

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No: 914
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

The issue of escooters and ebikes has been a front and centre concern within communities - in particular with ageing people such as myself since at least 2018. In recent years my personal concern has been significantly greater in relation to what I can only describe as out of control use of powerful e-bikes, mostly by youth on the Sunshine. So much so that it is unusual NOT to see reports each week of serious injury. Frequent news reports, recent statistical data published in the Courier Mail - and a more widely inclusive segment on A Current Affair testify to the cost, deaths and injuries, and public concerns about the lack of official to curb reckless use of these 'vehicles'. In Queensland, there have been at least 10 e-scooter related deaths since 2018, with a notable increase in injuries, particularly in the past few years. A recent Queensland Government report highlights that 'more than 2,700 infringements were issued for illegal e-scooter use between November 2022 and December 2024. Additionally, a 112% increase in e-scooter and e-bike related injuries was reported between 2021 and 2024'.¹ My first specific point is to question why it is necessary to have another enquiry into this matter. The Government Queensland must certainly have access to detailed statistics confirming deaths, injuries, and added burden on hospitals, emergency services, and ensuing diversion of already critically under supplied resources away from the general public in need. Added to which the very significant impact of additional costs directly attributable related to this whole situation. Why has action not been taken previously - the time for talk, and 'talk festing' has long since passed. As a voter and taxpayer it is outrageous that an enquiry - and subsequent inevitable bureaucratic processes - will definitely create further delay. One death is a death too many - we have a police force, we have road laws and regulations - delay in taking action is shameful. 2. I moved to the Sunshine Coast in 2021. Prior to this I lived in Brisbane (Hawthorne - between Riding and Hawthorne Roads. It was during this period that I first became aware of the risks, dangers and public nuisance created by e-scooters. Three instances stand out: i) I used to frequently observe a young man travelling at speed along Riding Road, dangerously passing cars on the wrong side - always without a helmet. ii) It became hazardous to walk towards the city on the Wynnum Road footpath - especially during morning peak hour - due to speeding scooter and bicycle riders crowding the footpath (many without helmets). This was particularly dangerous with silent e-scooters as few riders used any form of bell or signal - when approaching from behind. If anything was said to such people they were quite frequently rude and aggressive. iii) During the period from 2018 to 2021 I was undergoing and recovering from prolonged chemotherapy and later rehabilitation for a stroke. The limited exercise I was able to do was usually at Hawthorne Park, and the increasing volume of scooters short cutting through the park at speed (fast running pace) eventually made this so unpleasant that I was not confident of using the park.³ After moving to Yaroomba in 2021 there has been quite a dramatic increase of e-scooter and e-bike usage. I often walk between Yaroomba and Coolool along David Low Way and have frequently encountered dangerous situations with both e-scooters and e-bikes (the majority now being 'fat tyred' e-bikes). These seem to be most often ridden by young teenagers. The first observation being that the riders frequently do not wear helmets, speed at least a fast running pace on the footpaths, and often have two or more people on the bikes. and without exception whilst on the FOOTPATH have expected me to move out of their way. I have observed riders doing sharp u-turns at the David Low Way/Coolool-Yandina Road traffic, and have several times seen riders doing wheelies along the road from this intersection towards Birtwill St, Coolool. Another frequent hazardous area has been along David Low Way / Havana Road intersection, at the afternoon time when Coolool

High School students are returning home. As a driver I have observed students on e-bikes (most without helmets) crossing David Low diagonally without pause and then speeding (observed at up to 25 kmh) along the main road in the direction of Coolum. 4. It would also appear that some young riders may have modified the "fat tired" e-bikes or disabled any governing devices to allow increased speeds. One particularly dangerous instance comes to mind when my wife and I were driving along Warran Road toward South Coolum. At the T intersection with Bimini Drive two very young looking e-bike riders emerging from Bimini Drive at speed - one then passed at speed on the wrong side of the road centre line, whilst the second rider passed on the left side (between our passenger side and the gutter). We had been travelling at about 30 kmh - and whilst we were startled and slowed down the two riders clearly moved ahead. Neither were wearing helmets. 5. Adults have also been a concern within my immediate area of residence. It has not been uncommon to observe adults riding the same e-bikes described - speeding (beyond fast running pace) past my house on Neurum Road Yaroomba - on several occasions with young children sitting behind and in front of the rider. What can be done? a) Given the very young age of many of the e-bike riders and the expense of purchasing these it would seem that the purchases must have often been made by parents, or with parents consent. b) Given proper care and when used appropriately at safe and legal speeds (wearing helmets) there are reasons why these devices could be both safe and useful. However, that seems to be very far from the reality of the situation. Given this, and the apparent shortage of available and visible police presence , I would submit that: i) Use of e-bikes and e-scooters should be legally restricted to persons of an age eligible to hold a driver licence or learners permit. Many e-scooters and e-bikes by personal observation and media reporting appear to be no different in power and speed potential than a motor cycle. ii) Existing penalties for breaches of laws and regulations should be very significantly increased - to become a true deterrent. iii) Parents or those responsible for allowing underaged users to ride such vehicles on public roads and footpaths should be charged as responsible for any breaches of the law. iv) Any such vehicles should be registered or otherwise identifiable to authorities and the general public , in case of accident or reportable dangerous behaviour. v) Such vehicles should also carry mandatory third party insurance. vi) Persons retailing or selling devices to modify these 'vehicles' to minors should be subject to strong penalties. Direct importing via online purchasing should be stopped. 3. 3.