong-West End footbridge.

It just makes sense to think about how we can connect them. Eventually, we can present a map of Brisbane to show a tourist how they can go from one end to the other in a day. It might take them to Howard Smith Wharves, which they may not have found originally without the map. It will open up the opportunity to go further into our communities and regions and get that diversity and to have the spending not just go into the main centres. With the Paris games being emission-free, as they stated, and with how we are trying to move towards that too, it makes sense to have that connectivity both on the road for vehicles and on the paths for micromobility devices and walking. If they are shaded with trees too, it would be a really good experience.

CHAIR: Do you have more details on the London experience? You talked about the boroughs. Can you share with us some insight from that?

Ms Anderson: We had the Paris tourism organisation present to our conference last year. It was very interesting how they drove that connectivity, and they did that through education, QR codes and maps so people could walk or use micromobility devices to get from A to B rather than use any other form of transport. Obviously the train network was very good, as ours will be too. They heavily promoted the alternative means of transport. I presume we will do the same thing and really push that for our state.

Mr MELLISH: Your submission calls for the development of clearly signed walking and riding routes. Can you see the benefit of more infrastructure investment in dedicated pathways? We have some in the city.

Ms Anderson: Yes, 100 per cent. If we look at South Bank—and I know there is a master plan to improve that pathway along the river—people are walking, running, riding bikes and riding e-scooters and the tourists do not really know where they are going. It is hectic. I absolutely think that anything that is moving faster than a walker needs to be separate. The signage is also very confusing for the wayfarer in a lot of areas in Brisbane. We have tried to make the pathways work and retrofitted the wayfaring signage. You might be walking on a walking path, but it could suddenly end because you were supposed to have turned left and gone down another side. That is very confusing for visitors, especially non-English-speaking visitors.

Mr MELLISH: I think every bridge in the city has a different set-up. Some of them have e-scooters down the middle and some of them have them on the left. I get confused and I am not a tourist.

Ms Anderson: Very much so. Once that concept is settled, we would like to see it rolled out across the whole of Queensland. There is the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. There are a lot of opportunities to use micromobility devices across lots of other regional areas. Having one set of rules that runs across the state will make it so much easier for people to come and experience the good, not the frantic and scary.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Thank you, again, for your submission. The time for this session has expired. There are no questions on notice, so you do not have any homework.

Ms Anderson: That is fantastic.

CHAIR: I would not mind, though, if you shared with us the submission you made to the 100-day review, just as additional information. Enjoy the balance of your day.

Ms Anderson: I will. Thank you very much.

HORDERN, Ms Alexandra, General Manager, Regulatory and Consumer Policy, Insurance Council of Australia (via videoconference)

PEARCE, Ms Alix, General Manager, Climate, Social Policy and International Engagement, Insurance Council of Australia (via videoconference)

CHAIR: Good morning. Would you like to make a short opening statement, after which the committee will have some questions for you?

Ms Pearce: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee during its inquiry today into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. It is an important one and we really welcome it. My name is Alix Pearce, and I am the General Manager for Climate, Social Policy and International Engagement. I am joined by my colleague Alexandra Horder, who is the General Manager of Regulatory and Consumer Policy. We are both here today because this policy issue that affects e-bikes and e-scooters actually interacts with insurance in a number of ways. Alexandra and her team manage compulsory third-party insurance, whereas I have responsibility for the various risk factors that come with personal mobility devices and how that impacts on our built environment. I am really looking forward to having a discussion across both those themes with you today.

By way of background, the Insurance Council is the representative body of the general insurance industry in Australia. We represent about 85 per cent of total premiums written by general insurers, and that is spanning both insurers and reinsurers. Australia's general insurance sector provides protection for 41 million homes, buildings and vehicles against unexpected events. We welcome the committee's inquiry into the growing use of alternative low-emissions transport, particularly around e-bikes and e-scooters.

We support the electrification of Australia's transport system as a key step towards decarbonisation, aligned with state and federal policies; however, this transition must be managed carefully to address the emerging risks that we are seeing. In particular, rising demand has led to increased imports of cheap, noncompliant e-scooters and e-bikes which pose a higher risk of battery fires, a higher risk of injury and a higher risk of property damage. This really does highlight the need to review both the current legislation and our regulatory settings.

We have presented on these issues before, including to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety and the New South Wales Legislative Council. We emphasised in those forums that electrified transport includes three distinct categories, and they do need to be treated distinctly as they come with different risk profiles and different solutions to help mitigate the risk. To be clear, the three categories are: road registered EVs—these do not pose higher fire risks, but when a fire does occur they need to be managed differently; light delivery EVs—things like electric golf buggies; and personal mobility devices—they are the e-scooters and the hoverboards, which can present a higher risk of battery fire and a higher risk of causing injury, death and property loss.

We are also seeing that proper storage, consumer awareness and stricter imports and regulations for lithium ion batteries are absolutely essential. We welcomed the New South Wales government's August 2024 announcement of new standards for battery powered personal mobility devices, and we encourage other states, including Queensland, to adopt a nationally consistent approach to testing, certification and labelling.

Finally, we also support a clear legislative insurance framework to address the growing number and severity of PMD related accidents. E-bikes and e-scooters are not required to be registered, so there is currently no requirement for compulsory third-party insurance coverage in Queensland or elsewhere in Australia. As you will hear from my colleague Alexandra, the injuries from e-scooter accidents are not covered under the CTP scheme, and that is leaving third parties potentially facing higher costs with no legal recourse. Whilst we recognise the need for suitable insurance, we do not believe it should be provided through the CTP scheme, given a lack of registration and premium collection requirements. We expect that insurance products for e-scooters and similar devices will become available over time. It is important to understand that if e-scooters were added to the CTP scheme a system for collecting premiums would be necessary.

Just to round out before we hand over for questions, we are monitoring developments in other states. On 13 July 2025 it became legal to ride personal mobility devices in public areas in South Australia. There was a parliamentary inquiry in New South Wales in 2024 in relation to e-mobility devices, and we expect that the use of private e-scooters and other mobility devices on public paths and on roads will be legalised there as well. It is a complex issue. The insurance industry is very pleased to be able to examine it further with the Queensland government. We thank you again for the opportunity, and we are happy to take any questions.

Ms BUSH: You kind of touched on my question when you said the CTP scheme is not really the preferred model. You mentioned that some private services might come into the market. Obviously, third-party claims and insurance have been a huge issue. What are the models and what are the solutions?

Ms Hordern: It is quite a complex problem to propose a solution to at the moment. Our key issue is that if registration fees are not being collected on these devices then it is not appropriate for them to be included in coverage in the CTP schemes because we are not collecting premiums in order to pay out losses. At the moment, it is not a requirement for private e-scooter riders to hold public liability or even personal insurance. There may be opportunities to look at requirements around insurance coverage for some of these devices. At the moment, the Insurance Council is comfortable working with the government on potential solutions rather than proposing a particular outcome.

Ms BUSH: If councils are procuring these services, should they be insisting they have their own CTP insurance as a condition of being awarded a contract? Would that be a solution?

Ms Hordern: For councils, absolutely. Most councils do require a level of insurance coverage for those contracted personal mobility devices, and that is something that can continue to be investigated—absolutely.

Mr KEMPTON: The whole question of insurance is complex. There may be a number of potential liabilities. Let's take a hypothetical example: if a parent buys an unlawful and noncompliant e-bike, which is essentially an electric motorbike, for an under-age person and that person rides it to school and injures somebody in the school grounds, the liability could potentially fall from the parent to the operator to the school. This is going to be a nightmare. I know we are looking at solutions for CTP, but it is a complex issue. We will have to come up with more than just some kind of scheme. It will need to be comprehensive—who will pay, who will collect and how it will all be done. It is a big issue.

Ms Pearce: Yes, it is a big challenge. The other thing to think about here is not just what is the scheme and the solution for when an accident does happen but how you tackle the risk in the first place. Part of that is having clear requirements and standards around product imports and labelling. A lot of people, like the mum in your example who buys the e-bike or e-scooter for Christmas, are probably not aware that they have bought a product that is not made to standard and is high risk or aware of the requirements around using the correct charging device to ensure the lithium ion battery does not ignite and cause a fire, which then causes a range of additional challenges. When we think of this challenge, we think of it holistically. How do we put restrictions in place to stop the dangerous products being imported? How do we improve consumer literacy around the product? What role does CTP play for those compliant e-bikes and e-scooters?

Ms Hordern: I think there are examples from other jurisdictions in Australia. As the committee would be aware, from 13 July this year privately owned personal mobility devices may be legally used in South Australia, but they have some rules around who can use those legally. That includes a minimum rider age of 16. They are not required to hold a driver's licence and the device is not required to be registered, but helmets are required, as are flashing lights at night or in low-light conditions. Obviously, there are some rules and regulations around riding under the influence being prohibited. The use of mobile phones while riding is also prohibited. They do not allow additional passengers on those e-mobility devices. There are some guardrails that can be put in place. We will be watching the outcome of the South Australian legislation carefully.

Mr MELLISH: Your submission highlighted a New South Wales government communications campaign providing education on the life cycle of a lithium battery. Can you expand on this program and how state and local governments in Queensland could learn from that campaign?

Ms Pearce: Absolutely. The ICA has been proud to be a partner with Fire and Rescue NSW on an education campaign to lift literacy and understanding around lithium ion batteries as in how best to charge them, what the safe disposal of a lithium ion battery looks like and what steps you can take to minimise risk around personal mobility devices—for example, ensuring there is sufficient airflow around lithium ion batteries; storing batteries and lithium ion products in cool, dry places out of direct sunlight; and avoiding using batteries or products or chargers that are damaged, overheating or showing signs of failure. We have partnered with Fire and Rescue NSW to help roll out that campaign. We do see consumer literacy as a really important driver and lever. We recommend and encourage the participation and collaboration with other state fire services to see a national campaign rolled out, because we know this challenge does not stop at different borders. We have seen some early and encouraging responses to the campaign.

The other thing to note is that we think the Queensland Fire Department's submission to this inquiry hit some really key points that are worth underscoring and are reflective of the points that we have seen in New South Wales as well—for example, their points around most rechargeable lithium ion batteries, when used and charged appropriately and manufactured to high standards, will be safe. For those batteries, that is where we want to see the literacy improve. Also, the data research findings and observations from firefighters in Queensland are all consistent in demonstrating that lithium ion batteries used to power e-mobility devices can be a serious fire risk. Finally, e-scooter batteries are of high concern to firefighters and battery failures in e-scooters in Queensland have significant consequences. Absolutely we think there is good alignment there on messaging and there is definitely ample opportunity for a consumer campaign in the state.

Mr JAMES: Are e-mobility devices currently insurable under your house and contents policy?

Ms Pearce: That is a great question. The insurance of personal mobility devices falls under an individual's home and contents insurance. Strata insurance, importantly, does not insure individual products or the property of an individual. As we know, strata insurance covers common property, although the risk posed to strata buildings by personal mobility devices—for example, if you have unsafe charging of e-scooters in your apartment complex—will be considered by the underwriter when considering the strata insurance of assessing the relevant risks.

Generally, home and contents policies do not prohibit personal mobility devices. Rather, insurers recommend best action is taken to mitigate risk and exposure. It is important to note that insurers do assess personal e-devices in terms of the increased fire risk that these items pose and they do price them accordingly. If you are able to demonstrate that it is a reputable bricks-and-mortar store that has been used to purchase the device and that it has been charged in a safe manner using the appropriate charger in a cool location out of direct sunlight, all of those things are really good steps to show strong risk management and would be considered in underwriting.

Mr KING: You have partially answered my question. It was about charging and reputable brands. As these devices get older and the charger fails, you just duck down to a shop and buy a different charger with multiple plugs—

Ms Pearce: Exactly.

Mr KING: Perhaps there could be a standardised plug or an education campaign about the reputable brands, because that is where we run into trouble. A good quality device has a battery that supports smart charging and will turn off when it is charged, but an aftermarket, cheaper charger does not work that way. We have to make recommendations, so is there anything governments can do to make that safer?

Ms Pearce: That is a great point. People really do not know. It is quite common to duck out, as you say, and grab a non-compatible charger or a cheaper one that is not from a bricks-and-mortar store, and that can cause real challenges. I think New South Wales offers a really instructive case study. They have introduced new mandatory safety standards as well as a new information standard in the state. That requires a supplier to provide clear and accurate product safety information including details about safe use, charging, storage, fire prevention and disposal of devices and their batteries. If you are looking at something you can do, the New South Wales one is a really good example to lift and shift. I know Queenslanders are unique, so you might want to add your own twist to it, but I think there are some really good foundations in that approach taken in New South Wales.

Mr KING: I know that the devices that are out there now do not have a standardised or tamper-proof plug, and that is the risk. Thank you for that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Alix and Alex. Thank you very much for being here and thank you again for your submission. It is very articulate across all manner of areas, from building and contents policies to batteries et cetera. I want to explore further a CTP scheme that would allow protection for people if they are injured. I note you talk about there being no jurisdictions in Australia where that is covered. Do you have any understanding from around the world of some sort of CTP insurance for these devices, or is it just up to the individual when they acquire one of these devices?

Ms Hordern: Given that this is an emerging area, we are not aware of any concrete examples of a CTP-like scheme for personal mobility devices. We anticipate that there may be developments in this area over the next couple of years as governments and jurisdictions all around the world are looking to deal with these sorts of things, but there is not a particular model that we would point to at this point.

Mr KEMPTON: Is there any instance presently where the Nominal Defendant might become involved when somebody suffers a loss or injury from presumably a lawful e-mobility device?

