

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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BEAM MOBILITY

Inquiry Into E-Mobility Safety and Use in Queensland Submission



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Introduction

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Beam Mobility (Beam), we thank you for the opportunity to take part in the Inquiry into E-mobility Safety and Use in Queensland and the chance to support the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee's work in this important area.

At the outset, we appreciate the Inquiry's aim in improving safety and addressing objectives with regards to personal mobility devices (PMDs). By providing a submission, Beam seeks to collaborate with the Queensland Government to ensure that shared PMD schemes provides a safe, efficient and sustainable alternative mode of transport for users in Queensland.

A key and central aim of the submission is to highlight the distinction between private and shared micromobility operators in PMD, a distinction which we believe should be captured in the relevant legislation in this area i.e., Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. Beam proposes to the Committee that as an outcome of this inquiry, the Queensland Government:

1. Distinguishes between shared micromobility operators and private micromobility devices in the Queensland market.
2. Articulates the public transport and congestion mitigating benefits of shared micromobility operations across Queensland, supporting local tourism and improving the connectivity of residents to their local precincts and environments.

We hope this submission encourages the Queensland Government to continue to improve its current regulatory settings in the area of PMD shared micromobility schemes, by recognising the strengths of its council led point of touch regulatory approach with micromobility operators.

Kind regards,



Sergio Correa

General Manager, ANZ

Beam Mobility

Beam is Asia Pacific's leading micromobility company, operating across Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and Turkey. Beam established its Australian operations in 2019. Since that time Beam has worked closely with regulators and policy makers at all levels of government to manage and roll out e-scooter and e-bike operations, through trials and subsequent contracts nationally. As a result, we are now the chosen operator for shared e-scooters programs in Perth, Darwin, Hobart, Adelaide, and numerous regional cities across Australia.

For your awareness, Beam is committed to the following 3 priorities, which are reflected throughout the entirety of the submission:



Sustainability: Beam has previously been independently recognised for its climate commitments and continues to evolve its approach in line with global best practice. We remain committed to achieving carbon-negative operations by 2025 through measurable emissions reduction, verified removals, and alignment with emerging international standards.



Safety: Our investment in new technology allows Councils unprecedented control over city spaces, and drives safer usage of vehicles by riders. Beam's industry-leading technology is backed by our flagship rider education and enforcement program, the Beam Safe Academy, to ensure every rider on a Beam is riding safely.



Community: Our Beam team know your city, because they live there, too. Backed by a local team that cares as much about the city as you do, we support local businesses and communities through partnership initiatives, driving Beam traffic to local businesses and enabling transport for all.

The Distinction between Private and Shared e-Scooter Schemes

Under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 (hereafter, the Act), the Act and its associated regulations apply uniformly to all users of personal mobility devices (PMDs). This is regardless of whether the device is privately owned or part of a shared or hire micromobility operator scheme. For your awareness, the legislative timeline of the Act is shown below:

- **Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) Regulation 2009**
 - Established specific rules for PMD usage, including where they can be ridden and under what conditions.
- **Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2016**
 - Amended the definition of PMDs to include specifications on maximum dimensions, mass, and speed.
- **Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018**
 - Introduced rules for PMD riders on separated footpaths, including requirements for yielding to pedestrians and maintaining a safe distance.
- **Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022**
 - Implemented speed limits for PMD riders on pedestrian infrastructure and crossings.
- **Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023**
 - Proposed amendments to update definitions and applications related to PMDs, including offenses related to dangerous driving of vehicles.

The primary focus of the Act is the operation and use of PMDs on public roads and pathways, setting out rules and regulations to ensure safety and proper conduct throughout Queensland. Shared micromobility operators, such as those providing e-scooter rental services, are subject to additional local government regulations and agreements, which is discussed below.

Regulatory Oversight Provided through Local Government

Under the Act shared hire micromobility providers operate under formal contracts with local Queensland councils. A key strength of this approach is that it allows for additional, bespoke regulation between micromobility providers and councils throughout Queensland. This approach allows local government to:

- Regulate the number of scooters deployed in council jurisdictions;
- Defined strict parameters for operational use in councils jurisdictions through geo-fences;
- Enforce and mandate speed limits specific to council localities and specifics, and;
- Require that micromobility providers adhere to strict maintenance schedules as well as rider safety requirements.

