


Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Teen e-scooter injuries soar

Doctors and public health researchers are calling for improved e-scooter safety regulation across Australia, after newly published research showed almost 180 young people under 16 required hospital treatment over two years on the Sunshine Coast.

The report, published today in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, is the first of its kind to capture paediatric e-scooter injury data in an Australian region. Experts say these findings expose a potentially widespread and increasing cause of major injury in children.

Researchers documented 176 paediatric e-scooter injuries in children and teens aged five – 15 years old attending Sunshine Coast University Hospital in 2023 and 2024. The researchers found that 1 in 10 e-scooter injuries were life threatening or potentially life threatening, while 37 per cent of cases suffered a fracture.

Queensland legislation allows children 12-15 to ride e-scooters if they are supervised by an adult. Speeds should be curtailed to 25km/h on roads and 12km/h on pedestrian walkways. Helmets are required and two riders (doubling) is forbidden.

Alarming, 42 per cent of cases analysed in the study were children or teens who weren't wearing a helmet at the time of their accident, 36 per cent involved speeds greater than 25km/h and 12 per cent involved doubling. Collisions with cars were seen in 13 per cent of the presentations and 8 per cent involving other e-scooters or



Doctor calls for e-scooter ban for under 16s after almost 180 children were treated at SCUH in two years.

mobility devices.

Most patients (71 per cent) were male and the median age was 14 but ranged from five to 15 years.

Lead author Dr Matthew Clanfield, who worked at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital during the study period, says that he was concerned to see the frequency and range of injuries being caused by e-scooter use amongst paediatric patients.

"While working at the hospital we would see a child or teen attend the emergency department with e-scooter injury every few days.

"The types of injuries ranged from minor frac-

tures and injuries, through to traumatic brain injuries requiring a craniotomy. A lot of the parents attending were extremely upset to see their child hospitalised and weren't aware how risky e-scooters can be or the legal requirement for supervision under 16.

"It was previously uncommon to see 14 year olds in our ED as they are generally healthy, but during the two-year study period scooters were the reason for one in 30 emergency visits within this age group. It's extremely concerning that young people are using these vehicles for fun and leisure and ending up in hospital as a result."

The release of the research follows an announcement from the Queensland Government

that it will hold a public inquiry into e-scooters and other mobility devices.

Queensland and ACT are currently the only two states that allow e-scooter use under 16 years of age. Dr Clanfield is calling for a minimum age of 16 to be imposed in Queensland until safety measures are improved.

Adjunct Prof Terry Slevin, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia, says that e-scooters are a public health and safety concern across Australia, and while use of the devices has exploded, regulation has failed to keep pace.

"We understand that e-scooters can be a fun and convenient way to travel, but unfortunately the way they are being used now, particularly by teens and children at high speeds, are proving a genuine public health risk and injury prevention issue.

"This study provides data in one region and in one hospital, but this is an issue in every town and city where they have landed across Australia, including in busier areas. This study found almost 180 kids were hospitalised in one regional area, at one hospital. Multiply that finding across Queensland and Australia and we are looking at thousands of preventable injuries, as well as lives lost. It is the tip of the iceberg.

"All Australian states and territories need to keep pace with the speed at which these products are taking off to protect the health and lives of young people. Proper regulation and enforcement is the key."