Ms Hordern: There was a move when the South Australian legislation was going through. The opposition proposed an amendment so that the use of personal mobility devices would be subject to South Australia's Nominal Defendant scheme. That Nominal Defendant scheme is obviously a safety net under the CTP insurance where a responsible vehicle is uninsured or the at-fault driver cannot be identified. The amendment proposed that injuries from accidents involving personal mobility devices would be covered by the Nominal Defendant where the at-fault rider is identified or the device is uninsured.

The argument was that, because personal mobility devices are heavier and in some cases faster than regular pushbikes and because accidents are likely, there should be a safety net of Nominal Defendant coverage so that people injured are not left without remedies. Those amendments were opposed when the bill was returned to the House of Assembly, but the government did commit to reviewing the operation of the new laws in the first 12 months and considering at that time whether the personal mobility devices should be included in the Nominal Defendant scheme. We do not yet have any data about the possible inclusion of personal mobility devices in the Nominal Defendant scheme, and we are continuing to monitor those developments with interest in South Australia.

Mr KEMPTON: It might be interesting in Queensland where an unregistered motorcycle may well fit within the scheme but an electric motorcycle, which is an unlawful e-bike—it is technically the same thing—may not. It is going to be a complex issue, isn't it?

Ms Hordern: It is quite complex, but we would caution that Nominal Defendant schemes should not be used as a bucket to cover vehicles which fall outside of normal road registration. Bikes, scooters and skateboards can also cause injuries to pedestrians but are not covered under Nominal Defendant schemes. There is a need to ensure that all of these schemes remain sustainable while protecting consumers and individuals who may be harmed.

CHAIR: Are you aware of any areas where CTP or something like that might be collected at the point of sale for these devices? I note in your submission that the insurance industry does not support CTP. I am sure you have done a lot of thinking around this. I am trying to explore your understanding of those areas. Are you aware of any areas where they do collect CTP at point of sale? I can imagine there will be challenges for imported vehicles. I wonder whether there is a crossover with imported vehicles as opposed to e-devices because imported vehicles end up with CTP cover when they are registered.

Ms Hordern: The registration system, as you are aware, is what drives those payments into the CTP schemes. Charging a fee at the point of sale may become complicated because the payments into the CTP schemes are based on the use of the vehicle. Consumers who are perhaps using the mobility devices infrequently may have concerns about the payment being taken at the point of sale. There would also be complexity around levying the right amount for a device that perhaps was only used for 12 months or one that was used for 12 years, for example. There is quite a bit of complexity involved in that. I am not aware of any specific examples where such a process has been undertaken, but we can take that on notice and have a look and see if we can find anything.

CHAIR: That would be great. I appreciate that. Thank you very much, Alexandra and Alix, for being with us today and for sharing your knowledge and research. We look forward to your advice regarding that information. If you could get an answer back to the secretariat by Friday, 10 October, that would be appreciated. Thank you for joining us today. Enjoy the balance of your day.

Proceedings suspended from 10.27 am to 10.41 am.

SCRUBY, Mr Harold, Chief Executive Officer, Pedestrian Council of Australia (via videoconference)

CHAIR: Good morning. Would you like to make an opening statement before we ask questions?

Mr Scruby: Yes. I represent Pedestrian Council of Australia. We are known as the walking class and we are here to represent pedestrians.

Ms BUSH: Good morning. It is lovely to meet with you. You may have missed the session earlier with Brisbane City Council, but I am very interested in the percentage of revenue and investment that councils put into active transport to make it a better experience for pedestrians, bicycle users and e-mobility device users. I am after your thoughts on what needs to be done in terms of an infrastructure solution to make pedestrians feel safer to coexist with people who want to use e-mobility devices.

Mr Scruby: We have had a long struggle to change the vernacular here. There is a lot of misleading information about e-scooters and a lot of e-bikes being active transport. In one of our presentations we got the top people in the world in this area to talk about whether or not an e-scooter is active transport. Each and every one of them said they are actually the antithesis of active transport and they are correctly described as inactive transport or, better still, micromobility. It got so bad in New South Wales that half the department started calling themselves active transport while promoting e-scooters. We had a cartoon made of Santa Claus, who was very fat. He was riding an e-scooter past Transport for New South Wales and he said, 'I thought this was active transport,' and the scooter was sponsored by Ozempic.

I want to bring to the very firm attention of the committee that you get as much action when you hop on an e-scooter as you do when loading your dishwasher. Active transport is cycling and walking. It is not e-scooters and it is not e-bikes which have been modified where no-one is pedalling for even five metres. I think we have to get the terminology correct.

It might sound trite, but the misleading side of this is that people who are riding e-scooters to work or whatever think they are getting some sort of health benefit. The problem is that you are getting the opposite, for two reasons: one, the person who is riding the device is not getting any activity; and, two, and more importantly, they are also dissuading people who are wanting to walk and possibly even cycle because it has become so dangerous.

I take the committee back to the very first time Queensland wanted to introduce e-scooters. We put in an extensive submission to Queensland. We said that the idea an e-scooter should be allowed to be on the same footpath as a pedestrian at 25 kilometres an hour was utterly absurd and would lead to lots of deaths and injuries. We were ignored and, of course, we all know what happened.

Following that, I was at a surgeons conference about 18 months ago in Queensland. One of the people from transport was there and I said, 'Why did you reduce it to 12 from 25?' We all knew the reason for doing that; it was that too many people were being killed and injured. I said, 'What made you choose 12?' He said, 'It is half of 25.' I said, 'But where is the evidence to choose 12? By the way, half of 25 is actually mathematically 13,' but that is just being pedantic. There was no evidence provided to go to 12.

Ms BUSH: I am conscious that we do not have a lot of time with you. In terms of separated infrastructure for these devices, is that something you would support?

Mr Scruby: Absolutely, irrefutably, unequivocally, yes. In our humble view, e-scooters should never be mixed with pedestrians. That is not good for either, and neither are e-bikes. They should be separated. Unfortunately, the technology has emerged far faster than the law and the infrastructure.

Mr KEMPTON: Harold, there is an argument that, especially in the CBD, the speed limit of these e-mobility devices should not exceed that of people walking, but the definition of a pedestrian is not just somebody walking along. We have aged people and we have people with hearing disabilities, vision disabilities and so on. There is a range of people who use the footpath who probably would have difficulty interacting with e-mobility devices—not only those that are being ridden but also those that have been left lying around in any circumstances. Would you like to comment on that?

Mr Scruby: You can judge a society by the way it treats people with disabilities, the way it treats its children and the way it treats elderly people. At that same conference I mentioned, one of the directors of Vision Australia made a presentation. The most important part of it was that he said, 'In a survey recently, 90 per cent of our members now feel unsafe when walking on a footpath because of e-devices.' Is there anyone in this room who does not agree with that point? What sort of

society have we become when someone who cannot ride a bicycle, who cannot drive to work and who has to use the footpath to get to public transport now does not feel safe in that environment? In fact, if you look at the World Health Organization and the United Nations they are, in fact, protected by those rights which we have trammelled. I think it is time we actually put them first and put pedestrians first, not e-mobility.

Mr KING: Thanks for your submission. I want to touch on what you mentioned regarding disability, e-scooters and the like and the hindrance they provide to accessibility for our public spaces. You talked before about no e-mobility devices in shared spaces. We need to remember that some mobility devices for disabilities and the aged have registration so they can go on a road where they need to. Are they a different category because they are speed restricted?

Mr Scruby: Yes, apologies for that.

Mr KING: No, I was not picking you up.

Mr Scruby: No, I was wrong.

Mr KING: I was just saying that because they are in the mix as well and they also feel threatened by people whizzing past on these much faster, more powerful devices.

Mr Scruby: Yes. The interesting point you just mentioned is that they are governed. If we had started this whole thing, for instance, we could have governed e-devices up to 10 kilometres an hour—in my view, that should be the maximum for any of these devices when they interact with pedestrians—and we would not have the problems we have today. A speed limit is completely different from a governed device. A speed limit is simply telling someone, 'That's the speed limit,' but how have people broken that rule?

I come back to what I think—and I walked through the CBD and I was just horrified at how I felt. I am 78, and I felt very threatened walking through there with my wife. May I suggest—and this might be a bit of an idea—that every member of the committee should go blindfolded through the CBD for a day and see how they feel when e-scooters pass them. Why do the e-scooter people and the e-bike people not agree that we should have the same right? They want the 'metre matters'. Why do they have 'a metre matters' when they are on the road, but we do not have 'a metre matters' on the footpath? Why should we ever be less than a metre away from one of these devices? I think there are some ideas here. I am sorry; I am probably digressing.

If we really want to have e-mobility, cities have to start emulating Paris, London, Madrid, Tokyo—most of the major cities are now moving to 30 kilometres per hour. If you move to 30 kilometres an hour you will have no trouble putting e-devices on the road. If you look at Victoria—and I think it is absurd—they have gone to 60. E-scooters can now travel on roads where the speed limit is 60 kilometres an hour. That is absurd, too, because the e-scooter is not allowed to go over 20 kilometres an hour.

The great opportunity for everyone is to grab this idea. Most New Zealand cities are now 30 kilometres an hour, and 30 kilometres an hour is coming big-time. I have just come back from Europe and most towns in Europe are now 30 kilometres an hour. If you want these devices to work well, just make it 30 and put them on the road.

Mr JAMES: Harold, you make some very good points. You probably answered my question. I come from Cairns. The city is now restricted to 40 kilometres an hour everywhere and it saved a lot of pedestrians' lives from being hit by cars in particular. Now we have e-devices. In your conclusion you say we need urgent actions and we have to reclaim the footpath. Where do we start? Is that a good starting point?

Mr Scruby: I was very lucky. Back in 2000 the then minister in New South Wales appointed an e-scooter advisory committee. Unfortunately, Queensland did not go through that; they rushed. We had everyone on that committee who was relevant: police, NRMA, Bicycle New South Wales and seven councils. We had Transport for New South Wales running it. We had ourselves and we had Guide Dogs. Every imaginable key stakeholder was on that committee. Committee members, listen carefully to this. These were our key recommendations for e-scooters: one, minimum age 17; two, a licence; three, insurance; four, a numberplate; and five, maximum speed on the shared path of 10 kilometres per hour. They were the five essential ingredients for e-scooters.

That minister retired to run for federal parliament and the new minister came in—I will tell you what he did in a minute which will surprise all of you—and threw all of that advice in the bin. It was the only committee that I have ever been on that was unanimous. Every one of those members—I think I have sent you that and if you want a copy of it I can give it to you—on that e-scooter advisory committee was unanimous that there should be five prerequisites for an e-scooter. I think most of you, if we could turn back the clock, would say that is pretty logical.

CHAIR: It is a point well made. In our pack we have the letters you sent in as well as your original submission you have just outlined, and it contains an interesting video. Thank you very much.

Mr MELLISH: Thanks for your submission and for appearing. Your submission spoke about needing a clear plan from police on enforcement. What are the current enforcement issues as you see them and, in your view, what more should be done or what should be done differently?

Mr Scruby: It is on record. At the surgeons conference 18 months ago in Brisbane there was a police officer giving a very good demonstration. When it was over—and he was boasting how many bicycle or e-scooter riders they had booked—I said, ‘How many e-scooter riders have you booked for failing to give way to pedestrians?’ You are all sitting down: none. We have been the last road user considered in this whole thing. No-one has thought of pedestrians. No-one gives a damn about pedestrians. This is a modern device that is going to suddenly save the planet and get people out of cars. Has anyone done a major study to see what the benefits have been versus all the problems? Has anyone seen whether people have actually gotten out of their cars? Has anyone looked at the health side of this?

I hope you have seen our logo which shows the evolution of man. He comes from being an ape and he suddenly stands upright. Then he gets on an e-scooter and next thing he is massively obese. That is where we are heading. No-one is looking at all of these things. We have to walk; it is the best exercise for all of us and what have we done? No. 1, hop on an e-scooter—that will save your life; and No. 2, make the footpath so hostile that no-one wants to go there. I do not know what we are doing to ourselves. We have this technology and the world has suddenly become the emperor in new clothes. No-one wants to recognise the elephant in the room. These things are a good idea but they have to have their right place. There is no enforcement; we all know that.

Did you see the number in my submission? In the e-scooter admissions to Royal Melbourne Hospital, did you see the number who were intoxicated? It was 58 per cent who were intoxicated, and that is only alcohol. Police now tell us that drugs are worse than alcohol—not that alcohol is not a drug. Are we seeing this tsunami that is coming? Half these e-scooters are being used for pub crawls. What have we done to ourselves? I see some of you are getting close to my age. How do you feel when you know that the highest cause of avoidable death after 50 is a fall, and you have someone whizzing past you on the footpath who weighs 80 kilos and they are on a 60-kilo device? Do you feel happy and safe? Do you want to go shopping in an environment like this?

CHAIR: I appreciate your passion, Harold, but I want you to know that we do care about pedestrians and a number of our witnesses have made very good points about pedestrians, particularly the RACQ.

Mr Scruby: That is good. That is great.

CHAIR: Thank you again for your submission. I want to explore those agreed terms that you did in New South Wales with the committee. Can you go through those that had unanimous support? Could you repeat the stakeholders for us?

Mr Scruby: No. 1, a minimum age of 17; No. 2, a driver's licence; No. 3, a numberplate; No. 4, insurance; and No. 5, a maximum speed of 10 kilometres per hour on any shared path. We are different from you. Queensland is a total shared path. We would not advocate—because a shared path should be constructed under very definite conditions such as Austroads guidelines. We do not believe you should just open up every path to ride bikes on, but that is your decision and I do not think you will turn that back.

