

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submitted by: Lachlan Trappett
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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; I use an e-bike (pedal assist) to commute to work each day. By doing this I save significant amounts of both time (as it is faster than public transport) and money (My partner and I do not have a second car). The use of the e-bike also benefits my health significantly, with my average week consisting of 5+ hours of cardio based exercise which significantly exceeds the recommended minimum. My fitbit tracks that in an average week, my Active Zone Time (of which they recommend 150 minutes) often exceeds 700. If this was common across the entire population, then I would expect significant benefit to the government through reduced healthcare spending. More benefits for the government relate to the significantly cheaper costs to build and maintain cycling infrastructure. The more people that shift out of their cars onto active transport, the less congestion busting and road maintenance the government would need to pay for.

2. Safety issues associated with e-mobility use, including increasing crashes, injuries, fatalities, and community concerns; The greatest danger I have experienced when riding my bicycle is when I need to ride on the road interacting with cars and trucks. My commute to work is 90% on separated bicycle lanes or paths through parklands. The difference I experience on that last 10% is significant and if it was my whole commute, I doubt I would feel comfortable riding to work. More investment in proper cycling infrastructure that separates riders from pedestrians and from vehicles is the most effective method for improving safety. It should be the priority of the government to expand the separated cycling network to encourage more people to ride. As more people ride, they gain experience and the rate of injuries should decrease as more people get used to it.

3. Issues associated with e-mobility ownership, such as risk of fire, storage and disposal of lithium batteries used in e-mobility, and any consideration of mitigants or controls; The biggest concern I have with my e-bike are theft as the bicycle is more expensive than a regular bike. A potential solution is to have unique IDs for bicycles and scooters sold through licenced shops that allow the devices to be identified should they be stolen and recovered. This would help reduce the risk of thefts, while also providing incentive to not purchase an illegal device.

4. Suitability of current regulatory frameworks for PMDs and ebikes, informed by approaches in Australia and internationally; I believe the current 25kmph cutoff for pedal assist should be raised to 30kmph. This will allow for riding on streets at a speed closer to vehicles which should reduce the frustration drivers experience. Especially on quiet side streets (Some of which already have 40kmph limits). I do not believe requiring individual registration for bicycles will be effective. Especially as the illegal ones causing issues are already illegal. The costs of implementing and enforcing such a system would also likely significantly exceed the revenue it brings in unless the costs to the individual were prohibitively expensive. This would only serve to discourage people from using these devices instead of encouraging people to use them so the community can reap the benefits.

5. Effectiveness of current enforcement approaches and powers to address dangerous riding behaviours and the use of illegal devices; Greater enforcement is needed on the use of illegal devices that pose danger to other people. Police seem to focus only on helmets.

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

I support changes to laws that remove loopholes allowing the purchase or use of illegal devices

7. Communication and education about device requirements, rules, and consequences for unsafe use; and I believe similar strategies employed for the emergence of personal drones would be

appropriate here.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. E-bikes and E-scooters have the potential to be a significant part of our transportation mix, if they are supported and regulated sufficiently and appropriately. Work should focus on increasing safety and acceptance through proactive means, not through punitive measures focused on a few bad eggs that may significantly hamper the uptake of these devices.