


## **Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland**

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	
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<b>Submitter Comments:</b>	

## **Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into E-scooter and E-bike Safety**

**Date:** 25 May 2025

**To:** State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee

### **Introduction**

I live in Brisbane City with my spouse and our two small dogs. We have lived in the city since 2016, and during that time, we have witnessed a significant decline in pedestrian safety, particularly since the introduction of e-scooters and e-bikes.

Just yesterday, while walking our dogs through the City Botanic Gardens, we witnessed four young men riding on-hire e-scooters at high speed without helmets. They were weaving recklessly between pedestrians, performing long skids, and being antisocial. At one point, one of the scooters began smoking heavily - I am not sure if it was due to overheated brakes or tyres, or a battery issue. They became verbally aggressive toward an elderly man who confronted them about their behaviour, then dumped the on-hire e-scooters in the middle of the main entrance to the gardens and walked off.

Sadly, this is not a one-off incident, it reflects the increasingly common and antisocial use of on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes in Brisbane City. These behaviours are dangerous, deeply disrespectful to our public spaces and to our inner-city community members. Sadly, this kind of event is now an almost daily occurrence in our neighbourhood.

As a long-term resident of Brisbane City, the area with the highest saturation of on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes, I have witnessed first-hand the deteriorating safety and amenity of our footpaths, public spaces, and streets. While these devices may offer some benefits in terms of low-emission transport, their current operation is chaotic, feels unregulated (or unenforced), and dangerous.

Across our inner-city community, concerns about on-hire e-scooter and e-bike misuse are widespread and growing. In our apartment building alone, which is a blend of long-term residents and short-stay visitors, residents frequently complain about the on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes which are dumped at the entryway to our building, intoxicated riders returning from nights out, and near misses on the footpaths. These issues mirror concerns expressed widely when I speak with residents from other buildings, whom we meet regularly when walking our dogs. There is a clear and urgent public desire for reform.

This submission outlines my five major concerns, each accompanied by practical recommendations for reform. My core recommendation is that on-hire devices (such as those provided by Lime and Neuron) be banned outright in Brisbane City and other densely populated urban centres. However, if the Government elects not to implement a full ban, then ride-share e-scooter and e-bike companies should be required to lease and operate physical retail premises within the city for the hire, maintenance, return, and storage of their devices. This would bring them in line with other on-hire industries, such as car rental services.

## **1. Footpath Speed and Pedestrian Safety**

On-hire e-scooters and e-bikes are motorised vehicles capable of travelling at speeds far exceeding what is safe for shared pedestrian environments. Their frequent presence on footpaths, especially when operated recklessly as they often are, poses a real danger to children, elderly residents, people with prams, and pedestrians walking dogs on leashes. Even in the absence of a collision, the speed and unpredictability of these devices cause significant anxiety for pedestrians and residents.

Footpaths are not suitable for fast-moving vehicles. Allowing these devices to mix with pedestrians and pets is a serious design flaw that is putting people at daily risk.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Ban on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes from Brisbane City; or
2. Any motorised device capable of exceeding 10 km/h (i.e. faster than a medical mobility aid) should be banned from footpaths, subject to individual registration, and be required to operate on the road with other vehicles or in designated bike lanes, but not on footpaths. Devices used in public should have visible ID plates so that unsafe behaviours can be reported.

## **2. Criminal and Antisocial Use by Youth Offenders**

On-hire e-scooters and e-bikes have increasingly become vehicles of convenience for youth crime and antisocial behaviour. Young people often use these devices as getaway vehicles after vandalism, verbal assaults, and general antisocial behaviour, taking advantage of their speed, mobility, and anonymity. Riders can easily weave through traffic, evade police, and discard these on-hire e-scooter and e-bikes with ease and zero accountability.

This growing trend has been widely observed in Brisbane City and is fuelling a climate of fear. Groups of teenagers using on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes now congregate in parks, laneways, and residential areas, creating an intimidating atmosphere, particularly at night. The association between these devices and lawless behaviour is clear and worsening.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Ban on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes from Brisbane City; or
2. Require on-hire e-scooter and e-bike companies to lease and operate physical retail premises within the city for the hire, maintenance, return, and storage of their devices. Curfews should be used to prevent these companies from operating during high-risk hours (e.g. late-night weekends), and Queensland Police should be empowered to confiscate devices used in criminal activity. Ride-share operators should be required to cooperate with police and provide rider data when criminal misuse is suspected.

## **3. Recreational Misuse vs Responsible Commuting**

There is a stark and important distinction between two categories of users:

- **Commuters**, who use personal e-scooters and e-bikes during peak hours as legitimate, low-emission alternatives to cars or public transport (albeit quite fast); and

- **Recreational users**, who treat the devices as playthings, hooning about, jumping gutters, performing skids, riding tandem, weaving unpredictably through foot traffic, and dumping devices on footpaths where they become trip hazards.

Unfortunately, the current policy framework does not distinguish between these user types, and the reckless use of on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes casting a black cloud on the entire e-mobility sector.

**Recommendation:**

1. Ban on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes from Brisbane City; or
2. Require on-hire e-scooter and e-bike companies to lease and operate physical retail premises within the city for the hire, maintenance, return, and storage of their devices. Curfews should be used to prevent these companies from operating during high-risk hours (e.g. late-night weekends), and Queensland Police should be empowered to confiscate devices used in criminal activity. Ride-share operators should be required to cooperate with police and provide rider data when criminal misuse is suspected.