The other problem we have here is that, like you, children up to the age of 16 can ride on any path here and the police say they cannot issue penalty notices to children. Here they are the main problems on our e-bikes. I hope you will ask me a question about that in a minute because I have some very interesting things to tell you about that, especially after we had an e-bike death yesterday, which is just horrible. They are the five basic essentials.

The police are really keen to have numberplates. Imagine being a police officer. You are on the footpath and a kid comes whizzing past. Are you going to try to stop him? Half the kids just ride off, or if they hit someone they ride off. I have just been in Europe, where a lot of places have numberplates on e-scooters and e-bikes now, and I think that is coming. Let's all try to cast our minds hence five to 10 years and imagine what these devices are looking like. I think I sent you some photos. I have just been in the Baltic States and they have these new hybrid e-scooters which are half bike and half e-scooter. I think you are the only state where you allow a saddle on an e-scooter, but that is coming. If you look at an illegal e-bike versus a legal e-scooter with a saddle, you almost have the same device just with different sized wheels.

CHAIR: Mr Scruby, you mentioned some information about children. Is it a brief piece of information or would you like to table it?

Mr Scruby: The main point I wanted to make about e-bikes is the problem we have. You know we are all born with nine railway gauges in our DNA, don't you? We all have to be different. As you know, every state and territory has different rules about e-bikes and e-scooters. We cannot help ourselves. A month ago I was giving a submission to the Western Australian inquiry into this, and three and six months back I did the New South Wales one. Each and every one of us is different. In Western Australia you can ride virtually anything—a hoverboard, whatever you like—on the footpath, and now they are suddenly suffering the consequences.

The point I wanted to make about all of this is that we need to raise this to the national level. We have a local member here, Sophie Scamps, who is trying to get e-bikes categorised so that we cannot bring in all these illegal ones. She is our local member. I should mention to the committee that my daughter-in-law is the state local member here and she is doing a lot of work on e-scooters. I wanted to talk about e-bikes. Can I talk about that?

CHAIR: Very quickly. Remember, we have your submission and the other letters, but if there is a point you want to make very quickly then please do.

Mr Scruby: Very quickly. I sent you those two letters. I have just received from Queensland a letter from Fair Trading. That letter from Fair Trading is sensational. We are using it here now and across Australia to show politicians what Queensland is doing. That is a No. 1, platinum letter. No. 2, you have a flyer there from the police telling people the definition of an e-bike. We are just on the cusp of getting the same.

Unbeknown to all of us, 2½ years ago Minister Rob Stokes changed the law in New South Wales to make e-bikes 500 watts. No-one knew what was coming. There was no consultation. I did an FOI to find out why. We still do not know. All of the entities that wanted it were redacted. Transport did not want it. Police did not want it. No-one wanted it. Now we have 500 watts and you have 250, so if you want to ride from Tweed Heads into the Gold Coast you are riding an unregistered, uninsured, unlicensed motorbike—no motorbike helmet, the lot. That is in that letter and in that flyer from your police. That is going to create a conundrum for all of us. We should be aspiring to get New South Wales to reverse it because they are bringing in these 500 watters. If we go for a holiday to Queensland and we shove the bike on the back, what are we going to be doing?

CHAIR: Mr Scruby, thank you very much for your passion and your evidence today. You represent your stakeholders very well. There are no questions on notice. Thank you for sharing with us all of that information. The time for this session has expired.

FRENCH, Mr Paul, Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group

POWRIE, Mr Ross, Private capacity

CHAIR: Welcome. It is good to see you again. I would like to remind you that the committee has your submissions, so please focus on anything additional or any points that you really want to stress. You have three minutes each to present.

Mr French: Thank you very much, Chair and committee, for allowing me to appear here today. I would like to echo Mr Scruby's comments in particular about the 30 kilometres an hour speed limit that should be applied across Queensland as the default urban speed limit. I understand the committee is looking for some very cheap solutions, and that could be done by the Queensland government with the stroke of a pen, by simply changing the road rules. I have been involved with the CBDBUG and have been campaigning for that for 20 years now. There is a huge amount of international evidence showing that that is the safe maximum speed in quiet local back streets. For motorists it would add only a few seconds to their journey—because most people start in a quiet back street, get out onto a major road and then have the reverse at the other end—so there is virtually no impact for motorists but a great deal of enhanced safety for vulnerable road users in those back streets.

I wish to talk about some of council's claims in terms of their infrastructure. We have been delighted with the CityLink Cycleway that was delivered during COVID and also the recently opened Kangaroo Point Bridge, which was done to a considerable extent with federal funding. However, in the CBD alone there is virtually no infrastructure for people riding bikes and e-mobility devices. In fact, there is no set definition for what the CBD is, but if we look at it generally from Turbot Street down to the river then we have about 24 kilometres of roads and about double that amount of footpaths—most of the streets in the CBD, if not all, have footpaths on both sides—but we have only about three kilometres of separated paths for cyclists and e-mobility riders. Most of that is the Bicentennial Bikeway around the river. We have three blocks on George Street, basically Elizabeth Street and one block of William Street—literally nothing.

Cyclists and e-mobility riders do not want to be on the footpaths with pedestrians. That is the fundamental mindset. We would much prefer to have our own space separate from motorists because, unfortunately, we do have a fairly hostile culture on the road here where people believe that motorists pay for the roads when in fact they do not. I think I mentioned in our initial submission that motor vehicle registration in Queensland, based on the latest national data from the BITRE, accounted for only 28 per cent of total road expenditure across the entire state. Overwhelmingly, roads in Queensland, and particularly in Brisbane, are owned and paid for by councils. On that basis, cyclists and e-mobility riders are already paying for the roads and what little footpaths and bikeways we have via their rates.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Ross, would you like three minutes as well?

Mr Powrie: Chair and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Ross Powrie. I am a husband, a father of a 2½-year-old and a member of the Gold Coast Bicycle User Group. I have been invested in this inquiry since the initial town hall meeting down at Elanora with the Hon. Laura Gerber and I provided a written submission, No. 1039. For the last three years I have used an electric-assist cargo bike as a car replacement for our family. We still have a car but I hardly use it. I commute to work, which is about a 16-kilometre round trip, every day on the e-bike, and I can carry a full week's worth of shopping on it, along with my 2½-year-old. We can load up beach gear on it and we can head down the Oceanway on it. We can do Bunnings runs with it. It is a workhorse and it meets all the requirements laid out by TMR as a legal e-bike. When it is just me on the bike, I accept the risk; I ride on the roads with traffic. However, when I am with my daughter, I am much more risk averse. We have some bike lanes on our journey, but these are always filled with parked cars. Drivers are not looking for a father and his daughter on a bike. The only option we have is to cycle on the pavement, but this puts us in conflict with pedestrians. I do not want to be there, but there is no alternative. We slow right down, we ding our bell and we give those on foot priority, but the pavements on the coast are just not designed for bikes.

Each evening my family and I walk around the local lake on shared paths, and on the weekends we head down the Oceanway. It is beautiful, but I am constantly on edge because, again, an erratic two-year-old is running everywhere. We share this path with runners, with bikes and with scooters, and these people are not hoons; they are just using a form of transport that moves at a faster speed than us on foot. This on-edge feeling I have when walking is exactly the same feeling I have when riding on the road—worried if the car coming up behind me is going to wait to pass safely or whether it is going to try and squeeze by.

I feel that the issues we are experiencing with e-mobility are symptoms of a greater transport inequality, and the majority of space and resources is being dedicated to car use and storage. I believe that we need to be encouraging more people out of our cars and onto more space-efficient transport options. To do this, we need infrastructure that is safe for less confident riders. We need physically separated lanes and protected intersections and to prioritise safety with slower residential road speeds.

I believe that this solution does not rest on state government shoulders; this is local councils and federal government. Most importantly, as Queenslanders we need to look after each other. We need to be building safer streets for all. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much to you both for your submissions, for your time now and for your experience as a parent and bike user which is actually rich. There is some great evidence there.

Mr MELLISH: As a father of a 2½-year-old who does not listen to me, if you have any tips let me know! Paul, in the context of the Brisbane CBD, you talked about the CityLink and the benefits of that but obviously the very small footprint of it. Where would the next route go? Similarly for you, Ross, in your Gold Coast area, where would be the next corridors for dedicated cycle/e-scooter/e-bike routes?

Mr French: We have already been calling on council to connect to the end of Elizabeth Street and down through the Valley to the bikeway that comes across Breakfast Creek. Obviously, all of the Olympics venues need to be linked by both footpaths and separated bikeways.

Mr Powrie: When we are looking at e-mobility, we have a great coastal track—the Oceanway—but getting to it is hostile. Definitely, east-west links would be a way to get folk out in the suburbs down onto the coast—not just east-west but also those suburbs out the back, so Varsity, Mudgeeraba and Robina.

Mr KEMPTON: Ross, there is obviously an explosion in the use of e-mobility devices and pushbikes. If we started tomorrow to build the appropriate infrastructure, that would be a decade away. What other measures do you think we could put in place in the meantime to make your trip safer each day?

CHAIR: If you need to take that on notice, I am happy for you to do that. There is a fair bit in that.

Mr French: I would love to see a change in the rhetoric. I would love to see a change in this ‘them versus us’ approach to transportation. It is all just tools—ways for us to get around. On occasion we drive a car. I came here by train and bus today. I am not taking that because I love trains and buses; I am taking that because it was the most obvious way to get here. In terms of us as Queenslanders getting around, it is being connected and being a community; it is not having a go at someone just because that is the only form of transport they have.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ross and Paul. I hope you enjoy the rest of the day. We look forward to catching up again.

CAMM, Mr Rod, Chief Executive Officer, Motor Trades Association of Queensland

DEWAR, Mrs Kellie, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Motor Trades Association of Queensland

PETERSON, Mr Paul, Chair MTAQ and Queensland Motorcycle Division, Motor Trades Association of Queensland (via videoconference)

CHAIR: Would you like to make an opening statement before we start our questions?

Mr Camm: Thank you for having us today. As you are aware, the Motor Trades Association of Queensland represents the broad retail components of the automotive industry. I am joined today by our chairman, Paul Peterson, who is travelling interstate but has dialled in today because of the importance of this issue, and our deputy CEO, Kellie Dewar.

We recognise that the growth of e-mobility offers Queensland some exciting opportunities but, as is evidenced already, it brings significant safety and regulatory challenges. We certainly call for a clear distinction to be made between legal, compliant vehicles and the ever-increasing presence of illegal, unsafe vehicles both on roads and in parks and on footpaths and the like. Many of these vehicles are modified, are imported and sold through unregulated markets, pose serious risks and are very poor quality.

Yes, legislation exists. What is lacking is enforcement, both federally—through Customs intercepting noncompliant imports and the ACCC around false and misleading advertising—and at a state level in terms of enforcement of the road vehicles act. Because this problem has been allowed to grow unchecked, it is now a serious problem. The best comparison I can make is to illegal tobacco and vaping. Very little action was taken and now it is a massive industry. To show the size of it, Monash recently did some work with our colleagues in the Victorian automotive chamber. They observed 27,000 two-wheeled vehicles of which around half were e-bikes. Only four per cent of those vehicles were observed as pedalling. They were travelling at high speeds—over 50 kilometres an hour. That is not the issue, by the way. It is not compliance with speeding; it is that they are illegal vehicles.

The solution, as we will explore with you today, is not simplistic. I hear solutions. People say to me, ‘Just register them and then we can get on with it.’ That will not solve the problem and it will not save lives. Put simply, if an e-bike goes faster than six kilometres an hour without pedalling, it is an illegal motorbike and that will not meet the Australian Standards, which we should be proud of, and people will get hurt. Licensing alone will not fix it. You have young people on these vehicles without any experience, and we have seen some recent tragedies. We are certainly looking to bring significant and immediate enforcement both to save lives and to save Australian small businesses that are being hurt by this phenomenon.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Did you have anything to add, Kellie or Paul?

Ms Dewar: Not from me at this stage.

CHAIR: I will go to the member for Aspley for the first question.

Mr MELLISH: Thank you, Rod, for your submission and for appearing today. It is good to see you again. You have outlined the complexities in the retail landscape in that they can sell a compliant device which then can be modified into an illegal device. We had one of those retailers before us on the Gold Coast. They are selling a \$5,000 device. You tick a box on the check-out cart and you add a \$50 throttle to it which makes it into an illegal device, much higher than is legally allowed. What more can be done to limit the modification of what are compliant devices before these add-ons?

Mr Camm: I will start and then I will hand over to both Paul and Kellie. Paul is a legitimate retailer, so these sorts of things are hurting his business. Some of our representatives have done mystery shopping, so they go into these retailers and they are told, ‘These are the requirements, but if you ask for it we will turn everything off; we will add a throttle.’ Instantly, it is illegal. Quite simply, my proposition is that they have to be stopped at Customs for a start. If they are illegal—and these are poor quality, let me tell you—they should not be allowed in. They do not meet Australian Standards. Put them through the normal checks and balances and they will not make it. Action should be taken against those retailers—they are easy to find—and significant penalties should be in place. That is about governments—joined-up government—working together. I will hand to Paul, because he experiences this on a daily basis. Then Kellie might add some value from a policy perspective.

Mr Peterson: It is not just the case of adding a throttle; it is as easy as downloading an app onto your phone and changing them from bike A to bike B on a phone app. The thumb throttles are fine; they all have them. It is as easy as that, or unplugging a wire and plugging in a different wire under a cover. They are all built to be able to go faster. The issue from my world is that I have customers asking, 'Why would I buy a scooter when I have to pay rego and I have to have a licence? My kids can't ride it to school. Why wouldn't I just go down and buy one of these poorly manufactured e-bikes and I can ride it to the beach, my kids can ride it to school and there is no enforceable regulation currently on them?'

