

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submitted by: jillian white
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My concern about e-mobility is the SAFETY ISSUE, both for the BIKE USERS, and for PEDESTRIANS, just as safety is an issue for cars. In 1970, Australia had around 3000 road deaths a year. Today the death rate is about half that, and with a population double what it was in 1970. What has changed has been GOVERNMENT LED INITIATIVES to increase safety - better roads, seat belts, curbing drink/drug driving, better signs, speed limits, and more recently drivers are showing more courtesy (not sure if that was a government initiative, or just a congestion issue?) Users of e-scooters and bikes seem, on the other hand, to be totally UNAWARE of safety issues - lights, using bells, helmets, speed, leaving bikes parked in the across footpaths. Raising awareness about safety issues has to come from the top, e.g. driving, tobacco, and alcohol use, safe sex, public health, etc.

Footpaths are - should be - primarily for "feet" - pedestrians, including people with wheel-chairs, and baby strollers. Users of any sort of bikes on footpaths should give way to ALL pedestrians, and warn them that they are coming up behind them. As a frequent runner in my neighbourhood I find e-scooters/bikes a real source of stress. Despite signs in my area for bikes to "sound your bell" and "slow down", this rarely happens! I CANNOT HEAR bikes coming from behind. I asked a cyclist the other day why he didn't use his bell. He said he didn't have one, and he apologized! Often streets are not well lit, and in the evening it is difficult to see bikes that have fallen over and block the path. I have seen wheel-chair users, and people with pushers have to move onto the road. I have also been surprised walking out of shops in the city and stepping into the path of a fast bike. When I have complained to the council they have told me to contact the police. What are they going to do? Bikes don't have number plates. A couple of years ago I had a woman come to me for counselling (psychology). Her husband had a fall from his e-scooter, suffered brain damage and died. That is just one incident. I would suggest you speak to emergency departments in hospitals and ask them for information about e-bike accidents they have to deal with. I would also suggest that the Queensland Government look at the use and control of e-bikes in other countries, and the measures they have taken to reduce accidents. Designated drop off points for bikes would prevent the problem of bikes left on the footpaths, and a public safety campaign to raise awareness about safety - use of bells, lights, and helmets, and to make our State more livable we need to CARE MORE FOR THE WELFARE OF OTHER PEOPLE. It's not hard, and once it starts it becomes contagious BECAUSE it makes a difference when people are considerate to one another.