

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	674
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Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

Submission to the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry on E-Mobility Safety

Date: 14 June 2025

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Subject: Enhancing Regulation and Enforcement of E-Mobility Devices to Protect Pedestrians

Introduction

The rapid rise of e-mobility devices, such as e-scooters and e-bikes, has introduced significant challenges to pedestrian safety across Queensland. With a 112% increase in personal mobility device-related injuries and eight fatalities recorded last year, it is imperative to implement stronger regulation, control, and enforcement measures to prevent further harm. This submission outlines key concerns and proposes legislative and policy solutions to ensure that pedestrians; particularly vulnerable individuals such as seniors, children, and those with disabilities; are safeguarded from unsafe e-mobility use.

Key Issues:

Increase in Pedestrian Injuries and Fatalities

- ≈ High-speed e-mobility devices operating on footpaths pose significant risks, leading to collisions with pedestrians, serious injuries, and fatalities.
- ≈ Many reported incidents involve reckless riding, failure to yield, and violation of existing road rules, demonstrating the need for enhanced enforcement.

Regulatory Gaps and Illicit High-Powered Devices

- ≈ Current laws allow importation of illegally modified high-powered e-scooters and e-bikes, which exceed legal speed limits and are used dangerously in public spaces.
- ≈ Clear technical standards must be enforced to ensure only compliant and safe devices are permitted for public use.

Lack of Consistent Enforcement and Penalties

- ≈ Police and regulatory authorities issued 2,700+ fines for unsafe riding, yet many repeat offenders face minimal consequences.
- ≈ The absence of strict licensing and registration frameworks allows reckless riders to evade accountability.

Recommendations:

To effectively regulate e-mobility and protect pedestrians, we urge the Queensland Government to adopt the following measures:

Mandatory Licensing and Registration

- ≈ Implement compulsory registration of e-mobility devices, similar to bicycles, to ensure users are identifiable and accountable.
- ≈ Introduce a licensing system requiring riders to complete basic safety training before legally operating high-speed devices.

Stricter Speed Limits and Footpath Restrictions

- ≈ Impose lower speed limits for e-mobility devices in high-foot-traffic areas (e.g., shopping precincts, transport hubs).
- ≈ Restrict e-mobility use on narrow footpaths to prevent pedestrian collisions, allowing only low-speed shared pathways.

Enhanced Enforcement and Penalty Frameworks

- ≈ Increase police presence to monitor high-risk areas and issue on-the-spot fines for violations.
- ≈ Introduce harsher penalties, including device confiscation and higher fines for repeat offenders.

Technology-Based Safety Controls

- ≈ Require all e-mobility devices to have speed limiters to prevent excessive speeds in pedestrian zones.
- ≈ Introduce geofencing technology to restrict device operation in prohibited areas, ensuring compliance through automated enforcement.

Safety Helmets:

Stronger law enforcement is essential in Queensland to ensure that all riders of e-mobility devices, such as e-scooters and e-bikes, consistently wear safety helmets. Despite existing regulations, a significant number of riders continue to disregard helmet requirements, contributing to preventable injuries and fatalities. Between November 2022 and December 2024, more than 2,700 infringements were issued for illegal road use, with helmet offences making up a substantial portion. Given the increasing popularity of personal mobility devices, stricter enforcement—through higher fines, increased police presence, and public awareness campaigns—would reinforce compliance and reduce the risk of severe head injuries. Helmets are a proven safeguard against traumatic brain injuries, and ensuring their use through rigorous enforcement would protect riders and pedestrians alike, fostering a safer urban environment.

Electric Motorbikes – EQV – Combustion Motorbikes:

Mandatory registration and identification plates for all e-mobility devices, including e-scooters and e-bikes, would enhance accountability and public safety in Queensland. Currently, e-bikes are classified as bicycles rather than motorbikes, despite their reliance on electric motors for propulsion. Unlike traditional bicycles, e-bikes can reach speeds of up to 25km/h with motor assistance, and higher-powered models blur the line between bicycles and motorbikes. Given their motorized nature, e-bikes should be regulated similarly to combustion motorbikes, requiring registration, insurance, and visible identification plates to ensure compliance with road rules. This would deter reckless riding, assist law enforcement in identifying offenders, and provide a framework for liability in accidents. Furthermore, registration would allow authorities to track stolen devices and enforce safety standards, fostering a more responsible e-mobility culture. As e-mobility devices become more prevalent, aligning their regulation with motor vehicles is a logical step toward safer urban transport.

Queensland Beaches:

All e-mobility devices, and in particular e-scooters and e-bikes, pose significant risks to the safety and environmental integrity of Queensland's beaches, warranting their prohibition. These devices, often ridden at high speeds on beaches, endanger pedestrians, families, and wildlife, creating hazardous conditions on sandy terrain where control is compromised. Beaches are meant to be spaces for relaxation and recreation, yet e-devices introduce aesthetic degradation and the risk of collisions, detracting from the natural tranquillity. Additionally, the delicate coastal ecosystem is vulnerable to damage from tire tracks and battery leaks, threatening local flora and fauna. Enforcing a ban on e-devices would preserve the pristine environment and ensure that beaches remain safe and accessible for all visitors. Clear regulations are essential to maintaining the balance between recreation and conservation, preventing unnecessary injuries and environmental harm.

Conclusion

With growing concerns over pedestrian safety, the Queensland Government must act decisively to regulate, control, and enforce e-mobility laws. The proposed measures will reduce accidents, prevent fatalities, and create a safer shared environment for all road users. Strengthening these regulations will ensure that the benefits of e-mobility—such as sustainability and accessibility—do not come at the cost of pedestrian well-being.

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry and urge policymakers to prioritize pedestrian safety through urgent legislative action.

Neil McKay