Ms Dewar: I think that is the real issue around enforcement. It is retailers that are actually misrepresenting the vehicles' use at point of sale. Australian Consumer Law comes into it, but the starting point is compliance at the beginning. If they do not comply, they should not make it that far in.

CHAIR: Of course, I must point out that these devices are illegal once ridden on the road. That is one of the things we are grappling with.

Mr KEMPTON: Registration is not the simple solution. You say that we need significant and immediate enforcement, but without registration that is almost an impossibility for the police. Would you like to comment?

Mr Camm: I absolutely accept that principle. What I am saying is that there should be more stringent regulation at the point of entry to the country. Yes, I appreciate that the ubiquitous nature of online and the like makes it difficult, but governments can try harder. This is a Commonwealth government issue around making sure anything for sale in Australia meets our standards. That is the first bit. You are right: registration means it is easier for police to capture photos, CCTV footage and things and track them back, so I appreciate that that could add value. All I am saying is that it cannot just be that.

Mr KING: You have touched on the standards. It was in 2021, during COVID, that the standards were relaxed nationally. The result is what we have now. We are a state committee. Is there anything we can do as a state to work to fix that problem? I know that we have what we have now and you are talking about the future, but is there anything you can suggest?

Mr Camm: I think the committee is incredibly well placed to make strong recommendations to government. The minister obviously participates in national committees. I have seen some of the statements he has made. He is very consistent with what we are saying. There is a chance for a national approach. We have to put pressure on the Commonwealth government; there is no question about that. The point of entry is their responsibility, but they must be also picking up this. The best way to move the Commonwealth government is for state governments to push on this issue. I have noticed other inquiries in other states. Whilst the committee obviously has to focus on state responsibilities, my advice to you is to still consider recommendations that put the pressure back on government that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads can pick up and go with.

Can I go back to that comment earlier about them being illegal when they are on road? This is a major problem, even when they are off-road. We have major parklands near where I live and there are often groups of 10 young men riding around at 50 and 60 kilometres per hour in parks with people pushing prams. I have stopped them before. I do not get aggressive. I try to say, 'Hey, boys, come on. This is not the place for this.' Then I will see them out on the road doing wheelies and I think, 'That is not quite what I meant.' Yes, complex problems require complex solutions, but we need strong, immediate action. They have to be off the road. They do not comply with Australian Standards. I would not want my young kids on them.

Mr KING: I will clarify that the chair and I have had this discussion many times about the semantics of it: they are a noncompliant device and the operation of them is illegal. That is the way we found that the retailers get away with selling these upgrades. They say, 'You use it in your backyard. It is for your property. It is not for public use.' It is just semantics. Thank you for your response.

Mr Camm: I understand that, but we still have to cut it off.

Mr KING: I agree entirely. Thank you for your answer.

Mr Peterson: Rod added that they are riding in the bush, so they are riding in state forests and in national parks. We see them in Noosa riding through the national parks. They are an electric, silent vehicle. I am sure that if the motorcycles I sell for off-road use only were ridden on the road, the world would be up in arms. There is not a lot of difference with a 125 motocross bike which we sell to race and for off-road purposes and are rarely ridden on the road—by the odd fool maybe. These things are literally the same motorcycle—they are just electric—being ridden on the roads.

Mr Camm: And are poorly made.

Mr KING: Agreed. Thank you.

CHAIR: That is a great point well made, Paul.

Mr JAMES: Is there anything we can do with regard to educating parents at the point of sale or putting the onus back onto parents at that point?

Mr Camm: That is a really good question, and I will hand to Kellie in a moment. I think that has to be part of a broad strategy. I often shake my head and think, 'My 12-year-old would not be popping a wheelie.' I saw yesterday that the police arrested a 13-year-old riding at something like 70 kilometres an hour through red lights. That is a horrific danger. From a policy sense, yes, we agree that education is part of it, but I will refer that to Kellie.

Ms Dewar: I think we have seen some of the media playing a part in that education role as well with fatalities and dangerous riding, but there is definitely a lack of clear public messaging. That really does need to be urgently addressed because a lot of people I speak to do not even understand the age restrictions that we already have in place in Queensland around these devices. Parents are quite surprised when you tell them that a child the age of theirs cannot be riding on these devices. There is definitely an opportunity around education and awareness.

CHAIR: Do you have anything to add, Paul?

Mr Peterson: Yes, I do. I chair another board. Our CEO has been meeting with Gold Coast high schools for this reason. We are looking to run an education piece through the high schools. The headmasters are at their wits' end. Last Thursday Miami High had 280 illegal electric bikes—so bikes that would go over the speed limit—parked in their school parking lot. A lot of them are two-up, three-up or four-up when they are leaving. Often the rider has a helmet; the other two or three passengers have no helmet. It is a problem at schools and certainly an education piece is important. Parents do not have to do anything: 'If I buy my son or daughter an e-bike, I no longer have to drop them at school. I can go to the gym. I can go to yoga. My child now has freedom.'

Ms BUSH: Switching gears—pun intended—you recommended infrastructure planning across all levels of government as a long-term strategy to promote the safe use of personal e-mobility devices. Can you expand on that for the committee?

Mr Camm: Yes. Again, it is really about getting all of the strategies lined up. You are only as strong as your weakest link. Kellie will talk to that one.

Ms Dewar: The biggest thing is about where they can be used and safe use. In the opening of our submission we talk about some of the benefits. There is definitely a place in market and for use of these devices. It just needs some really clear framework, because a lot of people think they can use them on the road like any other vehicle. Especially when you look at the games and different opportunities for first- and last-mile transport options, that will require safe infrastructure for them to be used. There is probably a lot of confusion when there are different rules for different states. I think we see some of that as well. Most states have done or are doing these inquiries, but it does not necessarily mean that there is going to be consistency in outcomes, which is dangerous for tourists as well.

Mr Camm: We talk about last-mile infrastructure. E-mobility is going to be a big part of the future. It reduces congestion—we get all of that. We do not mean that that should be joined up with allowing illegal vehicles. We think it should be high-quality Australian Standard vehicles. Why are the vehicles that people like Paul and a lot of our other members sell more expensive? They are more expensive because they have had to go through that stringent testing. Yes, people might have to pay a bit more, but they are less likely to have crashes and they will not be in illegal vehicles. Notwithstanding that, the notion of infrastructure for safe transport is a relevant comment.

CHAIR: My question is with regard to the illegal motorbikes you were just talking about. I understand there are road registrable bikes—there might be 125s that can be road registered because they have the flickers and all of that sort of thing—and then there are the illegal motorbikes. Can you talk to us about your experience in that space? Is it a case that if they are to be e-motorbikes then they should only be able to be used on the road, if they are able to be registered and the driver has a licence?

Mr Peterson: I have no problem with these vehicles being ridden on the road if they meet Australian compliance, which means safety testing, blinkers, lights, registration and licensing.

Mr Camm: It is as simple as that, I think. I think it is about requiring compliance regardless of a loophole: 'I'm only going to drive it in my backyard.' It does not matter. They should meet safety standards. It is really about anything over six kilometres. I have looked at some of these vehicles that can go up to 70 kilometres an hour. All they have is cheap bicycle brakes. That will not pull someone up at those sorts of speeds because they do not meet the Australian Standards, so Paul's response is the right one.

CHAIR: You mentioned a couple of times that these things are unsafe. I know from other evidence we have had that the brakes are one issue. Are there other aspects of the Australian Standards that you would like to highlight for the committee in the last minute or so?

Mr Camm: I can start and then maybe Paul and Kellie can add to that. From what we have seen, they have very poor welding and they rust quickly. They have noncompliant batteries. There are no battery management systems—they just whack a battery in and go with it. They have poor brakes. They have no or very poor quality suspension and dangerous unfinished front forks, so if they hit someone they will not only hurt themselves but hurt the person they hit. They are cheaply put together and sent out in a box—let the buyer beware.

CHAIR: That is very good. I think we have run out of questions for you. Thank you, Rod, Kellie and Paul. Your evidence has been very valuable. Thank you for your detailed submission. A lot of work has gone into that and we really appreciate it. I hope you enjoy the balance of your day.

Mr Camm: Can I just make one final comment. The reason we put such a submission in and the reason we are taking it so seriously is that this is genuinely hurting legitimate business that employ people. They are losing markets—not just one or two bikes a week. This is significantly undermining a legitimate market.

CHAIR: That is a point well made. Thank you very much.

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

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

CHAIR: Welcome. I would like to hand over to you for an opening statement, after which the committee will have questions for you.

Ms Weston: Chair and members, thank you for the opportunity to be part of the inquiry today. You have already heard detailed submissions addressing the safety and legality of e-bikes, e-scooters and lithium ion batteries. Our own submission also covers this in great detail.

There is little dispute that the narrative and the numbers are troubling. Our perspective is very simple: a large share of the worst harm and most of the enforcement headaches come from illegal or noncompliant devices and batteries. Having also been a specialist global insurer in micromobility, we echo the sentiment of the Insurance Council who spoke earlier. We need to make it easy to identify what is safe, certified and legal. Then we can begin a conversation about managing risk, behaviour, compliance and insurance. If Queensland can visibly verify what is legal and quickly remove what is not, we can significantly reduce the problems we have all been experiencing. Our proposed solution, outlined in our submission, is practical and effective: make legal devices easy to categorise and recognise and make illegal devices easy to remove. The problem is well known and we are keen to set a pathway for a solution.

We have five key principles in our approach. First, create a clear legal category. Create one simple legal category for everyday e-mobility. Have a top speed of 25 kilometres an hour. We know that Queensland removed this requirement in 2022. Have a maximum weight of 60 kilos, with no length restrictions. This keeps things safe and stable while allowing a broader, safer range of vehicles than today—standing scooters, seated scooters, e-bikes, cargo and disability support options. We can do this without pushing people into illegal power or speed. Speed and weight are easily understandable concepts for consumers.

Secondly, we propose the introduction of a digital product passport. This is a new concept for Australia. Require a digital product passport for every e-micromobility device and its battery. Digital product passports can link to live records of independent tested certifications to international safety and quality standards and the exact legal specifications of the device. Digital product passports can even share information like road rules as well as important information about battery composition, safe-handling disposal and even charging instructions.

Ensure each device and battery has a hi-vis smart label so you can scan it with any phone. Technology is available now that can determine if a device is compliant, noncompliant or tampered. The current labelling system that we use does not do that. It is only one dimensional. Retailers can show this at the point of sale. Consumers can check it instantly. Riders can have it on a frame. Councils, police and other enforcement bodies as well as waste managers and recyclers can check it in seconds. Europe legislated digital product passports in 2023, with implementation from 2027. E-mobility manufacturers are already aware of this technology requirement. It is not something new.

The third thing we recommend is to leverage these passports and use existing powers to remove illegal devices. Digital product passports are the glue that holds everything together and makes all of the key functions in the value chain possible. Queensland can use existing Transport and Fair Trading powers to find and impound devices that fail the scan or do not match the certified specs. The digital product passport turns a 20-minute roadside argument into a 20-second decision.

The fourth recommendation—and we have heard this quite a lot this morning—is about the private use permit. Replace the private use privilege with a permit. Right now, private use is a massive loophole that lets illegal devices slip through. We propose you close it. Make it a permit instead—a simple online process that issues a hi-vis scannable permit tied to the device's digital product passport. No passport, no private use proof, no permit. This protects responsible owners and gives police and councils a clear visual check.

We also recommend the development of a public online registry. Buyers can check before they buy. Marketplaces can list verified products or risk hefty fines. Councils and schools can link to it for education. Ideally, there should be one registry nationally—and this may be a collaboration opportunity with New South Wales, who are already moving in this direction.

What does this solve? From police operations and hospital patterns, the worst harm clusters are around illegal, overspeed or tampered devices and poor quality batteries or aftermarket conversion kits. With the five steps we have outlined, we expect you will remove a big slice of the

problem. Our analysis conservatively indicates that around half to two-thirds of severe non-motor-vehicle rider injuries and a large majority of the e-mobility battery incidents can be eliminated by stopping illegal tampered devices at the source.

You can do this now with Queensland rules and permits. Whilst we are very strong advocates for national harmonisation and for Canberra to take active steps, our proposed process does not require you to wait for Canberra. Use Fair Trading to require verification at sale, transport law for roadside enforcement and permit conditions for shared fleets. We need simple rules, visible proof and swift enforcement. We need to make it simple for all of the participants in the value chain—from consumers to retailers, insurers, enforcement, waste managers and recyclers—to easily identify what is legal and compliant and what is not. If you control the devices, you can limit the bad behaviour. We thank you again for your time and we are very happy to take questions.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for that opening statement. Could you give us your quick elevator pitch for what is Zipidi?

Mr Coulter: We are micromobility consultants. We have worked around the world with manufacturers, governments, regulators and share operators in bikes, scooters, lithium ion batteries and the like. We have been working in that space for around 10 years.

Ms Weston: We have given submissions to virtually every parliamentary inquiry. We have done deep dives into battery safety. We have done a lot of work into safety certifications, and that has led us down the path of identifying technology solutions that can solve the problems right across the value chain.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. We have it in your very detailed 50-odd-page submission. Thank you very much for sharing that with all of the online listeners.

Ms BUSH: Thank you for coming along and for your submission. I think it was your submission that spoke about the experience of trying to develop an open data specification for crashes and injuries for vulnerable road users. Given that what we have heard as a committee is that there is really limited data capture and reporting on that, how would more reliable and consistent data collection help to inform those types of safety regulations?