As a whole, the regulatory environment created by the Act allows for point of touch regulation. The effect is that there is an effective leveraging of local knowledge for tailored and effective policy outcomes. This is distinct from the approach taken in other States where the contracts between councils and providers are more heavily constrained by the regulation provided by the State Government. This in turn reduces flexibility of the regulator – provider relationship, which constrains innovation.

Discrepancies in Effective Safety Regulation – Private V Commercial offerings

Due to the nature of the regulatory environment many of the restrictions that are provided for by legislation which are then enforced by Councils for commercial PMD operations are less, or not enforceable for private scooter owners. These include weight, speed and location restrictions. A number of examples of this are below:

- Private micromobility devices often lack built-in speed limiters.
 - This in turn limiting the safety features and protocols exhibited and adhered to by shared micromobility operators
- Private owners are increasingly modifying their device's micro-batteries and motors to increase speed and range beyond legal limits.
- Restricting the area of operation is difficult for private PMBs

Beam encourages the Committee to consider the differences between the regulatory environments that commercial and private PMB operations act within, and structure regulation accordingly.

An Australian Leading Regulatory Framework

Queensland was amongst the first markets in Australia to introduce and allow the usage of shared micromobility services. Shared micromobility services have been allowed to operate in Queensland since 2018 following the passage and implementation of the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018*. Since the Act's amendment in 2018 Queensland's micromobility regulatory framework is Australia leading. Queensland's regulatory environment has helped to foster innovation, allowing providers to tailor micromobility offering in response to local needs and nuances. Due to the nature of the regulatory environment e-scooter providers have also been more willing to introduce innovative technologies into the Queensland market. These innovations tend to increase safety for both riders and pedestrians and improve rider experience.

Table 1. Beam Safety Technologies

Safety Technology	Details
Rider Check	'Rider Check' is a proactive measure aimed at discouraging riders from operating e-scooters under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This cognitive test is strategically deployed during peak travel hours on Friday and Saturday nights, targeting various high-traffic hotspots and nightlife areas.
Pedestrian Shield	'Pedestrian Shield' is a technology that utilises AI and an onboard camera to identify city infrastructure like roads, footpaths, and bike lanes. It's designed to help e-scooters adjust speeds and provide alerts when riding on restricted areas, such as footpaths. This technology aims to improve safety and compliance with local regulations regarding e-scooters.

Public Transport Integration Benefits of PMDs

When managed appropriately micromobility can be a highly effective supplement to the public transport network. For instance, throughout our operations in NSW, our micromobility offering has provided a unique accessibility option for commuters that are not within convenient distance of their local station. With almost 34 percent of NSW Beam riders not owning or having regular access to a car, this has seen Beam improve transport equity. Indeed, micromobility has the ability to remove the limitations of first and last mile travel associated with public transport, reducing the need for car travel and road congestion, for example in jurisdictions such as Kogarah, where many riders used e-scooters to get to or from the nearby train stations of Allawah, Carlton and Kogarah.

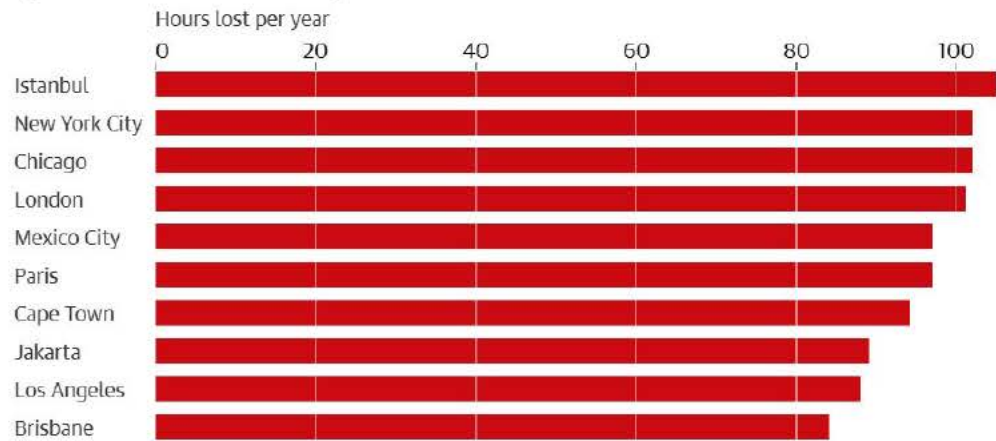
Reducing Congestion

In NSW 52 percent of Beam trips replaced a car journey in NSW. With Brisbane ranking as the worst city in Australia for congestion according to data from the [INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard](#), it is estimated that the average inner city Brisbane commuter loses approximately 74 hours a year to traffic. More could be done to address this. With South East Queensland being one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, expected to grow to 6 million by 2046, improving micromobility use can help reduce traffic congestion in the region, increasing the livability of urban spaces for not only communities but also tourists.

