

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submission to the Queensland Parliament Inquiry into the Use and Safety of E-Mobility Devices

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About ecoTekk Sunshine Coast

ecoTekk Sunshine Coast is a regionally based tourism and mobility business offering electric bicycle (e-bike) hire, guided tours, and electric mountain biking (e-MTB) experiences and sales. We operate in compliance with Queensland legislation, local council permits, and industry best practice. Recognised for three years in the Best of Queensland Experience Program and finalists in the 2023 Sunshine Coast Business Awards, we deliver community safety workshops and e-bike education programs covering safe riding, shared pathway etiquette, and responsible use for young people, families, and community groups. E-mobility devices enhance community health, provide transport options for youth, and support local economies, particularly in regional areas with limited public transport.

Submission Summary and Recommendations

Benefits and Risks of E-Mobility Devices

E-mobility devices, such as e-bikes and e-scooters, offer significant benefits to Queensland communities by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, alleviating traffic congestion, and providing inclusive mobility options, especially in regional areas. ecoTekk Sunshine Coast has safely operated for over 15,000 hire hours and 2,500 tour hours without serious incidents, demonstrating the potential for safe usage with proper regulations and education.

Research from the [Queensland University of Technology](#) highlights that e-bikes improve health and wellbeing, including mental health, by encouraging cycling. Economically, they reduce transport costs, as noted by Brisbane residents avoiding traffic and parking fees. Environmentally, e-bikes reduce emissions, with 78% of women and 68% of men using them for transportation, often replacing car trips.

However, risks arise from unregulated high-powered devices and unsafe behaviors. Injury statistics show a 112% rise in e-mobility-related injuries from 2021 to 2024, with 1,273 e-scooter-related emergency presentations in 2023, primarily fractures, open wounds, and sprains ([Bicycle Network](#)). These trends underscore the need for improved regulations, enforcement, and education.

Regulatory Gaps & Age-Based Discrimination

Current age restrictions for personal mobility devices (PMDs) in Queensland, requiring riders to be at least 16 or 1215 with adult supervision, are restrictive and limit access to sustainable transport options ([Queensland Rules](#)). Children under 12 are prohibited, which may be seen as discriminatory.

Recommendations:

- Allow children under 12 to ride PMDs under strict parental supervision in controlled environments, such as shared paths or off-road trails.
- Clarify that parents or guardians are legally responsible for fines incurred by supervised minors, ensuring accountability.
- Review and amend legislation to balance accessibility and safety.

Enforcement Approaches

To ensure public safety, Queensland Police should have explicit powers to seize non-compliant or dangerously used PMDs, with devices retained until fines and penalties, such as mandatory safety education, are completed ([Legal Aid Queensland](#)).

Recommendations:

- Amend legislation to explicitly grant police authority to seize non-compliant or dangerously used PMDs.
- Implement consistent signage on shared pathways to indicate speed limits and usage rules, ensuring uniformity across councils.
- Establish uniform visual standards for signage to reduce confusion and conflict.

Shared Pathways Enforcement & Signage

The lack of speed signage on shared paths contributes to tensions between pedestrians and e-mobility users. Forcing riders onto roadside lanes would increase risks and likely lead to more fatalities ([Queensland Rules](#)). Current Queensland regulations set a 12 km/h limit on shared paths and 25 km/h on dedicated bicycle paths, but clearer zoning and signage are needed.

Recommendations:

- Implement speed zoning based on path type and usage:
 - 12 km/h in high foot traffic areas.
 - 15 km/h on general shared paths with moderate pedestrian traffic, subject to safety assessments.
 - 25 km/h on dedicated cycleways with minimal pedestrian traffic.
- For on-road cycle lanes, set speed limits to match vehicle limits, with a 25 km/h motor assist cut-off per EN15194 standards.

- Install consistent signage across councils (e.g., “Max [speed] km/h”, “Respect Pedestrians”, “Ring Bell Before Passing”) to communicate rules clearly.
- Establish uniform visual standards to reduce confusion across jurisdictions.
- Conduct a review by the Department of Transport and Main Roads to assess path usage and safety before implementing higher speed limits.

Table 1: Speed Zoning Recommendations for Shared Pathways

Path Type	Speed Limit (km/h)	Conditions
High Foot Traffic Areas	12	Dense pedestrian presence
General Shared Paths	15	Moderate pedestrian traffic, suitable for walking and cycling
Dedicated Cycleways	25	Minimal pedestrian traffic
On-Road Cycle Lanes	Match vehicle limit (max 25 km/h assist)	Per EN15194 standards

Importation and Sale of Non-Compliant Devices

Non-compliant, high-powered PMDs pose safety risks and disadvantage compliant operators ([Department of Infrastructure](#)).

Recommendations:

- Mandate clear, visible wattage labelling on all imported PMDs at the point of sale.
- Prohibit import and sale of non-compliant devices, except for private use with licensing.
- Establish a national product compliance database linking online sellers to compliance information.
- Collaborate with federal and state governments to enforce these measures.

Public Education & Programs

Public education is critical for safe PMD use. ecoTekks workshops and briefings promote safety and etiquette, complementing initiatives like [StreetSmarts Queensland](#).

Recommendations:

- Launch a statewide education campaign across television, radio, social media, and print, targeting youth, parents, and grandparents.
- Partner with schools, tourism precincts, and workplaces for tailored in-person workshops.
- Offer free online safety courses on road rules, safety equipment, and responsible riding, accessible via government platforms.

Conclusion

ecoTekk Sunshine Coast supports a balanced, evidence-based approach to e-mobility in Queensland. Enhanced enforcement, flexible regulations for youth, robust education, and

improved infrastructure like speed zoning and signage will promote safety and sustainable transport. We welcome participation in stakeholder roundtables or pilot programs to refine these recommendations.

Contact

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References

- [Queensland Parliament Inquiry Terms of Reference](#)
- [Queensland Rules for Personal Mobility Devices](#)
- [Legal Aid Queensland Police Seizing Vehicles](#)
- [Department of Infrastructure Importing E-Scooters](#)
- [StreetSmarts Queensland PMD Rules](#)
- [Australian Rural & Regional News E-Mobility Safety](#)
- [Queensland Police News E-Scooter Safety](#)
- [Bicycle Network Queensland E-Mobility Inquiry](#)
- [Inside Local Government Queensland E-Mobility Inquiry](#)
- [CSIRO Publishing Active Transportation Policies](#)
- [Community Transport Australia Social Justice Issue](#)
- [Royal Australasian College E-Scooter Safety](#)
- [Jamieson Trauma Institute E-Mobility Safety](#)
- [Transport for NSW Shared Paths Research](#)
- [Georgia Institute of Technology Shared Pathway Analysis](#)
- [QUT CARRS-Q E-Scooter Safety Recommendations](#)
- [University of Sydney E-Scooter Risk Insights](#)
- [Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6A](#)