Mr Coulter: Right now, as you have said—and lots of people have said it to this committee and the other inquiries—there is no reliable data around that allows you to assess what is causing these problems in detail, looking at the injuries. In New South Wales there is less than 50 per cent matching of police records to hospital records because they use different systems of recording the incidents. We do not think this is a specific e-bike or e-scooter issue. As you said, it involves multiple road users.

We need to have a broader system where we have standard definitions that all first responders and medical people can use to categorise injuries and to capture what caused the injury. Then we will have a database that we can analyse to look at what the real problems are. We can also look at the comparative risk of one mode of transport versus another versus other types of injuries. What we are seeing now is that there is a lot of panic around e-scooter and e-bike injuries but there is very little reference to how the scale of those injuries compares to other types of injuries and whether the injury rates are actually increasing or decreasing, because the usage of the vehicles is increasing astronomically.

We think at the moment one of the best sources of data is New Zealand. They have a free accident compensation scheme where anybody who is injured in any form of accident can apply for compensation. We did a review of that three or four years ago. There were 10 different forms of vulnerable road users and active transport we could analyse. In New Zealand you can actually look at comparative data across modes of transport and see what the real issues are, as well as other types of injuries from sport and from all sorts of things. You can see where the issues are that are costing their health system an enormous amount in injury and long-term care.

The bigger picture to remember with this is that the whole purpose of new types of emerging mobility is to get people out of cars and to use this sort of transport for short journeys. The biggest health cost in our system is from cars, not from these devices. It is the cost of injuries, deaths and environmental pollution from cars that is causing cardiovascular and all sorts of issues out there. That is the biggest health issue we have. That is why this mode of transport needs to be far more dominant than it currently is, and it needs to be safer, which is our focus around having a digital product passport as the first thing to solve to get safety into the system.

Ms Weston: Right now we are dealing with moral panic as opposed to facts.

Ms BUSH: Your point is well made. Stephen, is that the Accident Compensation Corporation in New Zealand?

Mr Coulter: Yes, it is. As well as their published data, we got them to do specific data extracts for us. They have a huge database and they can pull data in lots of different ways if you ask them.

Ms Weston: It is dated now, but we would be happy to share the slice of information that we commissioned from them to provide us. It is a couple of years old now, but it gives you some indicative patterns and trends. They are a little bit more mature in terms of where we are in Australia around e-mobility just because they regulated earlier than we did.

Ms BUSH: Subject to the chair, I think we would like to see that. That would be great.

CHAIR: Yes, we would definitely like to see that.

Mr KEMPTON: There are now thousands of e-mobility devices and electric motorbikes that have been sold—in some cases, parents have spent thousands of dollars on those—and it is highly likely that they would become not only illegal as they are but also unable to be used on the roads. What advice would you give to a government to satisfy those parents who have unwittingly spent all this money? We will have all of these devices on our hands.

Mr Coulter: There are countries that have already been down this path including Singapore and Spain. New York has already done it at a city and state level in the US and there are other examples. Typically, they have a date that they have to be off the road by. In Singapore, the initial period was about 18 months from when they announced the law change. For a lot of e-scooters, because they are poorly made that was more than their life span anyway so they disappeared relatively quickly.

Because governments have permitted their sale and have not stopped it, some governments have also provided rebate programs and buyback schemes. People who trade in an illegal bike, an illegal scooter or an illegal battery and replace it with a compliant one will get a rebate from the government against the new one. Some governments give a rebate just for handing back product that no longer meets the state laws.

The important thing is: there are high-quality standards that exist internationally that we have mentioned in detail in our submission, but no government in Australia has mandated that they are compulsory. Standards remain voluntary in Australia. No state government has mandated them; nor has the federal government. They are effectively guidelines. Good manufacturers manufacture to them because it should be a marketing advantage to prove the quality and safety of their devices but, because the illegal devices have not been stopped, the good manufacturers are being thrown in with the bad and they are suffering because of it. There are others like the motor industry. As you heard earlier, in the VACC we had the same conversations in Victoria. They are losing out on registered road vehicle sales because of illegal motorbikes taking those sales from them and causing injuries and all sorts of problems.

Ms Weston: We note that New South Wales Fair Trading has gone down a partial pathway and Victoria is going down a similar pathway in terms of governing electrical safety, but it is not looking at the totality. We heard the previous speakers talking about frames snapping, poor welding and all of those sorts of things. Please note that the New South Wales Fair Trading changes that are coming fully into effect from February next year—they are already in part in effect—only deal with electrical and battery safety issues, not other issues that are a bigger contributor in some instances to injuries. When we talk to retailers they say that batteries might be a problem but the bigger issue is the frames snapping and those sorts of things. No-one is looking at that at the moment.

Mr KING: I noted with interest from your submission and also your opening statement the use of a digital fingerprint to be able to track these. It sounds like the silver bullet. I want to know some technical details. You talked about a scanner. During the course of this inquiry we have heard about how kids can hack things and change it. Is this foolproof and what are the costs? Could you please expand on that? It is very exciting.

Mr Coulter: It is fraud-proof. Think about passports. We have passports in Australia that have RFID cards embedded in them; they are linked back to government records. When we do a fingerprint or a face scan at an airport, they are actually checking against real records that cannot be faked. Digital product passports are effectively multifactor authentication for products and they work in a similar way. You have a unique fingerprint on every product. I am not sure whether you can see that round blob that looks a bit like lava up the top. There are billions of those, without any two being the same. When they are scanned they look for a digital twin in a secure database. If they find one, they can then access records specific to that product—right down to the serial number of that product. It

is not the product category; it is the individual item at the serial number level. It can check that it has the right certification for safety and quality and that that certification is legal for Queensland, which may be different to the legality for New South Wales and Victoria. It is location sensitive. It can look at import rules. Australia is very poor on that right now in this category, but if we up the import rules to require digital product passports they can also be used at the point of import to stop illegal products. Once you have a passport—it is like a human passport—you can add other things to it. If you go down the path of requiring a light registration or certification of some sort, that is a digital stamp in this passport. If it is allowed to go onto public transport because it meets that criteria, that is another stamp.

Ms Weston: There are significant issues around ONRSR at the moment and the banning of electrical devices from public transport. The industry has banded together to support this form of identification to verify whether a device is safe, is compliant and is quality and therefore should be permitted on public transport.

Mr Coulter: We are dealing with the Owners Corporation Network of Australia, which represents over 2.2 million property owners. They are concerned about how they control e-bikes, e-scooters and batteries in strata premises. They want to go down a path where there is effectively a digital product passport that can be scanned to say, 'This is eligible to be stored on this property' or not.

Ms Weston: You heard the issues from the Insurance Council that are challenging.

Mr KING: I understand that part of it—that is great—but if someone were to hack that device, how would the digital passport pick that up?

Mr Coulter: Let's say somebody saw one of these things, photocopied it and stuck it onto another product. Somebody can scan it, but the first thing it brings up is an image of that product. It is not going to look like it and it will not have anything that reconciles. If I am a police enforcement officer and I scan one of these passports on an illegal bike that has a photocopy of one from a legal bike at the roadside, the bike I scan is not going to look like anything that comes up on the phone when I scan it.

Mr KING: If you have your digital passport on the device and someone gets in and hacks the device to soup it up or something, that would not change the passport. I mean if they hack the device.

Mr Coulter: I see. The digital passport locks in the manufacturing specifications of the device and hard-codes that in. That cannot be changed. We get production manifests from the factories when the devices are made that show exactly what the specification is, so if the device is not what the passport says it is, it has been modified. Going forward, there are other technologies around the world that are evolving. The speed one you have spoken about. Lots of people have spoken about unlocking. That relates to the firmware within a device. That can also be locked down. There is work happening around the world now where you can use ways of locking firmware down so it cannot be changed in the future. That is not widely available yet, but there is stuff happening in that sphere as well.

Mr JAMES: Throughout this inquiry we have heard from a lot people wanting a better data source, particularly Queensland Health and TMR. Who should be the central repository for all of this data? Given what you know and what you have done, should this all be integrated?

Mr Coulter: It can be integrated, but it does not have to be. It needs to be secure and it can be distributed. You might have some in federal databases and some in state, but the beauty of a digital passport is that it can link to whenever that data is. There are data standards at government levels about how data has to be stored. Whether it is in a government database or a private database such as a Google or an Amazon, it needs to meet those standards; it needs to meet privacy rules and it needs to meet things like the GDPR rules for data privacy and access. It does not need to be in one place because it can be distributed and linked through a passport and proven to be authentic and reliable.

Ms Weston: We are talking about the health pieces. The key thing is that there is no one data specification around how to report on health issues, incidents, accidents and the like, so everybody is doing it their own way and there is no ability to compare apples with apples. It is no small task to pull it together. We put up a proposal a couple of years ago to pull together a project, but it is no small task and it will require cooperation and collaboration from all of the key stakeholders—fire, police, hospitals, share operators, insurers—because everybody is reporting the information differently and sometimes incidents go unreported. In particular with share operators, we know that a lot of incidents go completely unreported but they may be subject to an insurance claim, so you want to be able to capture the totality of the data. It is doable, but it will require cooperation and collaboration.

Mr MELLISH: Thanks for your very detailed submission. Earlier you touched on import rules and said that in the absence of those being tightened up there are actions the state can take in terms of fair trading. Could you run us through what the state could do in terms of some of these easily illegal products flooding the streets at the moment?

Mr Coulter: The first thing the state could do is mandate the standards as compulsory for a vehicle to be sold and used in Queensland. That is what, in part, New South Wales have done around electrical safety. They have stopped short of using the full standards which cover the vehicle as well.

Ms Weston: They have done a carve-out.

Mr Coulter: There are three broad standard authorities around the world: there is the EN, there is a group called IEC and there is another group out of the US called UL. All three of them have standards for e-bikes, personal mobility devices and batteries. Most, if not all, of the quality manufacturers already manufacture to those standards and can prove that. By mandating that you must have one or more of these standards, it instantly enables quality manufacturers to continue to sell their products and stops illegal products from being able to be sold because they will not be able to prove they have that certification.

The other important part is that the certifications need to be proven and, in that sense, they need to have been done by independent laboratories, not the manufacturers themselves. In Queensland regulations—I think it is the OIR in Queensland—there are laboratories that Queensland recognise for doing tests if have been done elsewhere. It is the same with the Commonwealth and other states. Laboratories exist around the world and within Australia that have done these tests. They have to be done independently.

In terms of the problem Australia has at import, even when it had tighter import regulations, until 2021, there were problems because the federal government allowed what was called self-declared conformity. A manufacturer could just tick a box and say, 'My product meets these standards,' even if it did not. A lot of illegal product was coming in before July 2021 and it has become a flood since then. By having digital product passports at import that require proof that a product has certifications done by an independent lab, you can close that loophole completely and make it virtually impossible for somebody to import something because they will not be able to meet that criteria.

Ms Weston: We have seen other markets require the traditional safety marks. They are just flat, one-dimensional printed labels that are so easily faked. We live in a world of fakes, forgery and scams at the moment. They cannot be relied upon.

Mr Coulter: QR codes are easily faked. QR codes are not part of this solution. They have a purpose, but if you want security and fraud-proof technology do not use QR codes.

CHAIR: We did have evidence before the committee about EN 15194 and the development of AS 15194, and we are looking forward to seeing the work done in that space. My question is about the digital product passport. It is very clear that there are few problems with the geofenced units, which are all the shared ones, because they are speed controlled in different areas. Is there any way those digital product passports could have that technology built into them so private devices could be geofenced in different areas?

Mr Coulter: No, that is not a digital product passport function; that is controlled by the Internet of Things—IoT—technology that is built in to the device. For that to happen on privately owned e-bikes and e-scooters, they would need to have an IoT module, which is not all that expensive, and then the geofencing of areas would need to be open and applied to everything. If you look at the share schemes, they predominantly use a platform called Ride Report. In Ride Report, the councils, governments and operators set the geofences for parking, speed zones et cetera. Every share-scheme operator pulls from the same geofences. You would need those sorts of geofences to also be available for private vehicles to access.

Ms Weston: It is very challenging. There are lots of privacy issues.

Mr Coulter: Then you would need to ensure every private vehicle had IoT built in. Quite frankly, that is very unlikely to happen. We are a small market. These devices are built for global markets. Unless it became a global requirement, the manufacturers are very unlikely to do it.

CHAIR: I am pleased I asked you that question. If you have any other thoughts on that, we would be pleased to hear from you. The time for this session has expired. Thank you very much. If you have any other information, we would be happy to hear it. Apart from that, I do not think there are any other questions on notice. Thank you, Stephen and Krystana. Enjoy the balance of your day.

Proceedings suspended from 12.02 pm to 12.13 pm.

CHAIR: Welcome back. We will now start the open session, during which we will hear from registered participants.

COLEMAN, Mr Reece, Owner, East Coast Choppers

CHAIR: I invite you to make a brief opening statement, and then the committee will have questions for you. If you push the button in front of you, the red light will turn on and then you will be right to go.

Mr Coleman: Firstly, I want to let everyone know that I am very nervous. This is very uncomfortable for me, but it is also very important to me and my family. I have written out a bit of a speech. I am not the best reader or writer, so please bear with me. This is very important, so I am shaking.

CHAIR: Take your time. You are doing well.

Mr Coleman: Thank you very much. My name is Reece Coleman. I am 33 years old, from the Gold Coast and the proud owner of East Coast Choppers. We are an e-bike company that I and my beautiful son built together. I am sorry: it is an emotional time for me and my kid at the moment, so bear with me. For me, e-bikes are not just a business; they represent freedom, innovation and a cleaner, more sustainable way of moving through communities. Above all, I am here as a father—a father who wants to make sure young people can enjoy these bikes safely.

