

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Hon Brent Mickleberg,

I am writing in response to the article I read the Courier Mail, *E-bike injuries prompt review* 1 May 2025, and your request for submissions from the public.

State Governments and Council are championing getting people out of cars and onto bikes, and to walk more for a fitter, healthier lifestyle and that's commendable, but people have simply swapped the car for the electric bike. They're not getting exercise; they're just speeding through shortcuts and the ones that are walking are getting terrorised by those that aren't. Cyclists are simply ignoring the bike lanes on roads and using the pavement and footpaths.

Millions was spent making bike lanes on roads and accompanying awareness campaigns asking drivers to respect cyclists by leaving a meter (now 1.5m), to make it safe for cyclists. We need a similar campaign to ask cyclists to give walkers space, to warn them of approach, slow down and show some respect? We need something to get cyclists and other riders to respect vulnerable pedestrians, perhaps speed bumps or some other calming method, to slow these 'motor' bikes (and bicycles) down.

In many countries now e-bikes and e-scooters have been banned from densely populated areas, certain countries have now legislated that all e-bikes and e-scooters need to be registered and have their own insurance, maybe that needs to happen here in Australia.

Our concern as walkers on the coastal paths is the conflicting use and the potential danger imposed from irresponsible e-bike owners.

A few months ago I was actually hit by a bicycle, albeit at low speed and I wasn't hurt, but the handlebar struck my right wrist.

I was nearly hit again another day. I put my arm up at the last moment to protect myself and was missed by a hair. The scooter was travelling at high speed and gave no warning. I felt the wind of his passing, and he had a kid on the front!

I was actually struck again a few months later. I was watching my feet and a stranger on a bike brushed past. I'm happy to say it was a glancing blow, but it startled me. Shouldn't the responsibility lie with the vehicle, to warn and avoid people? When I exclaimed, she shouted something back! No apology or anything.

Another time, a group of 8 or 10 Lycra-clad cyclists on road bikes raced across Tooway Bridge at very high speed, on the pavement.

Another time a guy got off his bike and actually argued that he 'lives here', implying that he somehow had as much if not more right to cycle on a footpath than someone walking, who also lives here. What's interesting is he had an answer, so he's either been thinking about it, or I'm not the first to complain.

I keep to the very left 50cm or so of the path and rarely engage, so if all these incidents are happening to me, they are happening to others too.

I noticed a few signs have been painted on footpaths around Dicky Beach and I want to thank Council for their efforts to slow these 'motor' bikes and e-scooters down, by asking riders nicely to watch their speed but sadly this approach is not working for everyone. It now needs to be policed, so that there are consequences.

I also noticed the day after the signs had been painted that someone had already skidded across each of

them, leaving black tire marks across the middle and thereby showing their objection to the signs and their contempt.

In Brisbane when we lived there, we occasionally saw Police cycling through the parks and along shared bike tracks etc., and it felt good that there was that presence. The Police have done similar here by sending a squad car to drive round Moffat Village occasionally, after those troubles a few years back, and it was good to see.

I went up to Caloundra Police Station and spoke with a very understanding yet frustrated Officer who said they are aware of the problem and are doing their best. I was told they will circulate an email to increase patrols on footpaths. I learned that the police are under resourced - no surprise there and my impression is they have one hand tied behind their back. The kids just laugh at them, they can't chase them or apprehend them. The best they can do is confiscate their bikes under certain circumstances. The Police apparently recently enforced behavioural issues in Coolumb with the support of drones and police patrols that followed users home and confiscated their rides.

I was told that the growing number of deaths and severe injuries will eventually bring change but until the government makes the changes and either bans them altogether or controls them with licensing, requiring registration etc., the police can only do what they are currently doing. When I spoke with the officer I was told:

- a) there is no mandatory reporting from hospitals so the stats on numbers are woefully inaccurate
- b) there was something about not being able to measure speeds, which I didn't fully understand because I thought the police could measure speeds accurately
- c) I was also told that police require special training to ride bicycles.

There are articles in the news about reducing the power of these bikes, but I think more needs to be done to keep bikes and pedestrians apart. For this reason, I'm calling for a ban of motorised vehicles on footpaths. We walk on shared paths, which I understand, but vehicles with motors and pedestrians, be it electric or petrol, should be kept apart. There is no petrol motorbike that I'm aware of, other than the Postie, that has any right to be on a footpath, or on the road without a license and registration, yet somehow these e-bikes have taken ownership of the pavement over time, and it is the pedestrian that is expected to keep out of the way. When an incident occurs, there are no number plates and no accountability and the rider just rides off anonymously. Registration would be a start, and at least cause some people to think twice.

Footpaths are supposed to be a refuge for walkers. There are many users of footpaths; people out for a stroll, walking dogs, elderly people getting a bit of exercise and lots of kids. Kids and pets can run in the path of a speeding bike without warning. The point is these paths are unregulated. They are not a race track, and shouldn't be treated as such, and certainly not the domain of the most powerful! There are still some respectful and mindful cyclists but others treat walkers as mere inconveniences to swerve round. And it's not getting better. It's getting worse.

It really isn't safe anymore. I grant it's safer than some parts of the world, but when my partner goes out for a walk, I wish her luck. I wish her luck that she will have a safe and pleasant walk without conflict, and that she returns home refreshed, unstressed and, uninjured.

In summary, pets and children are unpredictable and particularly vulnerable, and the older we get, the slower we get and the more easily we are to be seriously hurt. Also, not all walkers can hear or see properly. Walkers need somewhere safe to walk.

I hope the enclosures help. I've attached a few images.





