

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	528
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Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

Wednesday, 4 June 2025

Submission to State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee's inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) has serious concerns about e-scooters and the dangers they pose to lives, homes and the community.

Without oversight and proper guidelines, sadly more people will die.

The latest statistics FPA Australia has seen from the Queensland Fire Department show that in 2024, lithium-ion batteries caused 183 fires across Queensland, an increase from previous years.

FPA Australia acknowledges the growing popularity and convenience of e-scooters but believes more must be done to ensure the public is aware of the risks of fire these devices pose.

A Coroners Court of Queensland investigation into the death of a man in Logan, handed down in April last year, found the "most likely" cause of his death was an incompatible e-scooter charger, which led to an explosion and fire.

The investigation stated that "while all batteries present risks, the consequences of lithium-ion battery failure can be catastrophic given they are energy dense and contain material that is highly flammable".

It also said "using incompatible chargers or overcharging batteries is one of a number of risk factors leading to lithium-ion battery incidents".

FPA Australia agrees with these findings and believes more must be done to educate people and address this issue.

At FPA Australia, we have a Lithium Battery Special Interest Group that engages with technical committee members and external organisations to address the growing concerns created by lithium battery fires. This has led to the development of a good practice guide for the use, maintenance, storage and disposal of lithium-ion batteries.

FPA Australia's good practice guide recommends the following:

- Always follow the care, use and charging instructions from the appliance or battery manufacturer.
- Regularly check the condition of lithium-ion batteries for signs of damage, swelling, significant capacity or performance loss, as this can be an indicator of declining health of the battery.
- Do not crush or puncture batteries, as this can lead to short circuiting and fire.
- If an electric vehicle (cars, light EV or personal mobility vehicle) has been involved in a collision, the installed battery must be checked by a qualified professional before charging or use.
- Do not expose batteries to water or excessively damp conditions.
- Only use qualified professionals to perform repairs or modifications of devices containing lithium-ion batteries.

The other serious issue identified by FPA Australia's Queensland Committee is e-scooters being charged in common areas within apartments and strata complexes.

Potential battery fires can engulf entire unit complexes potentially putting hundreds of people at risk.

FPA Australia and its members have also identified that charging e-scooters is often done in common areas of unit and apartment complexes. This can lead to blocked egresses and emergency exits, which is a serious concern in the event of a fire.

FPA Australia believes educational material and new regulations should be considered as a way to mitigate risk and ensure body corporates and strata managers are aware of the potential danger.

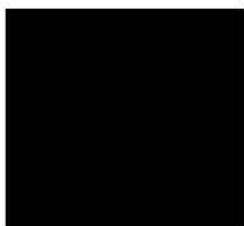
Education for both residential and commercial buildings must cover the safe use, maintenance and charging, including safe charging locations, as well as disposal of these batteries.

The other issue FPA Australia believes should be highlighted is the disposal of lithium-ion batteries. While we welcome the Queensland Government's three-point plan to tackle battery safety risks, announced in February 2025, more funding should be made available to councils to ensure they are able to deal with the emerging issue.

There should also be more promotion of the strategy and education around how people can dispose of dangerous batteries that pose a serious risk to workers.

Further, locations and costs of safe disposal need to be more readily publicised, and correct disposal needs to be made more accessible.

We would be happy to brief the committee on FPA Australia's position and our concerns about the dangers of e-scooters, as well as the learnings of our good practice guide.



John Collie

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