

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submitted by:	Melanie Thomas
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Melanie Thomas
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

INQUIRY INTO E-MOBILITY SAFETY AND USE IN QUEENSLAND

To whom it may concern

I wish to have the following submission considered.

I write the submission as an individual and I do not represent any group or organisation.

I refer to the following terms of reference that I believe are relevant to this submission:

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

As I write from the standpoint of a concerned Brisbane/Queensland resident, it is this point which I wish to address.

I live in the inner city of Brisbane, in Fortitude Valley, and walk as much as possible as a matter of personal choice. I also drive.

Since e-scooters have arrived on Brisbane streets I have become increasingly concerned with not only my safety but the safety of others, as well as the safety of the rider.

There are two main areas in which to find e-scooters, that is the footpaths of Brisbane streets followed by the roadway. E-scooters are, with their current speeds and use, completely incompatible with walkers on a footpath. The main concern here is speed, as the riders tend to speed down footpaths. I have experienced many near misses as a pedestrian, particularly at footpath intersections. If a scooter is coming at speed along a footpath one is about to enter, there generally isn't time to even register it coming. I do not think a shopper in the Brisbane CBD should have to be on guard for a speeding scooter when departing a shop yet this is very much the case.

The second area after footpaths in which to encounter the scooter is the roadway, when you are driving a car. The very nature of a scooter appears to deem it very different to bicycles, so they are far more erratic and unpredictable. At night this is intensified by poor lighting on the scooter, making them difficult to see and a driving hazard.

4. Suitability of current regulatory frameworks for PMDs and ebikes, informed by approaches in Australia and internationally;

The current regulatory framework is obviously completely ineffective, in that there does not appear to be many regulations, beyond how many scooters a provider can place on the streets at any one time and where exactly they can be ridden. This is complicated by the rules varying between the various states and territories in Australia. In relation to Queensland, examples of their regulation include that they are permitted to be ridden on

footpaths, shared paths and certain local roads. Permitting an e-scooter to be ridden on a footpath is simply too broad a brushstroke, as footpaths exist in the Brisbane CBD, on the roads and streets of the inner city, and on paths running alongside the river. This one size fits all approach is problematic because depending on where a footpath is, the number of people walking on that path will vary. A footpath in the CBD, for example Adelaide Street, will see thousands of people walk it in one day, whereas a footpath on a street in Stones Corner will see much reduced foot traffic. The regulations as they stand currently, allow an e-scooter rider to effectively ride at speed through a crowd.

Speed limits and mandatory helmet laws are simply not being adhered to, with many riders riding both over the speed limit while not wearing a helmet. It is at this point that the rider moves beyond being a danger to other people to being a danger to himself. This is the point where the testimony of head trauma doctors and police data becomes relevant:

- Four people have died in e-scooter accidents in 2025;
- 2700 infringements were issued for illegal road use on PMDs between November 2022 and December 2024;
- More than 65% of the infringements involved failing to wear a helmet, carrying passengers, or illegal road use;
- Eight people died while riding e-mobility devices in Queensland last year;
- More than one third of e-scooter riders presenting to emergency admitted to travelling at speeds over 25 km per hour and 58% were triaged at the second highest urgency response;
- As of 30 September 2024 there have been 1050 presentations to emergency departments in Queensland;
- The Queensland government's own data cites a 112% rise in injuries to riders, passengers and pedestrians.

(source: ABC News and RBWH Foundation news release)

This is just a snapshot of the available data. I understand that the Queensland government is well aware of the data, hence the commendable decision to launch the inquiry.

As the population of Brisbane and Queensland continues to grow at record levels, so will this injury data. It would be grossly irresponsible for the government to ignore it.

I thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns. In fact, I was relieved to hear that the inquiry had been announced. I urge the Queensland government to not miss this most important of opportunities.

Warm regards

Melanie Thomas