

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submitter Comments:

My submission relates to e-bike classification, safety issues, and enforcement. I live near the coastal Oceanway shared pathway that runs from Currumbin to Kirra. I walk most days on the pathway, or on the beach between Tugun and Bilinga. While walking, I have experience of e-bikes on the pathway and on the beach. There appear to be two basic types of e-bike: those that are light-framed (akin to pedal bikes) but fitted with a motor, and those that are heavier, low slung, with wide tyres. I suggest that these two categories of e-bike require to be distinguished, and that different rules be devised to regulate their use. The light-framed e-bikes seem to pose no unacceptable risk to pedestrian and other users of the shared path, or of the neighbouring footpaths adjoining roads. The heavier e-bikes, however, seem to attract use by riders who travel faster, and they do pose a danger because of the speed at which they travel, their greater weight and bulk, and greater difficulty in manoeuvring. They need more room than lighter e-bikes and pedal cycles. In addition to the speed at which they generally travel, the heavy e-bikes are often seen to carry pillion passengers when they are not fitted with a passenger seat. Very often, riders and passengers do not wear helmets. The lack of a requirement for third-party insurance seems a serious omission, particularly in the case of the heavy e-bikes. Use of e-bikes on the beaches involves hazards to other users, particularly children, at busy times. Existing rules seem not to be generally enforced. Enforcement - particularly of the speed limit, wearing of helmets and carriage of passengers - would improve the existing situation, but would probably impose unacceptable pressures on available police resources. Users of the heavy e-bikes, in particular, are often seen to flout the road rules on the streets overlooked from my balcony - ignoring a one-way sign, travelling on the wrong side of the road, speeding, travelling the wrong way. Maybe there is a case for regarding the heavy e-bikes as mopeds, or as motor bikes, and devising rules to regulate them appropriately.