

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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E-scooters have surged in popularity as a convenient, eco-friendly mode of transport. However, the rise of underage riders using these vehicles on footpaths presents serious risks to pedestrians, riders themselves, and public safety. While e-scooters offer mobility and efficiency, misuse—especially by young, inexperienced riders—can lead to preventable accidents and long-term consequences.

Why Are E-Scooters Dangerous for Young Riders? Many e-scooters are designed for adult use, with speeds that can exceed 25 km/h. These vehicles require balance, quick reflexes, and an understanding of traffic and pedestrian rules. When operated by minors—who may lack the judgment and experience needed for safe navigation—the likelihood of accidents increases significantly.

Reduced Reaction Time: Younger riders may struggle to anticipate hazards and react effectively, as there is no training or situational awareness.

Limited Awareness: Lack of road safety knowledge can lead to collisions with pedestrians or vehicles.

High Speeds on Shared Spaces: Footpaths are intended for pedestrians, and fast-moving e-scooters create unsafe conditions.

Lack of Protective Gear: Many young riders don't wear helmets and safety equipment, increasing the severity of injuries.

The Impact on Pedestrians and Public Safety Underage riders weaving through crowded footpaths pose a direct threat to pedestrians—especially vulnerable groups such as the seniors, young children, and people with disabilities. Sudden movements or reckless riding can lead to collisions, falls, and even serious injuries. Additionally, riders who dart between traffic and pedestrian areas risk unpredictable crashes.

Legal and Community Considerations Many cities have strict regulations regarding e-scooter use, limiting riders to certain areas and enforcing age restrictions. However, enforcement can be inconsistent, leading to continued safety concerns. Community initiatives, school education programs, and clear signage can help raise awareness about responsible e-scooter usage and discourage dangerous behaviour.

Moving Forward: Safer Solutions for All To curb the risks of underage riders on footpaths, several measures can be taken:

- Stronger Enforcement of Age Limits:** Governments and rental companies should ensure strict compliance with legal riding ages.
- Registering and insuring of scooters, ebikes etc**
- Educational Campaigns:** Schools and community programs can educate young riders on responsible e-scooter use.
- Dedicated Riding Zones:** Establishing designated areas for e-scooters—away from pedestrians—can enhance safety for all.
- Parental Supervision & Awareness:** Guardians should be aware of the risks and encourage safer alternatives for young riders.

The rise of e-scooters represents an exciting shift in urban mobility, but ensuring their safe use requires responsible riding, proper regulations, and community engagement. By addressing the dangers of underage riders on footpaths, we can create safer streets and sidewalks for everyone.

Alarming Statistics on E-Scooter Accidents Involving Minors Here are some recent statistics on e-scooter accidents in Queensland, Australia:

- Since January 2019, there have been 3,305 presentations to emergency departments due to e-scooter accidents.
- In 2023, Queensland emergency departments recorded 1,273 e-scooter-related presentations, a 25% increase from 2022 and an 84% jump from 2021.
- Fractures are the most common injury, followed by open wounds, sprains, and intracranial injuries (including concussions).
- Males make up 62% of e-scooter accident victims.
- 364 children aged 15 and under have been treated for e-scooter injuries since 2019.
- More than 50% of patients suffered head and facial injuries, indicating that many riders were not wearing helmets.
- 20% of e-scooter crash patients required hospitalization or operative care for head and facial trauma.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for the 3 E's: Enforcement, education and engineering. State Governments need to do more, you are vicariously liable for any injury caused to pedestrians due to lack of inaction in these illegal vehicles

being operated on pathways around QLD by individuals.