

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	769
Submitted by:	David Walter
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

1. *Benefits of e-mobility (including both Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs), such as e-scooters and e-skateboards, as well as e-bikes) for Queensland;*

The most obvious benefit is actual transportation in a timely manner, compared with walking which takes typically 4 x longer, at the current “legal” speed limit. There is a diverse range of people using these devices ranging from those who mainly want to get exercise as well as the “transport factor” to those who have no intention of ANY exercise and use what is currently considered an “illegal” device with a Throttle requiring NO pedalling whatsoever, and they are, generally, a real problem on the paths and the streets.

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

As an avid Cyclist using my Bike as my main means of transportation, I am concerned about safety – mine as well as others. In and around my area of Robina, I would see typically a dozen illegal bikes or Scooters per hour, depending on the time of day. They range from Scooters with an unrestricted throttle, to eBikes with a throttle (and no pedalling) usually doubling somebody, often with no helmets and often riding “in the traffic with the vehicles” and NOT on a path or the Cycle Lane. This especially applies to the Sur-Ron (Surren) Bike that is effectively an Electric Motorbike, capable of ridiculous speeds (up to 70 MPH / in excess of 100KPH). They are a real “Menace” and the worst single “problem” I have witnessed as they are commonly riding in and zig-zagging through the vehicle Traffic and often riding on the rear wheel (doing a Wheelie). There are MANY of these and they are mostly High School Students and they literally terrorise the streets! I haven’t personally witnessed an actual eBike, Scooter or Skateboard accident, which is quite surprising, but I’ve seen so many “near misses” and mostly they are the Sur-Ron bikes riding at high speed (60 +) on the rear wheel only – and they rarely ride alone!

3. *Issues associated with e-mobility ownership, such as risk of fire, storage and disposal of lithium batteries used in emobility, and any consideration of mitigants or controls;*

Cheaper Chinese manufactured batteries are definitely an issue as they are “made to a price”, but quality batteries supplied on all “name brand” Bikes are Certified and never present an issue. The “fastest growing” sector are the “bike Kits” that many teenagers are buying where they convert a standard bicycle by adding a wheel with a Hub Motor and usually a LARGE battery and these are almost ALWAYS a throttle (only) Bike.

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

Australia is, unfortunately a “Nanny State” with the current 25Kph limit and this exacerbates the proliferation of illegal bikes. Even New Zealand has a 32Kph limit, and

*following this trend would certainly go some way to resolving people going “around the current inadequate restrictions”. From personal experience, I pedal less than four revolutions before the motor has cut out and I’m pedalling a heavy eBike under my own power entirely. Even with this heavier bike I can pedal (at 70+ years of age) up to at least 40Kph and beyond, so that’s what makes a mockery of the ridiculously “low” 25Kph cut-out limit. It’s NOT Speed that kills, it’s inattention, lack of skill, inadvertent pedestrians blindly crossing directly in front of you without looking, people on Mobile Phones and a myriad of other factors that are the issue. In the USA the limit is 25Mph (over 40Kph) and I guarantee there aren’t more accidents or injuries than we have. I “rarely” see a **legal** bike when I’m out riding, so the 25Kph limit is **NOT** being followed anyway.*

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

My experience is that there are “Rules” but they are NOT being enforced whatsoever. I have NEVER seen any enforcement or people being pulled over and spoken to, or charged. I recently spoke with the Police about people not wearing helmets and why they didn’t do anything about that and the reply was “the Gold Coast is a Tourist town so we don’t enforce that”! He then had the audacity to say that if they were in Ipswich, they would be fined!! I said surely the law should apply “Everywhere”! There’s the problem!

6. *Gaps between Commonwealth and Queensland laws that allow illegal devices to be imported and used;*

*This is an area that **MUST** be addressed! If all these illegal bikes / Scooters were “nabbed” when they arrived at the Ports, there wouldn’t be an issue at all!*

7. *Communication and education about device requirements, rules, and consequences for unsafe use; and*
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.*