

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	555
Submitted by:	Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland (WRIQ)
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

3 June 2025

State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee
Parliament House, George Street
Brisbane QLD 4006
Via email: SDIWC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: Inquiry into E-mobility Safety and Use in Queensland

Dear Committee Members,

The Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland (WRIQ) represents nearly a hundred businesses responsible for 97% of Queensland's waste and recycling collections, and more than \$2.5 billion in investment in critical infrastructure across the state. Our members range from multinational corporations to local family-owned businesses. WRIQ actively engages on a broad range of policy, safety, and infrastructure matters vital to the sustainability and development of Queensland's waste and recycling industry.

WRIQ welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into e-mobility safety, and does so without prejudice to any additional submissions made by individual members or operators. This submission specifically addresses the Committee's term of reference regarding the "risk of fire, storage and disposal of lithium batteries used in e-mobility, and any consideration of mitigants or controls."

The risk of lithium battery fires in the waste and recycling stream is already manifesting in Queensland and nationally, with catastrophic consequences. Notably, the Bedminster advanced waste treatment facility in Cairns — a major infrastructure asset for North Queensland — was destroyed by a lithium battery fire. This facility played a crucial role in municipal solid waste diversion and is unlikely to be replaced for at least five years. Rebuilding is expected to require significantly more capital than its original construction. In the meantime, North Queensland will operate without any municipal solid waste diversion capacity, placing further strain on landfill and missing recycling



Waste, Recycling Industry Association (Qld) ABN 50 986 260 101

A Suite 101, 726 Gympie Road, Chermside QLD 4032

E memberservices@wriq.com.au P (07) 3067 3315

Similarly, Canberra's Material Recovery Facility, the facility responsible for sorting yellow top bin waste, was also destroyed by a lithium battery fire on 12 December 2022. Two years later this facility has still not been replaced. These devastating incidents are not isolated and will continue to occur unless proactive measures are adopted to prevent lithium batteries from entering our trucks and recycling facilities — where they pose an enormous and escalating fire risk.

WRIQ recommends the Committee consider the following actions:

- 1. Introduce a landfill ban on e-scooters and similar e-mobility devices, with enforceable penalties for households and businesses improperly disposing of these items.**
- 2. Fund targeted community education programs delivered by the waste and recycling industry, rather than retailers, to educate Queenslanders about the dangers of disposing of lithium-powered devices in household waste streams.**
- 3. Mandate a return-to-retail stewardship scheme for all retailers selling e-mobility devices and lithium battery products.**
- 4. Fund training programs for the waste and recycling industry to develop and embed best practices in lithium battery identification and removal for frontline workers.**
- 5. Enact Extended Producer Responsibility legislation in Queensland, requiring producers and sellers of high-risk or hard-to-recycle products (including e-mobility devices) to be financially responsible for the full lifecycle of these products, including end-of-life management.**

Queensland experiences an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 lithium-ion battery-related fires each year, with the average single truck fire costing approximately \$174,000. In 2023 and 2024 alone, the state's waste and recycling industry reported spending \$87.3 million managing these incidents. Without decisive government intervention, critical infrastructure will continue to be lost, worker safety will remain at risk, and momentum toward a circular economy will be undermined.

WRIQ appreciates the Committee's attention to this urgent matter and would welcome the opportunity to provide further evidence or appear as a witness during the Inquiry's hearings.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Price
Chief Executive Officer

Waste, Recycling Industry Association (Qld) ABN 50 986 260 101
A Suite 101, 726 Gympie Road, Chermside QLD 4032
E memberservices@wriq.com.au P (07) 3067 3315