

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

<b>Submission No:</b>	1053
<b>Submitted by:</b>	David Dallaston
<b>Publication:</b>	Making the submission and your name public
<b>Attachments:</b>	See attachment
<b>Submitter Comments:</b>	

David Dallaston

20 June 2025

Submission to the Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

This submission relates particularly to terms of reference 1, 2, and 8: the benefits and safety issues of PMDs and e-bikes, and community stakeholder perspectives.

PMDs and e-bikes have huge potential benefits; for equity, and for social, economic, and environmental sustainability. For commuters, they represent a highly economic alternative to owning and operating a car, and will significantly contribute to reducing traffic congestion in our urban centres. For younger people living in suburban and small-town Queensland, they are the bicycles and skateboards of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; they represent freedom, independence, and exploration, which should all be encouraged. To ban, age-restrict, or licence micro-mobility is to risk losing all of these benefits, and is a knee-jerk reaction which should be approached with caution.

As a regular pedestrian both in my local suburb of Aspley and in the Brisbane CBD, I have sympathy for and, to a degree, share the widely-publicised concerns about the risk PMDs pose to pedestrians, particularly vulnerable and older pedestrians. However, this risk is mainly caused by pedestrians, cyclists, and PMD users all being expected to share often very narrow footpaths; while the bulk of our paved public spaces remains dedicated to the exclusive use of inefficient and, comparatively, much more dangerous road traffic. If our objective is to retain the benefits that PMDs, cycling, and walking provide, while also mitigating the dangers, then we must look to changing the built environment in which these activities take place, and the cultural attitudes which underpin that environment.

I note, and agree with, the discussion between Mr Kempton and Ms Downing in the Public Briefing regarding the desirability of separation between road traffic, PMDs / bicycles, and pedestrians, and the potential cost associated with building that infrastructure. However, while TMR has long had policies in place designed to encourage walking and cycling, those policies are not always reflected in what gets planned and built. I offer the following illustrated examples of where TMR has recently build infrastructure in my area which is not fit for purpose, or which, with a little extra thought, could have had a much better outcome:



1. As part of an intersection upgrade in December 2023, this incredibly pointless minimum-width cycle lane was added to Gympie Road in Aspley – a 70km/h arterial – in central Aspley. The lane starts here and ends a few meters past the intersection, adjacent to the sign visible in front of the tree at the left of the image.





2. As part of the signalisation of the intersection of Albany Creek Road and Bangalow St in Bridgeman Downs, TMR painted bike lanes on both sides of Albany Creek Road. These bike lanes, like the one on Gympie Road, simply start and end a short distance either side of the intersection, rendering them disconnected and useless. A little more thought could have seen these bike lanes extended to connect with the path through the park at Cabbage Tree Creek, and with a new shared path across the NWTC.





3. A little further along Albany Creek Road in Aspley – a medium-density residential area with several retirement and aged-care facilities – pedestrians, cyclists, and PMD users are expected to all share this minimum-width footpath, made even narrower by overhanging ornamental vegetation,



while a wide, flat, recently-resurfaced road shoulder is used for storing trucks and caravans; it could easily and cheaply be developed into a protected cycle lane. This state-controlled road has recently been identified by a Brisbane City Council and TMR Walking Network Plan as a primary active transport route.

It seems, therefore, that there is a culture change required within the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Separated cycling / PMD infrastructure must be taken seriously as a goal in road design, rather than something tacked on for tokenism or compliance. Such a shift in priorities would result in better infrastructure, and consequently accessibility and safety, for everyone.

I have three recommendations I would ask the inquiry to consider, in the interest of improving safety and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, PMD users and motorists:

### **1) Strengthen give-way rules for pedestrians**

All Queenslanders have a right to be safe and active in public spaces, regardless of age, background or ability. It is, therefore, unreasonable to make safety for pedestrians contingent on being able to understand and react to either the road rules or the road environment in the same way we expect trained and licenced drivers to.

Our road rules regarding giving way to pedestrians, particularly at intersections, are overly complex and inconsistent. Many motorists – as well as cyclists and PMD users – interpret rule 236 ((1)*A pedestrian must not cause a traffic hazard by moving into the path of a driver.* / (2)*A pedestrian must not unreasonably obstruct the path of any driver or another pedestrian.*) to mean that any pedestrian in their way is always in the wrong, and cite the rule to justify failing to give way, aggressive attitudes, and unsafe behaviour. Therefore, as much as possible of Part 14 of the road rules, but rule 236 in particular, ought to be repealed, and the road rules clarified to underline that it is always motorists' and cyclists' responsibility to operate their vehicles safely around pedestrians.

### **2) Reduce speed limits in residential areas**

30km/h local speed limits are international best practice, and have been adopted over the past 20 years in many countries and sub-country jurisdictions. Lower speed limits allow pedestrians, cyclists, PMDs and motor vehicles to co-exist safely on local streets, reducing the need for expensive separated infrastructure. On urban arterial roads, lower speed limits of 40 to 60km/h should also be considered, as a way of reducing risk and improving comfort for all road users, and improving the safety and usability of relatively-cheaper on-road cycle lanes for cyclists and PMDs.

### **3) Have TMR review the presence, safety and connectivity of their suburban infrastructure**

In suburbs like Aspley, state-controlled arterial roads are often a barrier to safe walking, cycling, or PMD use. The two 70km/h arterials which bisect our suburb – Albany Creek Road and Gympie Road – often have poor or no footpaths, and only tokenistic and disconnected cycle infrastructure. This means that most residents have no option but to get in their cars and add to the traffic, or to ride a PMD or bicycle on the footpath, where they come into conflict with pedestrians.

Prioritising connectivity through activity centres, where an on-road cycle lane and / or reduction in speed limit would allow PMDs and cyclists to safely move off a footpath and onto the road, would

be the fastest and most effective way to improve micro-mobility safety in a suburban setting. Wider and better connected footpaths, better road crossings, and the ruthless removal of slip lanes are also solid investments in safer and more sustainable local transport futures, and reducing our future dependency on cars and expensive heavy traffic infrastructure.

Finally, I wish to commend to the committee a submission made by Victoria Walks to a 2023 Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users, which covers similar topics to my submission, but better referenced and in greater detail:

<https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/Assets/Files/Victoria%20Walks%20submission%20Vic%20Parliament%20Inquiry%20Road%20Safety%20Behaviours%20May%202023%20Final.pdf>

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. If I can be of any further assistance, please do contact me at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

David Dallaston

Aspley, Queensland