Right now, Queensland faces an urgent challenge. We are seeing large groups of young people riding irresponsibly—weaving through traffic, hooning on public roads and, in some cases, shutting down entire streets. These actions have led to tragic outcomes such as serious injuries, preventable accidents and the loss of young Australian lives—my Australian brothers and sisters, as I like to refer to our younger generation.

Let me be absolutely clear: e-bikes are not the danger. When operated responsibly, e-bikes are one of the safest, cleanest and most affordable transport options available today. The problem arises when children are too young to appreciate the risk of mixing powerful machines with busy roads without the right education, rules, infrastructure and, I will argue, discipline.

The fallout from this misuse affects everybody. Parents live in fear every time their child goes for a ride. Motorists dread the possibility of being involved in a collision which they cannot avoid. Emergency services are being stretched thin, responding to crashes that simply should never have happened, and communities are left grieving losses that should never have occurred. This is why action is needed, not to punish e-bike riders and not to demonise the technology but to protect our young people and restore safety to our streets. That means—this is what I believe, anyway—setting clear rules around types of e-bikes that are appropriate for different age groups—younger generations, I believe, should have to stick to less power and whatnot; rolling out educational campaigns in schools and local communities to teach safe riding habits; building better infrastructure that separates young riders from heavy traffic; and enforcing laws so it is clear that reckless behaviour will simply not be tolerated.

Every week without action is another risk, another headline and another grieving family. We need a response that puts safety first while recognising the benefits that e-bikes bring when used properly. As a father, I want my son to grow up seeing e-bikes as a source of freedom and opportunity and not as tragedy. As a business owner, I want the industry to be known as one of innovation, sustainability and safe riding, not reckless behaviour. As a member of this community, I want to ensure young people are protected, families are supported and our roads are safe for everybody.

What East Coast Choppers is looking to do is create a community that is safer and take on initiative for more responsibility and safety. What I am looking to do at East Coast—and we are starting to get the ball rolling on this—is, firstly, introduce the East Coast Choppers safety course and licensing program. I hope that other e-bike dealers can see this and jump on board with us because, obviously, there is power in numbers. You give these kids an inch and they are taking a mile—it is ridiculous.

We are introducing the East Coast Choppers safety course and licensing program. We are currently developing a mandatory safety course that will be offered for free to all East Coast Choppers customers upon successful completion of the course. Each rider will receive an East Coast Choppers licence, embedded with a QR code. I did hear you guys talking earlier about QR codes and I cannot remember exactly what you said, but the QR code will basically be on the bike—somewhere on a licence where you scan the QR code and it will show that they have passed this course. They will attain a completion certificate and a bike-specific safety checklist. This program will educate riders on road rules and legal requirements; how to ride responsibly in public spaces; helmet usage and protective gear; and how to handle emergencies in case something happens. This is more than a box tick; it is more about creating a safety-first culture.

The second thing is an owner identification system. To place clear responsibilities on the rider and encourage accountability, we are proposing a visible ID system for each bike which may include a tamperproof QR code, sticker or badge mounted on the bike frame linked to the rider's licence, for adults, or guardian for the minors, registerable in our national East Coast Choppers registry. This adds a visible layer of deterrence from reckless riding and helps authorities trace owners in case of an accident.

The third thing is support of penalty enforcement and hoon deterrence. We support and are advocating for tougher fines and police intervention for: group hooning; rides that endanger the public; riding without a helmet; disregard of road rules, red lights, wrong lanes and so on; and modified or unlocked e-bikes. I am sure you guys have some questions for me and I am happy to go over that.

CHAIR: Reece, I note you are reading from something. Why don't we get you to share that with us in written form?

Mr Coleman: Of course.

CHAIR: We are fast running out of time, so we will just ask you a couple of questions.

Mr Coleman: Go for it.

Mr MELLISH: Thank you, Reece, for coming along today. We have been to the Gold Coast before and we have talked to a couple of retailers from there. It looks like your business sells the one product and it is pretty specifically targeted.

Mr Coleman: We will be branching out, but at the moment it is just the one product, yes.

Mr MELLISH: I want to get your thoughts. We have heard about some other retailers who are doing the nod and the wink—selling the device that can be quickly made into an illegal, very fast road bike. From your perspective, how do you see the market and the different sellers down your way?

Mr Coleman: When I import my bikes I need to go through a ROVER test, as I am sure you guys are well aware. You are talking about the power of the motor, I am guessing?

Mr MELLISH: Yes, the power of the motor.

Mr Coleman: It is so easy to do. All bikes can be unlocked, but you do not even need a code to unlock these bikes. These kids jump on Temu and order a 1,000-watt motor. They simply take the back tyre off and slap it on the bike and off they go. I am not too sure how you guys are going to fix it. I noticed earlier someone was talking about an IoT sort of device that connects—I don't know. I do not have the answer for that question, but it is very easy to make these bikes highly illegal and go very fast, obviously.

I believe there are so many different things we can go over here—maybe a licence plate to start with. I have VIN numbers on my bikes as well now. At East Coast Choppers I want to have a database where when I sell a bike to a customer I record their VIN number so that if anything goes wrong I have them on a database. If there is a licence plate that is attached to a bike that can be seen, East Coast Choppers can then be contacted and I can provide the details of that person who was not adhering to the laws.

CHAIR: Great work. I am sorry to cut you off, Reece, but the member for Cook has another question for you.

Mr KEMPTON: Reece, your efforts are commendable. If everybody did what you are doing, the problems would be halved. Are you able to tell us what kind of impact the sale of unlawful e-bikes is having on your business?

Mr Coleman: It is massive. The amount of hoops I have had to jump through to get this business off the ground! My son and I sat down in front of a bloody computer for eight to nine months designing these bikes. With an eight-year-old, it was very interesting. The impact it will have on me will be dramatic. Like I said, this is our provider. I do not intend on being just part of the e-bike industry; I want to take over. I want to take over everything, I want to do it safely and I want to make as much money as possible and give my son the best life that I can.

The impact this is having on me is obviously a lot of stress. The money I have invested into my business and the effort I have gone through to learn the legalities of this has been massive. The impact this has on me is going to be dramatic. I have bills to pay, I have a family to provide for and I have parents who are getting older and need to be retired, so it is stressful. It is also frustrating. You give these kids an inch and they are taking a mile. Enough is enough. Something needs to be done, so I am here today to be as open and transparent with you guys as possible to find a solution to this problem.

CHAIR: Reece, thank you very much.

Mr Coleman: Thank you for having me.

CHAIR: It is the first time we have heard about people buying a third-party motor and changing it out. Thank you again.

Mr Coleman: No worries.

CHAIR: I am sorry that the time for this session has expired, but I again offer you the opportunity to share that written information with us.

Mr Coleman: I am more than happy to do that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Reece.

WALKER, Mr Chris, Private capacity

CHAIR: I now welcome Mr Chris Walker. You probably do not need much introduction from your football career, but I understand that your family suffered a tragedy with regard to e-bikes.

Mr Walker: Yes, Jim, we did. At the start of the year, my older brother Shane's young fella was doubling on the back of an e-bike, after Shane had told him not to be on e-bikes. He was riding home when a branch hit him. It hit his forehead pretty hard and he then landed back on the pavement. He was in a coma for five days. As an uncle, it was hard to see my nephew laying in that state—senselessly, I think. If education could have been provided to him and to my brother and his wife earlier, perhaps the accident could have prevented. That is the reason I am here.

Everybody in the room here would know what happened to that young fellow on the Gold Coast last week. He unfortunately lost his life. I certainly do not want e-bikes to be banned, first and foremost. If we can educate our kids, our schools, our parents and everyone to be across it, I think that is the way to move forward, because we have seen the growth of e-bikes over the last 10 years and they are not going anywhere. If we can provide education for everyone then I think moving forward we can have a safer community.

I live at the back of Currumbin Creek and I have a tinnie. I am 45 and I need a licence for my boat. I do not have the answers today—I am sure you guys can come up with some solutions. Can we work out a way to have age brackets for our kids on licences, certainly when it comes to the speed of these things? I live on the Gold Coast. My kids go to the PBC school. There are thousands of them all parked up out the front, and I am sure that 90 per cent of the kids riding those bikes would not know the legality of them. We need to educate our kids. As I said, a safer community for me is No. 1. We do not need these senseless injuries and deaths of our beautiful little humans every day from these bikes.

CHAIR: Thank you for sharing the story. What sort of education do you think would help? What is your experience with other parents? Do they know that these bikes are illegal if ridden on the road?

Mr Walker: I mention helmets, too. I remember when I was a kid in Toowoomba: if I rode my bike without a helmet and a copper pulled me up, it would be a \$30 fine. My dad would wear it, and I would probably go home and get a flogging. All parents need to understand what is actually going on with these kids. Whether they turn a blind eye to it I do not know, but if we can hold them accountable we will soon see the roads being a lot safer in terms of kids riding on bikes on the roads, around cars that are doing 60 kilometres an hour. At least you can hear motorbikes coming behind you, changing lanes. With e-bikes, you have two kids who are barely 15 years of age without helmets, doubling, and they have no idea of the road rules. If we can educate them on that in schools, to stay safe, we will have less injuries and less deaths amongst our younger community.

Getting back to your question, Jim, I do not know the legalities of kids with e-bikes. My kids do not have them. My kids—one is 17 and the twins are 15. I do not know the legalities of e-bikes, so I am guessing that most of the parents who buy these \$3,000 to \$4,000 e-bikes do not have a clue. If we can at least educate them, starting with guys like Reece who own e-bike companies—the education can come through them to the parents when they purchase these e-bikes. I think that is No. 1.

CHAIR: Thank you. That is a point well made.

Ms BUSH: What format would that education take? We all know that, as young people, we can be told things, but it is not until something happens that we realise the seriousness of that. I think you have answered it: bringing the parents in, with the schools—that whole-of-community response. Do you think that is part of the solution?

Mr Walker: One hundred per cent. At the age of 16 we get a learner's licence. We have to drive with an adult for six months. Why not put something in place where these kids have to learn—not six months, obviously, but a shorter term—through the parents. Growing up in the Rugby League community and being coached by guys like Wayne Bennett, tough love was a big thing when I was a kid. If these kids are not doing what their parents are telling them to do then the opportunity is there for fines to the parents. When parents who buy these \$3,000 or \$4,000 e-bikes start getting \$500 or \$1,000 fines for their kids misbehaving and putting other people at risk, they will probably learn a lot quicker and provide their kids with that standard.

CHAIR: It is a point well made. We visited Palm Beach Currumbin High School and had some really informative discussions with the principal, his team, the P&C and the kids. They gave us some great evidence.

Mr Walker: I do not want these things gone; I think they are awesome. I think they are a great form of transport for young kids, the elderly and everyone else in between. That, for me, is a given. I do not want them gone. Whether we put licences on them or encourage parents to put their kids through courses—we do it with motorbikes, we do it with cars and we do it with boats. It is an engine and it is around cars that are doing 60 kays an hour, even up to 80 kays an hour, and some of these kids are not wearing helmets. If we can even enforce that—

CHAIR: We really appreciate your evidence today, Chris. There are a lot of parents out there who I suspect are thinking about buying one of these for their kids before Christmas. What advice do you have for them? Firstly, make sure they are legal.

Mr Walker: Make sure they are legal. They should educate their kids on what they are about to partake in—the risks, the fun they are going to have. Obviously, do not take the fun out of it. As a parent you have a responsibility to teach your kids that when they jump on these things and they are doing 60 kays an hour and you take the governor off them there is a big risk. If they are going to spend \$3,000 or \$4,000 on an e-bike—especially now, before Christmas—I would encourage every parent to spend \$150 on a full-face helmet. That is probably your No. 1 investment.

CHAIR: How is Ned now?

Mr Walker: He is one of the lucky ones, Jim. He has come through okay. There are no real side effects to his learning and whatnot. He was a very active kid and he has gone back to that pretty quick. When you see your nephew lying there lifeless, with tubes down his throat—I think there has to be something done.

CHAIR: It is a very vivid memory. Thank you. Enjoy the balance of your day.

Mr Walker: Go the Broncos!

CHAIR: Both men's and ladies teams; good luck to them all. The time for this session has expired. Thank you for your time today.

BERTOLACCINI, Dr Kelly, Engineering Lecturer, Griffith University (via videoconference)

CHAIR: We appreciate you being here today. If you wish, you may make an opening statement before the committee asks questions.

Dr Bertolaccini: Thank you for inviting me to speak today. From my perspective, it is a really great thing that we are getting people out of cars and into other modes of transport. Of course, there are growing pains right now and we desperately need better infrastructure to accommodate people using these new modes. All of the research I have seen suggests that the needs of people who use e-mobility devices, whether bikes or scooters, are very similar to those of cyclists. We do have a nice body of research on that. One thing we know is that separate infrastructure, having separate lanes—what I would call cycle tracks—is very helpful. I would encourage more people to use them and in particular to use them safely.

Partnering with TMR, I recently did research on how to retrofit cycle track lanes to existing roads. This is a very feasible thing. We do not need a tonne of new space. We can retrofit what already exists out there so we will not have to acquire new land necessarily or things that would be very expensive. We can retrofit our existing roads to do this. This report is about to be approved. It has not been approved yet, but I am happy to provide information on that. We looked at 10 cases around all of Queensland, including in more rural and regional areas, and these retrofits were very successful. It is a good way to better use our roads without having to spend the money to build entirely new facilities in greenfield sites. I really think it is a positive development, but obviously there is a need for better infrastructure and better policy to make sure everyone stays safe, whether that is people using e-devices themselves or people who are walking on the footpaths and things like that.

