


Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	311
Submitted by:	
Publication:	Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

PMD Enquiry Submission 26 May 2025

This is a major and growing problem, so I'm pleased to accept the opportunity to contribute to a solution. The public are united in that the rules and level of enforcement must be updated for the benefit of all.

Failure to enforce existing laws is a root cause of issues surrounding E Bike use and therefore any proposals to upgrade existing laws must be considered with the intention of enforcement being enhanced. There is no suggestion that Police duties be largely altered to focus on E Bike use however an improvement is required and that will be reflected in outcomes readily observable to the public.

E Bikes are the main area of concern owing to the performance capability these machines have and their inherent ability to cause injury or death. This concern is real as evidenced by the recent death of a pedestrian in Victoria caused by an illegally modified E Bike. Most E Bikes seem to have been modified to bypass the cut-out of the electric motor once the machine reaches 25kph. This is clearly observable on a daily basis where E Bikes easily keep pace with cars without pedal assistance.

I am a regular walker in the Burleigh Heads area, so I have daily interaction with E Bike users on roads and footpaths. Other cities and towns may not have the concentration of E Bike use we endure on the Gold Coast but in time that will change.

The manner in which E Bikes are used (often unlawful) is of primary concern and it must also be agreed that traditional pedal powered bikes can also contribute to concerns as their use widens however the risk to the public in that respect is somewhat less so I will refer to E Bike use throughout this submission.

It's a matter of attitude and responsibility of riders that needs examination. Changes will meet resistance as the riders have had time to adopt bad habits. Resistance to change is inevitable but must be endured and overcome. There will also be resistance from parents of young riders as well, as any changes will likely impact them albeit indirectly as the provider of the bike. See below.

Unfortunately, the behaviour of individual juvenile riders is something parents are unaware of either by choice or misdirected trust, so the introduction of new rules will indirectly support parents who would *hope* that their children ride responsibly and safely.

E Bike issues are complex, and an acceptable solution will take time and effort to arrive at, especially since the previous Queensland Government ignored the problem. That in itself creates resistance to real change which will require careful rollout of new laws perhaps *in a staged* rollout or better acceptance supported by mainstream media education and public information programmes.

Change must happen in the interest of the wider public including riders.

Principles of change

Licensing and ownership:

On account of the speed that E Bikes are capable of dictates that licensing, registration and ownership are important *non-negotiable* considerations.

Registration, licensing and ownership principles

E Bikes have the performance capability of petrol-powered machines and enjoy the benefit of using well-made roads so a small contribution by payment of a nominal registration fee to support that cost must be considered. The question arises – why should a 125cc motorcycle pay registration while an E Bike is currently exempt?

The existence of, and wider use of E Bikes is of benefit to the public however that has resulted in issues impacting negatively on the wider public and riders, many of whom place themselves and others at risk. Wheelchairs capable of using a road must be registered so there is a precedent in that regard.

Without *enforcement* of existing and proposed laws, the exercise will be one of futility and wasted time. There is no suggestion that the implementation of new laws should precede a hard crackdown on E Bike rule compliance, moreover a focus on Police enforcement *periodically* would lead to increased awareness, compliance and acceptance of new rules. Discussions on social media will follow firm actions and support the efforts of Police and the Government in that regard.

The Police currently have a difficult task in enforcing laws so it follows that registration will support them well especially where riders knowingly avoid detection or apprehension. I have spoken to a number of Police officers all of whom expressed frustration with enforcing E Bike laws in the absence of registration numbers

A license plate the same size as that fitted to motorcycles will remove the anonymity of riders and support change in rider habits. Rider accountability needs to improve.

To ensure enforcement happens the cost of implementation must consider administration cost which needs to be revenue positive or at best neutral with registration and penalty income offsetting the cost of enforcement and licensing.

Registration might be introduced with a cut off time by which registration must be completed after which spot checks will result in a fine.

Consideration might be given to require *any* powered bike to be registered. Detection of bikes using national parks, especially petrol powered bikes is an ongoing problem which needs to be examined with exceptions extended to on-farm or private off-road use.