**4. Abandonment and Lack of Accountability**

On-hire e-scooters and e-bikes are routinely abandoned in inappropriate and dangerous places, including across footpaths, driveways, entrances to public gardens, entrances to apartment building and hotels, and other major infrastructure like the Queens Wharf and Howard Smith Wharves. I have personally seen people trip over them. In our apartment building, short-stay guests returning from nights out in Fortitude Valley and Southbank often leave clusters of on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes at our front entrance, creating both safety hazards and amenity issues.

Some designated parking zones exist, but they are routinely ignored by casual riders. There is currently no enforcement or incentive to do the right thing, and no real-time consequences for those who misuse or improperly dispose of these devices.

**Recommendation:**

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**5. Damage to Public Spaces**

On-hire e-scooters and e-bikes are visibly damaging Brisbane City's public spaces. I have seen them ridden across lawns and garden beds in the City Botanic Gardens, leaving deep ruts and destroying grass. Skid marks from sudden braking or intentional "skids" are also frequently visible on footpaths, plazas, and roads.

These actions degrade the natural and civic beauty of our shared spaces and create added costs for ratepayers and local councils who must repair the damage. I feel sorry for the

gardeners who take such pride in maintaining the City Botanic Gardens, only to have on-hire e-scooters tear up the grass in the blink of an eye.

**Recommendation:**

1. Ban on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes from Brisbane City; or
2. Ban on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes from parks, including the City Botanic Gardens.

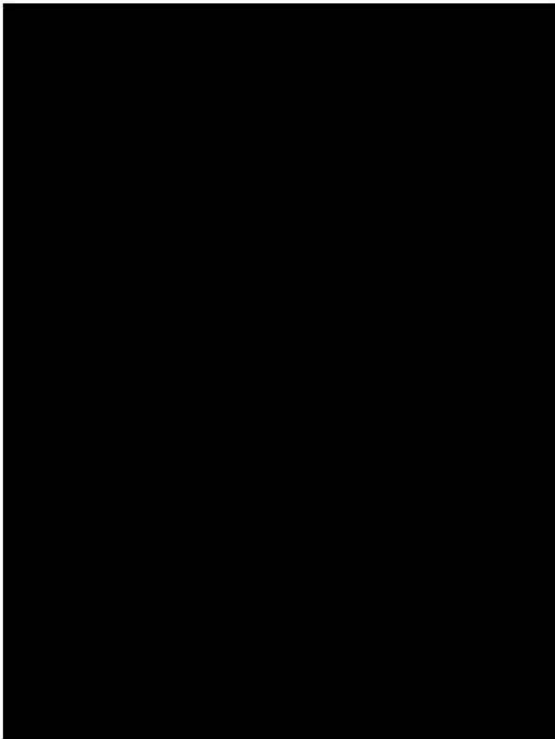
**Conclusion**

The unregulated operation of on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes in Brisbane City is no longer tenable. While e-mobility may offer benefits in theory, its real-world impacts, especially in dense urban centres like Brisbane City, have tipped the balance toward public harm.

Without meaningful reform, these devices will continue to be used for lawless, dangerous, and antisocial behaviours. It is time to restore public confidence, prioritise safety, and hold these private companies to a standard of care that matches the risks their devices pose.

**Photograph Submissions**

The following seven photos were all taken on one single weekend, in a radius of two city blocks.



Photograph showing two young men leaving the Riverside Markets on Sunday, riding tandem, with no helmets and at speed after weaving through a group of pedestrians who were crossing Alice street - taken at 4:25pm on Sunday 25 May 2025, Albert Street, Brisbane City.



Photograph showing on-hire e-scooters abandoned on the footpath on Albert Street, leaving less than 50% of the footpath for pedestrian traffic - photograph taken at 4:44pm on Saturday 24 May 2025, Albert Street, Brisbane City.



Photograph showing on-hire e-scooters parked outside of a designated parking zone on-mass at the foot of the Kangaroo Point Bridge and entrance to the City Botanic Gardens - photograph taken at 4:53pm on Saturday 24 May 2025, Corner of Edward and Alice Streets, Brisbane City.





Photograph showing skid marks and damage to the newly opened Kangaroo Point bridge - photograph taken at 4:16pm on Sunday 25 May 2025, Kangaroo Point Bridge, Brisbane City.



Photograph showing skid marks, and on-hire e-scooters parked outside of a designated parking zone, abandoned on the footpath along Albert Street, leaving less than 50% of the footpath for pedestrian traffic - photograph taken at 8:19am on Sunday 25 May 2025, Albert Street, Brisbane City.



Photograph showing tyre marks in the grass on the main lawn at the City Botanic Gardens, caused by on-hire e-scooters and e-bikes - photograph taken at 10:05am on Saturday 24 May 2025, City Botanic Gardens, Brisbane City.



Photograph showing on-hire e-scooters abandoned on the footpath on Mary Street, leaving less than 50% of the footpath for pedestrian traffic - photograph taken at 12:04pm pm on Saturday 24 May 2025, Mary Street, Brisbane City.

Submitted respectfully,  
Brisbane City Resident