

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No: 668
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Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

My submission will be limited to two areas only (I imagine others will comment on the various other matters of concern to them). These two areas are: 1. E-scooters and pedestrian safety, and 2. Environmental grounds.

1. Pedestrian safety. As I understand it, e-scooters are permitted (or even required?) to travel on the footpath. I contend that this is a misguided and short-sighted arrangement. Firstly, the footpath is not called that for no reason. It is meant for pedestrian traffic. E-scooters have no place on footpaths and present a real danger to pedestrians, especially the elderly and those with any kind of disability (eg sight, hearing and/or mobility). As they are relatively silent, they can be upon you before you know it and if they hit you it would likely mean serious injury or even death. Walking should be made as easy as possible to encourage walking (the most environmentally-friendly form of transport of all), and as a courtesy to anyone engaging in this most pleasant, and for some, necessary activity. Walking, at least for the health benefits (and don't we need that, for many reasons), should be made as easy and as pleasant as possible, not discouraged by the constant threat of one of these e-scooters running into you. Or having to dodge them all the time. The average scooter weighs about 20 or 30 Kgs and if you add the weight - say another 70Kgs - of the person on it, that means almost 100Kgs that could hit you at whatever speed they are travelling (and I notice that some of them travel at quite a speed). One does not need to be a Physicist to recognise that such a force would provide a devastating effect if a collision occurred (again, especially to the elderly and/or infirm). I know that removing e-scooters from footpaths introduces the question of where to allow them? In response to that I would say if there is no other safe place for them to be allowed (I can see that having them on the road incurs other risks), then perhaps they are never going to be safe anywhere, leading to the proposition that maybe they should simply not be allowed at all. Pedestrian safety does not seem to have been accounted for to date. Please consider this; it is a major concern for those of us who like to or have to walk.

2. Environmental concerns. The idea that e-scooters are better for the environment than other forms of transport is, in my opinion, false. Scooters need to be manufactured, out of metal and plastic and whatever else is required. There is also the battery, which has some considerable weight, and which has to be made from heavy metals and other materials that need to be mined.

What's the environmental cost (including tree-felling) of that? And how long does the battery last? And what happens to it when it no longer works - I guess it is just buried in the ground? And the battery still has to be charged from the grid. Many other forms of transport carry multiples of passengers, while the e-scooter carries only one. Please also consider that walking (refer above) is a much more environmentally friendly mode of transport. It should be encouraged as much as possible (plus consider the health benefits). Furthermore, there is the issue of littering, in that one sees scooters and spare helmets lying around (usually on the footpath) all over the suburb. To conclude, if there were fewer e-scooters (or none) then more people might walk! This would have enormous benefits for society and Government (eg health costs).