NB

Actual ownership, registration and licensing of E Bikes for any road or footpath use **must be limited** to responsible adults **over the age of 18** (*the age of majority*) however the use of such bikes may be sanctioned to permit another person to lawfully ride the bike provided such use adheres to existing rules especially in respect of age limits.

Enforcement of the expanded rules must include the recording of demerit points where a rider holds a driver license.

NB Special rules for under 17 riders must be considered. For example, a bike running a red light where a red-light camera is installed should result in an infringement notice being issued *to the registered owner* as is the case for a motor vehicle running a red light. The response of the owner (a person over the age of 18) would result in the payment of a fine and demerit points recorded as appropriate.

The option of recording demerit points where no license is held may not be viable however an alternative such as deferring eligibility to apply for a driver license by a prescribed number of months instead of demerit points would ensure that riders would be mindful of the consequences of causing an infringement.

Public Liability Insurance

As E Bikes have the potential to cause serious injury, the public must have access to recourse against the rider or owner of the bike causing any injury. I would expect that this nominal cost could be included in the registration fee.

Sale of E Bikes

Specialist stores are offering “Off Road” E Bikes in what appears to be an attempt to circumvent rules regarding the power available to a rider. Non-negotiable registration of off-road bikes as recommended herein should ensure that these bikes are simply put to lawful use.

Currently a purchaser is able to purchase a bike with no intention whatsoever of using it “Off-Road”.

Control of the sale of such bikes must be considered where such bikes should **only be sold as registered**.

Existing laws clearly state that only one person should be transported on a E Bike (PMD). **The law must be enforced**. The combined weight of rider, passengers (I see three on a regular basis) and bike is significant and potentially causes serious injury in the event of contact with a pedestrian.

Transporting children on an E Bike is potentially dangerous and must be stopped in the interests of child safety. Enforcement of regulations must be seen to be effective.

The sale of E Bikes which facilitate the carrying of more than one person must be banned. Hire E Bikes have the capacity to carry one person only therefore sale single user bikes should be the norm.

Modification of E Bikes

“Tweaking” of E Bikes enables riders to achieve much higher speeds on our roads and the practice of disabling cut outs etc must be stamped out. Where a bike is found to have been so “tweaked” to circumvent rules, the owner of the bike must be penalised. Where another person facilitates “tweaking” the person or business found to be responsible should also be penalised firmly. Enforcement of fines may prove a challenge however the existence of these rules may help alter poor behaviour in respect of E Bike “tweaking” generally.

Where it is considered a likelihood that a bike has been modified illegally, that bike may be impounded by Police for assessment which is carried out by a duly authorised and qualified person with costs recovered by fines as appropriate.

I’ve seen parents fit seats onto the handlebars where a small child is carried while another child (usually older) is seated behind the rider parent. This is a patently unsafe option for the children who have no choice in being transported in this manner. The sale of handlebar seats must be banned and the carrying of passengers in this most unsafe manner must be stopped through enforcement and fines. Compare the safe carrying of children in a motor vehicle to this and there is a vast difference in the outcome should an accident occur.

A review of headlights and taillights, reflectors and bells must be included. The warning bells fitted to existing bikes with a feeble “tink” , ‘tink” sound are hardly recognisable as a warning to pedestrians as is the recorded sound of a dog bark.

Education

A significant majority of the riders in my area are of school age therefore use of the education system to disseminate and grow knowledge of the laws related to E Bikes might be considered.

This might improve riding standards and likely save lives.

In Summary

- ** Proactively enforce existing laws with statistical monitoring established to measure outcomes
- ** Introduce new laws where consequences of unlawful uses are enforced
- ** Upgrade E Bike (safety) specifications to support new laws

** New rules around ownership, insurance, penalties and **registration** to support new and existing laws in the interests of safer use of E Bikes

** Commercially used E Bikes must be included for the safety of rider employees

** Education programme to be considered for schools as many of the users are of school age

The public are looking for firmer enforcement of all related laws as a reflection of strong proactive government.

Thank you,