

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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IntroductionI am writing this submission as a concerned parent of a student attending Palm Beach Currumbin High School. I wish to bring to the attention of the committee several serious safety issues regarding the use of e-mobility devices (e-bikes and e-scooters) by school-aged children in our community.

Personal Observations and ExperiencesAs a parent regularly present in the Palm Beach Currumbin area, I have witnessed numerous concerning incidents involving students on e-mobility devices:

1. Multiple students riding e-bikes at speeds exceeding 40km/hr on public footpaths and roads
2. Students frequently riding without helmets or other safety equipment
3. Underage riders without supervision or appropriate training
4. Dangerous riding behaviors including doubling, wheelies, cutting in front of cars, riding on the freeway, bowling down pedestrians.

Specific Incidents of ConcernThe dangers of these practices are not theoretical. I am personally aware of several serious accidents involving friends of my son:

1. A child known to my son was involved in a collision with a car while riding an e-scooter. The impact caused the child to be thrown over the top of the vehicle. Though fortunately not fatal, this incident could easily have resulted in catastrophic injuries.
2. My own son was involved in an accident while doubling on an e-scooter (riding as a passenger). The driver crashed into a tree, causing a strike the crossbar with his face. The child lost four teeth as a result of this preventable accident.
3. Another boy who played sports with my son fell from an e-scooter, hitting the pavement with such force that he suffered significant dental trauma, losing several teeth.

These incidents highlight the very real physical dangers these devices pose when used improperly by children.

Key Concerns

Developmental LimitationsChildren and teenagers are developmentally limited in their ability to:

- * Accurately assess risk and danger
- * Make split-second decisions required for safe operation of high-speed vehicles
- * Understand and follow complex road rules
- * Appreciate the potential consequences of their actions

Technical ConcernsThe e-mobility devices currently widely available present specific dangers:

- * Many e-bikes and e-scooters can reach speeds of 40km/hr or higher
- * The power and acceleration of these devices far exceeds what is appropriate for inexperienced riders
- * The weight and momentum of these devices increases stopping distances and impact forces
- * Many devices are being modified to exceed legal speed limits

Regulatory GapsThe current regulatory framework is insufficient to address these concerns:

- * Lack of mandatory training or licensing for young riders
- * Inadequate enforcement of existing safety rules (helmet laws, speed limits)
- * Insufficient education about safe riding practices
- * Minimal supervision requirements for underage riders

RecommendationsAs a concerned parent, I respectfully submit the following recommendations for consideration:

1. **Mandatory Safety Training:** Implement compulsory safety training programs before children are permitted to operate e-mobility devices.
2. **Age Restrictions:** Consider appropriate age restrictions including mandatory licensing for different categories of e-mobility devices based on power, speed capabilities, and required skill level.
3. **Speed Limitations:** Enforce technical limitations on devices sold to or used by minors to restrict maximum speeds to safe levels, unless road registered.
4. **School-Based Programs:** Partner with schools to develop comprehensive e-mobility safety education programs.
5. **Parental Responsibility Framework:** Develop guidelines for parents regarding supervision requirements and liability considerations.
6. **Enhanced Enforcement:** Increase monitoring and enforcement of safety regulations around schools and other high-risk areas.
7. **Registration System:** Implement a registration system for higher-powered e-mobility devices to improve accountability. Impound unregistered devices.

ConclusionThe rapid proliferation of e-mobility devices has outpaced our regulatory

frameworks and safety education. While I recognise the benefits these devices offer in terms of transportation and reducing traffic congestion, the current unregulated use by children poses an unacceptable risk to their safety. The incidents I have described are not isolated. They represent a growing pattern of preventable injuries and deaths occurring because children do not have the capacity to safely operate these powerful devices without proper training, supervision, and regulation. I urge the committee to take urgent and decisive action to protect our children while establishing a sustainable pathway for the safe integration of e-mobility technology into our communities. Thank you for your consideration of this submission. Yours sincerely, Christian King