

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	853
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Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

I wish to make a submission in respect of the use of E-bikes and E-scooters but more particularly in respect of their use on footpaths.

My submission relate to the terms of reference (2) Safety Issues; (3) Issues associated with e-mobility ownership; (4) suitability of current regulatory frameworks; (5) effectiveness of current enforcement approaches; and (6) Communication and education.

I will limit my submission to the question of the risk of personal injuries likely to be caused by these vehicles to pedestrians using a footpath.

I am a retired Public Servants and aged 84. As part of our fitness program, my wife and myself go for a morning walk before breakfast along the footpaths in Sunnybank. In the winter months, we usually start our walk in darkness. In recent weeks there have been three occasions where we were at risk of receiving serious injuries because of the use of an E-scooter and an E-bike. Each occasion occurred before dawn and we had no indication of the presence of these vehicles until they passed us. Neither of them carried a light or sounded a warning. They passed us at some speed and very close to us possibly missing us by only a foot or so.

The E-scooter which was ridden by a teenage boy or young adult came from behind and if he had hit us, we would have suffered a major injury possibly spinal and even paraplegia. We called out, but he did not stop.

The E-bike was ridden by a young woman coming towards us and we did not see her as there was glare from oncoming traffic along Mains Road. Once again, no light and no warning alarm. Had we seen her, we could have flashed our torches but we simply did not know she was there.

I do not believe that the Queensland Government gave proper consideration to the question of safety to pedestrians when it permitted the use of these vehicles on footpaths. These vehicles are quite silent and even if they keep within the speed limit imposed, they are a real danger if they collide with a pedestrian.

My other concern is that these vehicles are not registered and no check is made to ensure that they are equipped with lights and warning bells.

I am also very concerned that these vehicles or their riders are not required to have third party insurance which means

that if the rider is a child or young adult, they are most unlikely to have any assets which would cover the compensation for the injuries caused by their activities. This would leave the injured person without any recourse to damages. It is possible that such damages could run into thousands or even millions of dollars. This does not seem to have been considered at all by the Queensland Government in approving the use of these vehicles on pedestrian footpaths.

I would therefore submit that these vehicles should not be permitted to use pedestrian footpaths but if they are so permitted, the following conditions should be imposed.

1. These vehicles be registered and carry a distinctive number from which the name and address of the owner can be ascertained.
2. These vehicles be required to carry and use warning lights and bells or whistles.
3. These vehicles be required to reduce their speed to 5 klms per hour when passing pedestrians.
5. But more importantly, these vehicles be required to hold third party insurance similar to that required to be held by normal motor vehicles.

My wife Janice Margaret Davis has the same concerns and we wish that these submissions be treated as a joint submission by us both.

I ask that you give our submissions serious consideration.