As a researcher, I would really like to see some better data around safety. Right now there is just not sufficient data for me to state with any confidence the level of safety that is being provided to people on e-scooters and e-bikes. We just do not have enough information yet. Certainly there are far fewer fatalities and serious injuries than cars, so to me it seems like something worth continuing to explore to make sure we give people the chance to use these devices and build better infrastructure.

CHAIR: I just conferred with my colleagues, and they would be happy to receive that information after the hearing.

Mr MELLISH: You might have answered my question then, Chair. I was just going to ask if we are able to get a copy of that research or if you have an idea of when that would be available.

Dr Bertolaccini: Absolutely. I am just waiting on TMR to approve its release. It should be happening very shortly, I am told. Is there someone I should send it to? I would be very happy to provide that information.

CHAIR: Yes, the secretariat who has been working with you, Dr Kelly.

Mr KEMPTON: The concept of getting people out of cars and onto bikes I quite understand. In Cairns, where I travel daily, very rarely do I see a commuter on an e-device. The vast majority are young people. We seem to be pushing younger and younger people onto electric or motor-driven vehicles. Do you have any comment about that?

Dr Bertolaccini: There are definitely young people using them. There was recently a very tragic incident up in Cairns, and I am certainly aware of that. My understanding is that a lot of the incidents involve people who are middle-aged. That said, I think providing infrastructure works for young people and older people and if there were safer ways for them to use it they might. I understand what you are saying about there not currently being a lot of usage. It is kind of a chicken and egg problem. If we do not have good infrastructure then people who are more risk-averse will not use it. They are waiting for something to be there. Cairns in particular is a much hotter environment, so e-devices are much more appealing to people than a pushbike because it is obviously a bit less effort. I think it is something they can make more appealing to people to whom maybe a traditional pushbike would not appeal, particularly in a hot environment.

CHAIR: Thank you, Kelly. We really appreciate you being with us today. Thank you for your focus in the academic realm on infrastructure in this space. We look forward to receiving that information when it becomes available.

CASSIDY, Mr Jared, Councillor for Deagon Ward, Brisbane City Council

CHAIR: Good afternoon, Jared. If you wish you may make an opening statement, after which the committee will have questions for you.

Mr Cassidy: Thank you very much. I would definitely agree with what I have just heard from all of the other speakers here so far about the need for greater infrastructure. I will come to that. In 2018, hire e-scooters first appeared unregulated in Brisbane. They were Lime scooters at the time. They were rewarded, essentially, as a company for their disruption and in 2019 were given a contract with council, so from 2019 council has been receiving revenue from hire e-scooter and now e-bike companies. Those scooters and those contracts expanded to suburban locations including Sandgate—in my ward—Wynnum, the Bulimba area, Eight Mile Plains and I think Mount Gravatt as well related to the busway station, so attempting to get people to make a last-mile journey, essentially, at the time. The number of hire e-scooters and devices has expanded significantly now. What we have seen over that time is many millions of dollars coming into council as revenue through those usage agreements, but we have not really seen—apart from line markings and parking bays and things like that in the CBD—any uplift in that infrastructure and the importance of infrastructure, as we have heard here today, to make it safe.

I heard a figure used this morning by Councillor Andrew Wines, who said there has been \$400 million spent over the last four years on active transport infrastructure. Some \$300 million of that was the Kangaroo Point Bridge and \$80 million of that was the Breakfast Creek Bridge, which leaves just \$20 million spent over the last four years on active transport infrastructure in Brisbane. In real terms, what that means, particularly with population increases, is a decline in the amount of funding allocated to active transport infrastructure.

There is very little transparency now, unfortunately. We are now in the second year where we have a council budget annual plan that does not detail individual infrastructure items in any area, particularly in bikeway areas. When we find out what is funded, we find projects that were delayed, pushed back—in some cases for 10 years—or re-funded again. A lot of them do not actually come to fruition each financial year and continue to get pushed back as well. As I mentioned, it is not hard infrastructure as happened in the CBD, mostly. Out in the suburbs that received hire e-scooters we are now seeing a lot of private e-scooter use, particularly in the foreshore areas of Wynnum and Sandgate. It is a great place to ride along.

In the suburban areas, 40 per cent of streets do not have formed concrete footpaths. They are unformed footpaths. Where there are formed footpaths, we are seeing a deterioration in the level of their usefulness because a lot of them are very old. I have had two reports in the last week in relation to suburban footpaths. One of them involved a child who was riding a scooter—a Razor scooter, not an e-scooter—who came off and was injured on a broken footpath. Another was an elderly lady in Sandgate who tripped on a broken footpath, broke her arm and lost a tooth as a result of that. Those footpaths do not provide enough amenity for people walking on them or learning to ride a Razor scooter or bike as a child, let alone interacting with e-scooters and e-devices as well as pedestrians.

My key takeaway around all of this is that the revenue that comes to council through e-scooter hire agreements—some 2,800 at the moment operating in the Brisbane City Council area—needs to be dedicated to increasing active transport infrastructure. We just need a whole lot more. There needs to be more than that. The rough figure I have calculated is that council receives about \$1.6 million a year. That is based on public information on the 2019 device licence fee. That will have gone up, so we may be looking at \$2 million a year from those companies. No. 1, there is no transparency about where that is being spent; No. 2, it is never going to be enough. I am happy to take questions.

Mr MELLISH: We were hearing a bit earlier about footpath maintenance in the context of the Story Bridge in particular. In your view, has Brisbane City Council kept up with footpath maintenance in recent years?

Mr Cassidy: In my view, no—certainly not on the Story Bridge. We know the council was warned in 2019 about a catastrophic risk of footpath failure on the Story Bridge. Unfortunately, they did nothing about it, and then we saw the announcement from the Lord Mayor in March this year that that footpath had to be closed. I have heard that it is going to be reopened tomorrow—a temporary footpath, anyway. When you look at suburban investment in footpaths, funding has been static for about the last 10 years. In the last couple of years we have been told that the cost of concrete alone has increased by 30 per cent. Contractor costs generally are increasing, yet the amount of funding for footpath repairs and maintenance, let alone new footpaths, has been kept static. For each ward in Brisbane, which covers about the same geographic as a state electorate, when you take out overheads and corporate costs it is about \$400,000 a year to build new footpaths and park equipment

as well. You would be lucky to get one or two footpaths a year built by council in each ward, so it really has not kept up with that—certainly not in the areas where e-scooter use has ballooned in popularity, let alone just generally in suburban backstreets.

CHAIR: When you referred to 'park' just then, did you mean parking equipment as opposed to park and recreational equipment?

Mr Cassidy: No, park equipment. Just for clarification, the only capital funding for footpaths is called the Suburban Enhancement Fund, which is allocated to councils. It is not completely discretionary, but it makes recommendations to council to delegate where that is spent. It is about \$600,000. Corporate overheads come out of that and design costs come out of that, so in terms of delivering infrastructure at a ward-by-ward level it is about \$400,000 a year. In real terms that means less is being delivered.

CHAIR: When it comes to the people who use these devices, there seems to be a culture of entitlement in terms of using the footpath and expecting pedestrians to get out of their way. Do you have any advice for the committee as to how we can assist to change that culture?

Mr Cassidy: Outside of being able to provide separated and dedicated infrastructure, we do have the problem of people interacting with that. Again I use the example of Sandgate, where footpaths were installed probably 70 years ago connecting the foreshore to the main street. They were installed at 900 millimetres wide. Now with grass growth and whatever, it is barely enough for one person to walk down, let alone for people interacting with each other.

Obviously enforcement has to play a part in that where people are operating in dangerous spaces, but I think separating people who are pedestrians, specifically walking, from people using e-scooters, e-bikes and bikes generally needs to occur where we know that there are areas of high desire of use. We know where they are. E-scooter companies can tell us that. They can track where people are using them and, outside of that, where e-devices are left. We are told by e-scooter companies—this is for the hire ones—that they are very well kept. People are told where to park them and they are all very safe. Walking in here today I saw that one was lying on the footpath, taking up two metres of footpath at the front gates of parliament. It was just lying there. Here are a couple of shots—I will table these—

CHAIR: Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr Cassidy:—at Lutwyche, where there are literally 10 scooters piled up on Lutwyche Road and one here on Bridge Street. That was just yesterday. We see that as well. Definitely holding e-scooter companies to account about their usage and also how they interact with the community I think is critical and probably sets a higher standard as well.

CHAIR: For sure. We are looking forward to making sure everybody is as safe as possible.

Mr MELLISH: On holding the e-scooter hire companies to account, we have heard from witnesses such as RACQ that more can be done in terms of enforcement. For example, for people who use hire schemes—scooters in particular—the devices will not operate unless they put a helmet on. Everyone can count, and as we drive around the city every day we see many, even up to a dozen, hire scooter riders not using helmets. Do you think this is something the council could do more about? We heard it in an aspirational sense today, but is this something the council should be enforcing more with these hire companies?

Mr Cassidy: Through the contracts that we have and the usage agreements that can be enforced, when you hire them you have to agree that if you are not using the helmet that is provided and clipped onto the device then you are saying, 'I'm going to use my own.' That is fair. Sometimes people do have their own. If it is a requirement that people use helmets, the onus really should be on the e-scooter companies around that.

If they are paying millions of dollars a year to councils through usage fees, we know they are making a lot more than that in profit. They are not charities; they are private businesses. They are making a lot of money out of operating in public spaces. They should be held to a very high standard. If that is the law and if we are not going to be banning e-scooters and e-devices, whether they are hire ones or private use ones—and I do not think that is what people want; they want to see them be safer because it is a very important way of getting people to make the decision to get out of private motor vehicles and into active transport to travel to work—then we are going to need better infrastructure, as everyone agrees with, and hire companies should be leading the way on that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Councillor. We have gone over time, but thank you for appearing before the committee today. There were no questions taken on notice. Thank you and enjoy the balance of your day.

McALEESE, Ms Irene, Co-Founder and Chief Strategy Officer, See.Sense

PEACH, Dr Neil, Spring Hill Community Group, Brisbane Residents United

CHAIR: Welcome. As I have said to each of the participants in the open session, we have your submission so please take that as read by the committee. You are going to have three minutes, so I will set a timer. We will go in order, so Dr Neil Peach will go first. Is there anything additional to your submission that you would like to say or highlight for the committee?

Dr Peach: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you again. The major objective that I would like to convey that is sort of an oversight of the submission is to put forward the view that the road corridor is an economy of movement and that nothing exists in isolation. The size of the footpath, the size of the road and the size of the parking area are all connected and they only get meaning if you look at the whole corridor. We would like you to list all of the elements in the economy of movement so that we do not get focused on particular one-fix items because every one of these actions has a reaction. It is too easy to get caught up in the fact that it is about the speed of the vehicle or the size or the weight of it or the repair of the footpath.

The objective is that we cannot solve it unless over time—and it is hard to believe, but we need three levels of government to come on board. At the top end you have the Commonwealth and the importing, in the middle you have the planning schemes and in the bottom layer with the councils you have the repairs and maintenance. There is no established economy of the public realm that is causing this problem. I would like to see the committee establish an economy of movement where there is a necessary requirement for there to be an established design for every public realm using the planning system.

In Brisbane and in other larger cities, there is a central traffic area that is subject to its own conditions with regard to motor vehicles and parking and so on. It can be rolled out progressively through the suburbs, but you could easily start with the central traffic areas and you could also work with the existing infrastructure—for example, the bikeways and so on. If you start in the central traffic areas the speed limits are going to be lower, which means you have more flexibility for getting some of these personal mobility devices into the bike network and getting them off the footpaths.

We have been doing a project in Spring Hill working with the community and the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland's Young Geographers to try to establish a suburb plan that we hope could be used across Brisbane as a way of trying to deal with this economy. Thank you for your time and I appreciate your efforts.

CHAIR: We will go to Irene. Thank you again for your submission. There was some really important IT information in there.

Ms McAleese: My name is Irene McAleese. I am the co-founder and CSO at See.Sense. We are a cycling and micromobility technology and data company. We are originally from Northern Ireland, but I am a Brisbane girl and after 20 years away overseas I have returned home, and we have now established the company as a Queensland company with an office here in Brisbane.

We are working around the world with cities that are using our data insights specifically to get better data that is going to help make smarter decisions about how you invest in infrastructure that is going to make these schemes safer and therefore more attractive and also understand the behaviour of the users. For instance, in London we work with Transport for London to get a better idea of the risk across their network. That project won the Prince Michael International Road Safety Award. We are also currently working in Helsinki, which is recognised as one of the leaders in Vision Zero and reducing deaths on their network. They have installed See.Sense devices on their e-scooters with Dott and Tier, which is one of the major micromobility operators in Europe.

In Australia we work with the Transport Accident Commission in Victoria, where they deployed 1,000 of our bike lights across Melbourne. Bike lights are one of our products. We also have a product which can be fitted, as I mentioned, onto e-scooters which is really like a GPS sensor tracker. What we do is monitor the environment of the rider up to 800 times a second. We use edge processing and AI on that device to crunch and analyse all of the data in real time. What we get from this is like really detailed telemetry, where it is not just the basic GPS location of where somebody rode but also what their experience was like. Were they swerving a lot? Were they braking? What was the road surface that they rode on like—was it rough or was it smooth? We can then aggregate all of this data and look at patterns in the data and we can start to see, for example, where our hotspots for crashes are.

Essentially, this data allows cities to be proactive. Rather than waiting on hearing, 'There was a crash that happened at this location. That must be unsafe,' you actually have data so you can be proactive and say, 'We're seeing this pattern of extreme swerve and braking. We know that there's a correlation of this pattern with those crashes.' That allows the city to be proactive.

