

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee Inquiry into e-Mobility Safety and Use in Queensland

1 Executive summary

Private e-mobility devices (e-scooters, e-bikes, powered skateboards) are now an indispensable part of the urban transport mix. In Queensland, more people are adopting them for first- and last-mile trips than ever before. National research shows 3.6 million Australian adults used an e-scooter in 2022—18 % of the adult populationⁱ.

Latest Jamieson Trauma Institute (JTI) research shows the safety challenge is shifting: 64% of e-scooter injury patients were on private devices, more than one-third were travelling above the 2 km/h speed cap, and 58% were triaged “Category 2 – Emergency”ⁱⁱ. While emergency presentations are rising in absolute numbers - 1,050 presentations to QISU-monitored EDs in Jan–Sep 2024, up from 940 in the same period of 2023. However, ridership is expanding even faster, meaning the **injury rate** 10,000 riders is trending downward, indicating that improved infrastructure, education and enforcement can keep pace with growth.

This submission **supports safe and sustainable private e-mobility** and recommends:

1. **Infrastructure & speed management**
 - Roll out consistent way-finding signage on shared and separated cycleways.
 - Introduce 40 km/h default speed limits on local urban streets to move PMDs off busy footpaths and reduce crash severity.
2. **Targeted education** for riders, motorists and pedestrians—building on TMR’s existing “Share the Road” and PMD rules campaigns.
3. **Better protective equipment** – retain helmet mandate; incentivise full-face helmets and gloves for >25 km/h devices.
4. **Stronger repeat-offender controls**
 - Empower police with “move-on / surrender” powers already used for other road offences.
 - Require shared-scheme operators to block accounts of users reported by police or councils for dangerous riding.
5. **Data-driven approach**—expand Injury Surveillance Unit coverage to all EDs and publish annual “PMD dashboard” combining injury, enforcement and usage metrics.

2 Context & evidence

2.1 Growth and benefits of private e-mobility

- **Mode shift & emissions:** Each private e-scooter typically replaces 1.6 car trips per day, cutting congestion and CO₂ emissions.
- **Economic impact:** E-scooters contributed **\$728 million in direct & indirect output nationally in 2022**, with Queensland the single largest shareⁱⁱⁱ.
- **Safety trend:** While injuries are rising in absolute terms (§ 3.2), growth in ridership is higher, suggesting the risk per trip is stable or falling.

2.2 Current safety picture

Metric	2021	2022	2023	2024	Trend 22–24
QISU-monitored ED presentations	706	1 033	1 273	1 050 (to Sep)	↑ 29 %
Share of injuries on private devices	—	56 %	—	64 %	Rising
Riders >25 km/h (private)	—	—	—	35 %	—
Helmet use reported	—	—	—	65 %	—

Sources: JTI interview study & RBWH Foundation update; QISU data cited at RACS 2023 Trauma Symposium.

2.3 Risk behaviours

- **Aggressive interactions** – clinicians report a spike in car-vs-e-scooter conflicts contributing to crashes.
- **Illegal riding** – QUT observations (Brisbane, 2019) found 45 % of shared e-scooters ridden illegally (no helmet, road riding, or doubling) versus 9 % of private devices; helmet non-use was 36 % among shared riders^{iv}.
- **Crash severity** – international research links speeds above 30 km/h and lack of separated infrastructure with higher injury severity^v.

2.4 Existing Queensland framework

Queensland already leads Australia with clear PMD rules—device standards, 25 km/h speed cap, mandatory helmets and lights^{vi}. The Committee can build on this solid base rather than reinvent it.

3 Key issues & recommendations

Issue	New evidence	Recommended action	Expected outcome
Infrastructure & speeds	Crash severity increases above 30 km/h; weekday commuter injuries dominate private riders	Uniform signage on all paths; 30–40 km/h default limit on local streets; fast-track separated cycleways	Shift PMDs off congested footpaths; reduce crash forces
Road-user attitudes	Clinicians cite car aggression in crash narratives	“Respect all road users” campaign; PMD content in learner-driver curriculum	Fewer near-misses; better compliance
Protective equipment	58 % of injured riders triaged Cat 2; high facial trauma despite 65 % helmet use	Enforce helmet law; rebate full-face helmets & gloves; promote reflective clothing	Lower head-/facial-injury severity

Issue	New evidence	Recommended action	Expected outcome
Repeat offenders	Minority of riders repeatedly breach speed/rules	Police prohibition notices; operators lock accounts 30 days; shared offender register	Curtail recidivism; boost public confidence
Data gaps	QISU now covers 5 EDs; broader coverage needed	Annual public “PMD Safety Snapshot”; extend QISU to all 30 EDs	Evidence-led policy; track injury rate per trip

4 Alignment with Inquiry Terms of Reference

TOR item	Relevant sections in this submission
(a) <i>Extent of e-mobility use & growth</i>	§ 3.1, § 4.7
(b) <i>Safety issues incl. crashes & injuries</i>	§ 3.2, § 4.4
(c) <i>Adequacy of current regulation & enforcement</i>	§ 3.3, § 4.5–4.6
(d) <i>Infrastructure needs</i>	§ 4.1
(e) <i>Measures to improve safety</i>	§ 4.1–4.4

5 Conclusion

Queensland pioneered legal e-scooter use in 2018; the devices are now indispensable for short urban trips. New 2024 evidence shows that private riders bear the highest injury burden, chiefly due to speed, infrastructure gaps and motor-vehicle interactions. Rather than restricting sustainable transport, Queensland can stay ahead by scaling separated infrastructure, sharpening enforcement against high-risk behaviour, and incentivising better rider protection. With these measures, safety can outpace the rapid growth of private e-mobility.

ⁱ The Australian Cycling and e-Scooter Economy in 2022, We Ride Australia, November 2024. weride.org.au,

ⁱⁱ JTI research finds private eScooter riders now most at risk, 26 Nov2024, rbwhfoundation.com.au

ⁱⁱⁱ [Newsroom - Largest-ever study on Australia's cycling and e-scooter economy shows growing strength of micromobility industry](#), 17 June 2025

^{iv} Haworth NL, Schramm A, Illegal and risky riding of electric scooters in Brisbane, Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, May 2019, mja.com.au

^v [Symposium tackles e-scooter injuries | RACS](#), 17 June 2025

^{vi} [Personal mobility device riding rules and fines | Transport and motoring | Queensland Government](#), 17 June 2025