

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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I am writing this letter as a concerned parent, pedestrian, Varsity Lakes resident, and professional counsellor—both in private practice and within school settings. Over the past year, the quality of my life has significantly declined, largely due to increasing safety concerns during my daily walks around Lake Orr, and the boardwalks at Miami and Burleigh Beach. What was once a calming routine to help regulate my own wellbeing as a mental health professional has now become a source of anxiety and distress. The primary cause: the illegal and unsafe use of e-bikes and e-scooters. I have reported these concerns to the Queensland Police Service and local Gold Coast councillors, but the response has consistently been to call the police when I witness a violation. This feels like a reactive and ineffective solution to what is now a daily and widespread public safety issue. Just recently, while crossing the bridge over Lake Orr toward Aldi, an e-bike carrying two teenage riders with no helmets nearly ran into my right side. They sped past me, laughing, with no regard for my safety. Incidents like these are not isolated—they are a regular occurrence and pose a serious risk to pedestrians. I was a school counsellor at a local school when a tragic incident occurred involving a young boy and his father, who were struck by an impaired driver while riding an e-scooter. Heartbreakingly, the young boy lost his life. The ripple effect of his death has been profound, deeply affecting the entire school community. I often find myself wondering whether that child might still be alive had the use of e-scooters and e-bikes not been permitted under current Queensland regulations. Sadly, I continue to witness parents riding these devices with young children—often in unsafe ways. Just recently, I saw a father speeding along the Lake Orr pathway with two small children, none of whom were wearing helmets, and without using a bell to alert pedestrians. It's only a matter of time before another preventable tragedy occurs. As a family counsellor, I frequently speak with parents who are purchasing e-scooters and e-bikes for children as young as 9, 10, and 11—often unaware that Queensland law prohibits anyone under the age of 16 from using these devices. When I try to educate them, many respond dismissively, saying things like, "I've told my child the rules, and they'll follow them." At that point, I explain the realities of brain development and remind them that they are, in essence, their child's prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain responsible for impulse control and risk assessment, which is still developing in young people. Unfortunately, many of these parents choose not to return for further sessions. While that can be disheartening, I've come to accept it because at the end of the day, protecting children's safety is more important than client retention. Their lives matter too much to ignore the risks. I'm alarmed by how many schools not only allow but seemingly normalise their use on school grounds. When I raise these issues with school leadership, I am told it's a matter for parents and council. I strongly disagree. I moved to the Gold Coast seeking peace, rest, and a safe community. Sadly, I am now reconsidering living here. The unregulated and often illegal use of e-bikes and e-scooters has had a profound impact on my perception of the area and my daily wellbeing. I urge the committee to take action—not only to prevent further injuries and fatalities but to restore a sense of safety for those of us who simply want to go for a peaceful walk. This is about more than the riders themselves—it's about the innocent people, including the elderly, children, and everyday pedestrians, whose lives are being disrupted or even destroyed by this issue. Please, do something before more lives are needlessly harmed. Thank you.