

## **Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland**

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	Murray Henman
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**Background:**

I have a master's degree in urban and Regional Planning, specialising in transport. I have previously worked in TMR and have been involved in walking and cycling advocacy groups. I regularly ride a (non-electric) bicycle for recreation and to get to work and use public transport regularly.

I start from the position that walking is the most fundamental, inclusive, and sustainable transport as well as a common form of recreational. Any measures arising from this inquiry must advance walkability and improve pedestrian safety.

After walking, riding bikes should be prioritised and encouraged (but above e-mobility / PMD – personal mobility devices). My proposal of providing more protected bike lanes has the dual use of providing safer infrastructure for both people riding bikes and using PMDs.

**Main points**

1. Footpaths are for walking. People walking should have the first priority. Everything else comes after that.
2. Appropriate infrastructure for e-mobility transport is vital to provide safety for those users and people walking
3. Better rules to ensure safe use and parking for e-mobility will help ensure safety and convenience for both users.

**The future of e-mobility**

E-mobility is now another mode that people use to move themselves around. With falling costs and an increasing electrification of society and transport, their use is likely to increase.

- They are very useful for last mile journeys. That is, from home to a train station, or the train station to the office.
- They are useful for a quick ride down to the shops to pick up something, or for a gig worker to deliver your dinner.
- They can help improve access for people with disabilities
- They can reduce emissions through electrification.
- They are much cheaper to own and run than motor vehicles and I think they will remain popular among younger people who cannot afford a car, or do not see the need to own one.
- They can help reduce congestion
- They can and help to improve road safety by decreasing reliance on heavier and faster moving vehicles.

They also come with challenges:

- Sharing footpaths with people walking can and does lead to crashes which injures people and makes people feel unsafe and uncomfortable, and less likely to walk.
- Rental PMD are often left strewn across footpaths, causing tripping hazards and inconvenience, as well as just looking unappealing
- Ensuring they can travel safely on roads or other paths

It is important to find ways to accommodate and encourage these new vehicle and technologies to operate safely in our transport system. This includes infrastructure and regulations.

I think it is similar to how we had to find ways to accommodate the motor car into society more than 100 years ago. Simply wishing the problem will go away is the incorrect approach and will only cause tensions and prolong the transition.

## **Solutions**

- Provide infrastructure for PMD users to use safely and conveniently. If it's not convenient, it's less likely to be used. An ideal would be to provide separate and protected bike lanes, especially in inner city areas, where use is the highest. This has the advantage of reducing PMD use on footpaths (reducing conflict with people walking) and on roads (which endangers PMD users). Scooters and bicycles have similar size profiles and (generally) similar speeds, so I think they mostly fit well together.
- Lower the general traffic speed to no faster than 40kmh in high use areas would improve safety. Vehicles travelling at lower speeds can stop more quickly, and any contact will cause less trauma.
- Require PMD hire (and sales?) companies to increase the onus on users to improve behaviour. One option would be to work with relevant local governments to provide space for parking. I note that Brisbane City Council has a few spaces which could be replicated across inner city areas. Companies should be required to penalise users who do not park PMDs in appropriate places.
- Councils could provide more secure scooter parking for private PMD so that users can park at their destinations.
- I haven't discussed speeding and helmet use as it is not my area of expertise. However, I believe people will wear helmets when that feel social pressure to do so – similar to attitudes to seat belts and drink driving. I don't know how to do this. Targeted advertising could help but I'd suggest talking to experts in behaviour change.

We have an opportunity to embrace e-mobility which can reduce congestion, reduce emissions, but we must make sure that this does not compromise pedestrian safety and convenience.