

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submitter Comments:

As an e-bike and e-scooter retailer, repairer and battery specialist (working with Batteries and battery re-building equipment spot welding, soldering, testing and rebuilding since 2000) I have personally seen many different iterations of batteries and battery protection systems. Lithium batteries are only ever as good as their protection systems, and having countless customers coming to us having tried to "fix" their batteries, and disassembled them exposing cells to being shorted out but anything from a screw to a metal bench being worked on (Have seen a training organization teaching battery repairs on a steel bench which was terrifying to me). I believe the legislation about battery safety and safe testing and repair practices is long overdue. My concern and Frustration though is on the Wattage limitations on E-bikes in particular. 250w in qld wattage limitation is an unsafe and unreasonable limitation on ebikes. Yes more powerful motors mean higher capable top speeds, but this is only one part of the equation. the bigger downside is a 250w motor does not have any power to help a rider up any inclines, especially in rural and remote areas where we promote most of our products. a 500w or 750w motor has much more power available to help up these climbs and being limited to the 25kph means they will still only assist the rider to the regulated 25kph max limit. An example of this is on the roads with any vehicle readily available for sale right now. a 1.2L hatchback and V8 sedan can both share the road, but to drive up the Toowoomba Range, the 1.2L hatchback will struggle to maintain speed and in many cases with slow down considerably as it reaches the top of the range, increasing wear and tear on the vehicle and putting additional stress on the vehicle it was not necessarily designed for. On the Other hand the V8 will easily climb the hill, with no issues, maintaining speed and adding no additional stress on the vehicle. Both are street legal, and both maintaining road safe practices without causing harm. One just performs harder tasks easier than the other. In SEQ or inner brisbane the difference between a 250w motor or 750w motor is only noticeable on acceleration. but when it comes to less flat terrain, such as for example around Toowoomba, Gold Coast hinterland, Rockhampton, where the region is build on hills and troughs, a blanket limitation of 250w is not only unpractical, it also limits the usefulness of such modes of transport. Just because a car can travel at speeds greater than 110kph does not mean it is illegal, why should that be the case for an ebike? The end user needs to be responsible for how they use a product. Holden, Ford, Kia or any other car manufacturer is held responsible to keeping motor size down or power down, It comes down to the Driver of the Vehicle and Local laws. If I am speeding through a school zone, endangering the lives of children I EXPECT a fine. if I do the same on a bike or scooter, I expect the same outcome.