Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submitted by:	Haydn Clentsmith
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[redacted]

To whom this may concern,

This submission comes from a resident of Palm Beach. This submission is based off the views and experience of an individual who is 37 years old and has lived in Palm Beach for 15 years, and now a family of four (including two children). The oceanway footpath between 23rd Avenue and Tallebudgera Creek is accessed by this family daily and interacts constantly with electronic mobility devices. The overall view of this submission asserts the prevalent use of e-bikes, e-scooters, e-skateboards, etc. has created significant safety risks, incidents, and accidents, and that the oceanway footpath is no longer safe for children: it is highly regular to see electronc mobility devices exceeding 12km/h on the oceanway footpaths (up to speeds of 40-50km/h). Therefore, transport devices that are motorised (electronic, or combustion) should not be allowed on the oceanway footpath due to the mass/momentum of such devices. Moreover, electronic mobility devices that are capable of exceeding speeds faster than 12km/h should require a driver's licence, compulsory third party insurance, and registration. Police should regularly patrol oceanways to catch prevent wreckless acts by those on electronic mobility devices.

This submission will respond to the appropriate terms of reference below based off personal experience:

2. Safety issues associated with e-mobility use, including increasing crashes, injuries, fatalities, and community concerns;

- Oceanway:
    - E-mobility use along the oceanway footpath has turned the footpath into a road. Devices soar by at speeds of up to 40km/h with little margins from pedestrians (including children). The most dangerous situations often involve adolescents below the age of 17 (hence the requirement for the rider to be of the age required to drive a motor vehicle). Adults are also responsible for fast or dangerous driving along the Oceanway near pedestrians but of a smaller percentage compared to adolescents. The lack of law enforcement on reckless driving of these devices on the oceanway fuel the sense of freedom these reckless riders seek. I have seen toddlers hit at low-moderate speeds by e-bikes. My own toddler has almost been hit several times by passing e-bikes. A toddlers movements are not predictable, as they are often learning to walk, developing their own spatial awareness, or learning to ride a scooter, tricycle or bicycle themselves. Now that electronic mobility devices are so prevalent along this footpath, it is no longer safe for my toddler to learn to ride their own scooters, skateboards, bikes. Up until recently, the oceanway was a perfectly safe place for families, not anymore. As a father, I now feel anxiety if I am not hovering over my children as they walk, scoot, skate, or ride.
    - Playgrounds along the oceanway are filled with young children. In particular, the playground near the Tallebudgera surf club is very busy. E-bikes often roar

through here at very unsafe speeds (far greater than 12km/h) with complete disregard to the children and families around them. Once again, anxiety invoking for parents having to hover over their children. Playground should be a 'go slow' area for any device that has wheels and this should be signed as such (e.g., 6km/h maximum).

- Local Roads
    - Young adolescents often ride their e-bikes around this area – either to the beach or to school. These riders do not often wear helmets, or their helmets are on their heads but not buckles up. These young adolescents do not hold drivers licences, yet they are driving on the roads up to 40-50km/h, disregarding road rules (not indicating, stopping at giveway or stop signs, swerving recklessly). Moreover, it is common to see riders doubling or tripling up their friends (also with no helmets). I have once seen a convoy of these e-bikes down Townson Avenue, all with no helmets, in the middle of the road, three adolescents per e-bike, with the riders texting on their mobile phones.

5. Effectiveness of current enforcement approaches and powers to address dangerous riding behaviours and the use of illegal devices;

- Reckless driving on e-bikes is not being effectively monitored. Palm Beach police station is understaffed. Extra police needed.
- Electric bikes are constantly riding much faster than 12km/h.
- Drivers licence required for riding electronic mobility device capable of speeds greater than 12km/h.
- Compulsory third party insurance required for electronic mobility device capable of speeds greater than 12km/h.
- Annual registration as per motorised vehicles (combustion engines) for electronic devices capable of speeds greater than 12km/h.
- Regular patrols by police on esplanade / oceanway to catch wreckless and or illegal riding.
- Regular use of electronic bicycles with pedals, that do not appear to be pedal assist (i.e., motor is primary source of power). This is witnessed daily and regularly.

8. Broad stakeholder perspectives, including from community members, road user groups, disability advocates, health and trauma experts, academia, the e-mobility industry, and all levels of government.

- Electronic mobility devices (any transport device which is powerered or assisted by an electronic motor) should be forbidden on the oceanway footpaths.
- If the state government continue to allow electronic mobility devices on the oceanway footpaths, than a maximum speed of 12km/h must be strictly enforced with significant punishment for breaches of speed limit. Maximum speed of 6km/h in high activity zones (e.g., near play grounds).
- Drivers licence required for riding electronic mobility device capable of speeds greater than 12km/h.
- Compulsory third party insurance required for electronic mobility device capable of speeds greater than 12km/h.
- Annual registration as per motorised vehicles (combustion engines) for electronic devices capable of speeds greater than 12km/h.