

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

Submission No:	1021
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Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

Unlicensed, unregistered & unregulated electric conveyances on public roads & footpaths

Research by the University of Adelaide into road safety, especially for children, and submissions by The ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations to the ACT Government have identified four mutually dependent areas for attention:

- 1 Legislation / Regulation
- 2 Signage
- 3 Environmental modifications ("traffic calming measures")
- 4 Compliance / Enforcement

The University of Adelaide's researchers admit "drivers may not comply with lower speed limits", in much the same way as they don't with the current 40 km/h zones. It's why they also recommended "traffic-calming measures, such as speed bumps, pedestrian crossings and perceived narrow lane widths" to further reduce vehicle speeds.

The ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations agrees that lower limits aren't enough.

"We want to see stronger enforcement of existing laws, clearer signage, safe crossing points and traffic-calming measures designed with children's (parents with prams, disabled people, the elderly, pedestrians in general) needs in mind," Ms Joubert told Region.

If we want unregistered electric conveyances operated by minors, or people of any age deemed at risk, off our roads then the only alternative is the footpath. By no means all footpaths are suitable to be designated as shared paths, hitherto mostly used by pedestrians and casual cyclists.

In the "Age of Obesity" walking should be encouraged. Walkers of all ages have the right to feel safe. In the ACT, cyclists on shared paths must give way to pedestrians. In practice a *modus vivendi* has evolved where walkers may make allowances for cyclists although the legal requirement is that cyclists must give way, dismounting if necessary.

Some suburban roads are narrow, have no footpaths or road markings and, if vehicles are legally parked parallel to the curb without obstructing driveways or damaging nature strips, there is no room for cars - never mind larger vehicles - travelling in opposite directions to pass. Such roads are, to all intents and purposes, "bridleways", open to vehicles and used by walkers, cyclists, children and even to horse riders. Here the general suburban speed limit of 50kmph is way too high.

In conclusion, although legislation is sorely needed, legislation on its own will not change the behaviour of people on suburban roads. On main roads separate bicycle paths, wide enough for walkers, like the paths following the Gold Coast Highway from Helensvale to Labrador are the only realistic option.

Relying on people to exercise common sense is problematic even with adults, let alone minors.

Electric conveyances are not toys but children and young adults are ever playful, all too often irresponsible.