CHAIR: Irene, thank you very much. I was just talking to the deputy chair and we both agreed that, whilst your submission is great, you have already shared with us some other information. We would like the opportunity to send you some questions and continue that conversation. I think that will be valuable because we just do not have time now. Thank you. It is very exciting to hear about the information being gathered about the light and the source. Did you have anything to add?

Ms BUSH: I did. I have questions for Irene, but I am going to resist because we also have Neil here who is phenomenal. Neil, the economy of movement concept I really am interested in. I am in the inner city. I know that my comrades here are from the regions. The pace at which the inner city is changing is quite remarkable. Things are coming up for us constantly around precinct planning and neighbourhood planning. We now have the Olympics coming down the line. I am just after your views on how important it is for council to engage in neighbourhood planning and precinct planning. I know for my electorate that our neighbourhood plans are not due for a refresh for another two years, which is just too late. Do you see a role in bringing that forward and really working, as you are saying, with communities in redesigning some of that economy?

Dr Peach: I think the precursor to that is for councils to establish a public realm design framework for everyone in the council to understand what council's plan is for the whole road corridor. We do not have that now. What happens is that someone will want to plant some trees and they plant them on the front side of the footpath which is 20 metres away from the bus stop down the road which is to the back of the footpath. Then you have signs on the footpath, so what you have is pedestrians and the PMDs going like this on skinny streets.

There are not any public realm guidelines that could be established as part of a city plan which could start with the central traffic area, if there is one, but it does not stop other councils developing a guideline for tree planting, bus stops, rubbish bins and everything else. What we are finding—and it is because of our demographic—is that the older demographic is getting afraid to walk on the footpath. At the same time, we want to make our footpaths shady and green. There are all these things happening in this economy and everyone wants it all to work for everything else, but you cannot do it unless you take everything else into account. The guidelines need to be established as part of a city plan, and it can be rolled out progressively based on each suburb and each city's requirements.

CHAIR: Dr Neil Peach, as always, thank you very much for your thoughtfulness. I am sorry that the time for this session has expired.

BASSETT, Mr Travis, Private capacity

HANLEY, Mr Stephen, Private capacity

KARG, Mr Frank, Private capacity

CHAIR: Gents, we are a bit over time, so I am intending to just give you each three minutes and we will keep you tight to that. Frank, would you like to begin?

Mr Karg: My name is Frank Karg. I live in the West End area of Brisbane. In the state of Queensland there are many varied rules and regulations for the road, as we have heard today. I could be a 12-year-old in Queensland and drive a private e-bike down the road with no knowledge of any road rules or any regard to any laws, because I am 12 years old and I know everything! If I do anything illegal, who will stop me? The Queensland police are not authorised to chase e-bikes for safety reasons. Whose safety reasons? The automobile driver who is going to hit them and must live with this for the rest of their life or the pedestrian that the e-bike rider hits on the road or sidewalk?

I was going to tennis three weeks ago and there were three kids doing wheelies up Gladstone Road on e-bikes at 6.30 pm. It was night-time. Not one bike had lights; they were all in camouflage. I was going to tennis this past Tuesday at about 7 pm down Gladstone Road at 50 kilometres per hour. Two e-bikes passed me—one without any lights and the other with a passenger and lights barely visible. I was doing 50; they passed me.

On 5 September 2025 I was going home after visiting MP Barbara O'Shea's office about a homeless person making a rather large home at the shelter at Victoria Street and Riverside. I am a bicyclist. I had just turned off onto Montague Road from Mollison Street. As I travelled down the road at 50 kilometres per hour, I saw an e-bike travelling on the sidewalk. Then it was on the road right next to me. I beeped to warn him. I moved to the right and then he rammed right into my car. He not once looked back. He was trying to cross the road. He was doing at least 40 to 50 kilometres per hour. It is on video, there were two witnesses and he admitted fault, all in my favour, for the more than \$11,000 damage to my Lexus—front bumper, fender, side-view mirror, door and windshield. The ambulance and then the police arrived. Later, his mother arrived and she told me to be more careful. I told her to shut up. He is lucky to be alive. I am lucky that I do not have to live with him being run over and killed.

On 13 September 2025 I was walking on Riverside Drive, West End, with my wife going to markets. I saw Councillor Trina Massey. I stopped to introduce myself and told her about the accident I had on 5 September and she told me about this upcoming committee meeting and to get involved. Just as we finished talking, two e-bikers went by doing wheelies on Riverside Drive, which is just pedestrians 99 per cent of the time. I turned around and yelled, 'Slow down.' One out of the riders yelled out—I am not allowed to say—'F-off', in front of all these kids and parents.

CHAIR: Frank, unfortunately, you are well over the three minutes now, but do you have a quick last remark?

Mr Karg: It all comes down to this: all drivers must have 100 hours of experience, with an experienced driver as a passenger, on the road to help them learn the road rules to pass for a P licence to drive an automobile; a 12-year-old e-bike rider needs no experience, no licence.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Your point is well made. Travis, would you like to go next?

Mr Bassett: Thank you for the opportunity to talk today. With all of the moral panic, I was just going to talk about how a legal pedal-assist e-bike has helped my family, particularly my parents. I will start with my father. For context, we used to ride out to Nudgee Beach with the family and the nephews, all separated. He eventually started falling off the bike. We thought he was just clumsy, but it turns out he has a medical condition that is genetic. Essentially, the best way to describe it is that it is like Parkinson's, which is not genetic but affects mobility. My father subsequently changed to using a recumbent bike. This allowed him to continue to ride because he can balance; he also has a battery now. In talking to the neurologist about my dad, he is a poster child for what can be achieved with regard to exercise slowing the deterioration of health for people with this condition. My dad is 81 now and he cannot walk without a wheelie walker and cannot really go up stairs; however, he still rides most days on the Centenary bikeway. The e-bike has allowed him to do this, as well as having access to safe, separated infrastructure. The path is hilly, but that is not really an issue when you have an e-bike.

Likewise, my mum—also in her 80s—rides too. She had a hip operation so she cannot ride a regular bike, so she switched to a recumbent pedal-assist bike. The exercise makes a difference to their health and the quality of their lives. My dad wanted to me to say that by Christmas he would have gone around Australia twice and he feels better and safer now on the e-bike than he did when he was 65 riding a bike.

That brings me to my story. I also have this condition. A neurologist told me that the only thing I can do to keep walking for as long as possible is to use my legs as much as possible every day. That is where an electric cargo bike comes in, and that is what works for me. I wanted to get the bike to drop my kids at day care and my dad suggested an e-bike, saying that if it was easier I would use it more. I have found that to be very true. It has been a fantastic way of incorporating exercise into my day. I have done 5,000 kilometres since I got it last year. It has replaced a lot of trips that I would otherwise do by car—dropping the kids off to swimming and getting the groceries.

It has been a particularly great way to get around the burbs with the kids, and it is teaching them how to ride and how to be safe on the streets. My kids, who are five and three, want to ride everywhere. The good part about having a cargo bike is that they can ride and when they get tired—particularly my three-year-old—they can hop on the back and I can tow them home. Otherwise, I would have to drive them to the park. The other thing is that they stop at intersections, so they are learning about road rules. Their kindy actually teaches them how to ride bikes.

I suppose this is going off tangent, but I travelled overseas and toured by bicycle around Europe. I noticed that when you have safe infrastructure kids have a lot more independence and mobility. It is just little things. In Holland it is better for driving, too, because they separate by building the road up and then you go through a tunnel to the other side. I guess it costs a lot of money, but I can see how it is designed. You have a chicken and egg moment, where there are a lot of kids who want to be independent. That is why they are buying these electric motorbikes, essentially. My last point is that the e-bike and train are brilliant. If I take my kids into the city, we can go everywhere and get a train home—the bike and the kids.

CHAIR: Travis, thank you for sharing such personal information with us. We really appreciate it.

Mr Hanley: Thanks very much for the opportunity to appear. To confuse everyone, I go by 'Stephen' Hanley. I live in Ashgrove, in Jonty's electorate. A lot of what Travis said resonated with me so hopefully my points will complement, rather than repeat, things that he said. I am passionate about cities and the opportunities that cities present for—I met my wife in Brisbane—romance, career and culture, quite importantly.

I want to talk to you about e-cargo bikes. Our family lives a car-lite lifestyle. We have one car that my wife and I share and we have two cargo bikes that we use to move our three young kids around the city. Travis is a good example. In Brisbane I co-convene a community of over 500 cycling parents and cargo bike riders in Brisbane. The movement has been organic. I want to call out that there has not been much government support. There was a small e-mobility grant which was brought in in the latter stages of the last government. I have already called out the disparity in that versus the zero-emissions vehicle subsidies. There is quite a huge imbalance; the detail is in my submission. It is recognised globally: the opportunity for displacement of oil that has already happened through two- and three-wheeler vehicles is much greater than from four-wheeled electric vehicles. In a city like Brisbane, where space is at a premium, the two- and three-wheeler vehicles are much more efficient in how they use space. They can replace car trips without taking up much road or parking footprint.

I would like to ask government for support in two ways. The first is financial support, because these are expensive. For lots of families that are less well off than my own, it is a big investment for them to take a punt on this. I did enjoy some support through tax in Ireland, before I moved to Australia, to take our leap into buying an e-cargo bike. It would be nice to see more support like that but also recognition—platforming examples in your own electorates of families who are doing this. I keep getting told that it cannot be done, that you cannot raise a family on a bicycle, but we have thousands of families in Queensland that are doing this and I do not feel that they are visible enough.

If you will humour me on a second point, I want to touch on KSI statistics and the focus on e-scooter trauma. It is difficult for me to make sense of it because it is not put in the context of the wider road toll and exposure data. Exposure data—particularly in the context of active school travel—is incredibly important, because we have come from a time in the 1970s, when 80 per cent of children got to school independently, to today, when over 80 per cent of kids are driven to school, so you do not have kids getting exposed to risk on the roads. If you only look at KSI statistics, you are missing the fact that if more kids are getting to school independently then a lot more will be hurt and injured.

CHAIR: That is a good point well made. We all grew up riding bikes to and from school and there are a number of skills that have been lost. Now kids can get on one of these and, at the flick of a switch, they can go very fast.

Ms BUSH: Thanks, Stephen. It is lovely to see you and Travis and Frank. Thank you for your evidence today. There is a rhetoric that I hear sometimes in conversations that e-mobility devices including e-bikes are a lazier version—that they are not about active transport. I would like you to comment on that.

The other issue I often get from council is that there is a disincentive to invest in active transport because people are not using it: 'They are not using that bike path. We don't have the numbers to support doing additional bike paths.' Can you speak to the idea that people are not using paths or infrastructure because they do not feel safe and that if you actually build that full piece of infrastructure you could get a better benchmark of who is wanting to use bikes?

Mr Hanley: I will go first.

CHAIR: You have a minute.

Mr Hanley: Sorry, what was the first question?

Ms BUSH: It was about the concept—I think we even heard it today—that it is not really active transport.

Mr Hanley: I am not an academic but I spend a lot of time on this, obviously. I think the research shows that people who are using e-bikes travel further and use their bikes more, and that has been my experience. I use it for groceries, for school drop-off and all of these things. It is my main mode of transport. I rode it into the city today. I feel like sometimes people look at my kids and the e-bike and they think they are lazy because they are not riding their own bikes, but they do not think of the fact that 80 per cent of kids are being driven to school.

To your point on infrastructure, I volunteered with the Story Bridge Bike Bus this morning. It is a great example. It feels like every time we get a good piece of infrastructure like the CityLink Cycleway, once you start to feel comfortable it is taken away—which CityLink was. I am not sure if it was quite closed, but it was certainly pulled apart down Elizabeth Street for a long time and the Victoria Bridge was closed for a long time. It just feels like obstacles are put in place. We need to get more momentum.

Mr Bassett: My wife and I travelled around Europe for a year by bicycle and camping, and my wife used to ride from Wynnum into the city. That is not a great road. Now she will not really ride. She will not drop the kids to day care because she does not feel as safe—you have bigger cars and for your kids you have to get home—but she does feel safe on separated paths. Likewise with my mum, when you do a simple detour she stopped riding, which I think I put into my submission, but she is back again.

If you had asked me three years ago if I would be here, I would have been dubious. My dad was the one who said, 'If it's easy you ride more,' and I think it is true. I did not think I could get to day care from Sherwood to Oxley because of all the hills, taking the back road, but riding that is actually really easy. If you want to put it into perspective: I am going at 25 kays per hour and a car is at 50. It might take me 15 minutes and it takes a car five minutes, but I get my exercise for the day. I will often beat everyone getting between Chelmer and Oxley because of the traffic. If it is raining, no-one turns up on time except me—even the teachers. I just wanted to point that out.

CHAIR: Thanks, Travis. Obviously that is a pedal-assist bike so you are getting that exercise; that is great. Frank, do you have a quick comment?

Mr Karg: E-scooters are imposing on streets and sidewalks, the same as e-bikes. The e-scooters have a little light on the back that is almost kissing the ground. Didn't we all have to have a middle light up high in the middle of our car? How the hell are we supposed to see that at night? Paris has outlawed e-bike and e-scooter companies to keep the number of these items in check. That is something most people did not mention. Paris has actually outlawed the companies, so you can have private e-scooters and e-bikes in Paris but the companies are not allowed to have it because they said there were too many of them. I checked that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Frank. Unfortunately, the time for the hearing has now finished. Thank you to everyone who has participated today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters, our secretariat and our broadcast staff for 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.

The committee adjourned at 1.16 pm.