


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

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# Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

## Committee Submission

### Terms of reference.

Firstly, I have two e-bikes. I have found over a considerable period that most adults who don't ride do not understand how a true e-bike works. This understanding has been further eroded by the introduction of electrically driven bikes.

A traditional e-bike is a purpose-built push bike that has a battery and motor to PROVIDE ASSISTANCE WHILE THE RIDER IS PEDDLING. Stop peddling and the motor assistance stops. These bikes purchased in Australia are also governed to a maximum assisted speed of 25 KM/Hr + or -10%. That means that when the rider reached 27.5 KM/Hr the motor assistance stops. I acknowledge that there may be ways of overriding the speed limit as they are allowed higher max speeds overseas, but any rider who does so is riding a motorised vehicle that must be registered to be used on our roads and if detected can be charged by the QPS under existing laws, for operating an unregistered vehicle.

For the purpose of this submission, I will call these bikes **Motor Assisted E-Bikes**

Then there are purpose-built bikes that can be purchased that allow the rider to drive the bike using the motor only. Finally, there are the traditional pushbikes that are being modified by the addition of a motor (electric or petrol) usually purchased on-line and fitted by the rider. These bikes are being modified and used by many kids.

For the purpose of this submission, I will call these bikes, **Motor Driven E-Bikes**

From reading the available statement by the Minister and the other information on the web site it appears that pushbikes that are modified by the addition of a petrol motor are not covered by your enquiry Terms of Reference. **If this is correct. this is a serious oversight which should be corrected by amending the Terms of Reference.**

I have personally witnessed these **Motor Driven E-Bikes** and e-scooters travelling on roads at speeds up to and beyond 70 KM/Hr. They are unregistered and under current Qld laws and the QPS has the power to stop and charge these riders if travelling at over 27.5 Km/Hr.

Whether traditional push bike frames are capable of withstanding the additional stresses imposed by high speed motorised propulsion is a safety issue that should be investigated when deciding what action the Government should take in relation to these modified bikes going forward.

### **Benefits of e-mobility devices**

**Motor Assisted E-Bikes** allow riders to negotiate hills easily. These bikes allow many older riders like myself (aged over 70) to continue riding and exercising long after what would have otherwise had to stop due to age and/or health issues.

The **motor driven e- bikes and scooters** can also be a benefit in increasing mobility for people, but they must be operated in accordance with the law and with the required, minimum safety gear, e.g. a helmet. Also operation and e-mobility vehicle while intoxicated should be subject to heavy penalties.

Speed can be an issue with the operation of privately owned e-scooters. Most e-scooters, at least those purchased privately, are fitted with a switch that can override the 27.5 KM/Hr speed limit intended for on road use as an unregistered vehicle. The higher speed setting is supposed to be used on PRIVATE PROPERTY ONLY. Some top end scooters can travel at speeds up to 100KM/Hr when operated in this mode. Scooters are sold with clear instructions regarding the use of the two speed settings, but it appears many riders choose to operate their e-scooters at higher speeds on public footpaths and roadways.

If riders choose to ignore the laws around the use of their unregistered e-vehicle there should be charged under the existing legal framework rather than simply banning all e-bikes and scooters which some submissions and social media users are calling for. This would unreasonably impact the many users who operate their vehicles safely and within the current laws.

**E-Scooters sold in Australia should be limited to a max speed of 27.5 Km/Hr.**

### **Enforcement Approach**

Adult riders who are caught breaking the law should be charged and fined for a first offence and for repeat offences should face fines / imprisonment and have their bike or

scooter confiscated and destroyed using legislation similar to the HOON laws currently in place in Qld and other States.

If the rider is underage then the Parents should be fined and the rider prohibited from obtaining a drivers licence for a period once they reach the legal driving age.

Without consequences there will be limited if any cultural change and these problems will go on unchecked.

The biggest failure in the area of enforcement is in the court system which is not only failing to meet community expectations but undermining the efforts of the QPS to address these issues and youth crime generally.

### **The courts**

The government needs to find an effective way to ensure that the courts apply penalties that meet community expects and the intent of current Government policies.

There have been recent cases where courts have elected to impose totally inadequate sentences that not only don't meet community expectations but the intent of current Government policies. Unless this issue is addressed making legislative change will be ineffective.

Judges and Magistrates should be accountable, and action taken when inadequate sentences are handed down. There needs to be consequences.

Youth offender found guilty of serious offences should be publicly named and shamed.

### **Lithium-ion battery fires.**

I am not an expert on this issue, so all I can say is I have two e-bikes and a golf cart with Lithium-ion batteries and have not had any issues charging them but I also maintain them and charge them in accordance with the product advice provided with the item or battery, nor do I leave them on charge overnight.