Shared micromobility operator services can further complement public transport offerings by filling in the gaps that buses and trains cannot always reach efficiently. For instance, a commuter might use shared micromobility service to travel from home to a nearby train station and then continue the journey via public transport, avoiding the need for car use altogether.

With South East Queensland expected to continue to grow, shared micromobility operations can alleviate the likely increased demand on traditional car-based infrastructure. In the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond, micromobility has the potential to become a key enabler of the Games’ post-event legacy, particularly around precinct activation, the night-time economy, and live entertainment. Following the release of the 2032 Delivery Plan, with both Brisbane and South East Queensland set to experience renewal through cultural, retail, and hospitality precinct investments, micromobility can connect residents and tourists to these vibrant hubs. By encouraging the uptake of active, low-carbon movement between stadiums and live entertainment venues, micromobility operators can play an instrumental role in making the infrastructure legacy more accessible, inclusive, and integrated into everyday life.

Figure 1. Most traffic congested cities world-wide



In higher population dense jurisdictions that Beam operates in overseas such as South Korea, Beam’s 2024 user survey found that 45.7% of riders use e-scooters more than three times a week, with 37.5% using them to commute to work or school Usage spikes during peak hours, with rides between 5–6 PM up 67% above the daily average, highlighting their role in daily transport, with micromobility users instead opting for micromobility transport solutions. This pattern is strongest in dense urban areas. In Beam’s South Korean operations, cities like Seoul and Incheon show the highest commuter demand, and in nearby satellite cities such as Goyang and Gimpo, located on the outskirts of Seoul and home to large residential populations 25% of daily trips occur during commuting hours, filling first- and last-mile gaps where public transport is limited. These trends are increasingly reflected in Australian cities, where shared micromobility supports access to transit, reduces car use, and meets the needs of high-density, commuter-driven corridors. These services can support optimising land use by reducing the demand for extensive vehicle parking infrastructure and freeing up space for other public amenities.

Weight and Speed Specifications

Across many Australian states, the broad consensus is that imposing a weight restriction on personal mobility devices is both necessary and appropriate, with weight often used as a proxy for safety in these circumstances, below in **Table 2**, we list the weight and speed specifications across the varying jurisdictions in Australia:

Table 2. Weight and speed specifications

Jurisdiction	Details
QLD	• Weight Limit: Up to 60 kg. • Speed Limit: 12 km/h on footpaths and shared paths; 25 km/h on separated bicycle paths and local streets with speed limits of 50 km/h or less. • Usage: E-scooters are permitted on footpaths, shared paths, bike lanes, and local roads.
NSW	• Weight Limit: No specified restriction, recommends up to 25kg.. • Speed Limit: 10 km/h on shared paths; 20 km/h on designated bicycle paths and local roads. • Note: NSW has initiated several shared e-scooter trials in collaboration with local councils.
VIC	• Weight Limit: Up to 45 kg. • Speed Limit: 20 km/h; permitted on shared-use paths and roads with speed limits up to 60 km/h. • Usage: E-scooters can be used on shared paths, bike lanes, and roads with a speed limit up to 60 km/h. E-scooters must not be more than capable of more than 25km/h.
ACT	• Weight Limit: No specific weight restriction. • Speed Limit: 15 km/h on footpaths; 25 km/h on shared paths or bicycle paths. • Usage: Permitted on footpaths, shared paths, and local roads.
SA	• Weight Limit: Up to 30 kg. • Speed Limit: 15 km/h on footpaths, 10km/h is enforceable along footpaths adjacent to State Controlled roads within certain cities. • Note: Currently, micromobility devices are allowed only under trial conditions in certain areas of Adelaide.
TAS	• Weight Limit: Up to 45 kg. • Speed Limit: 15 km/h on footpaths; 25 km/h on bicycle tracks. • Usage: Permitted on footpaths and bicycle tracks; not on main roads or highways unless specifically designated. E-scooters must not be more than capable of more than 25km/h.
NT	• Weight Limit: No specified weight restriction. • Speed Limit: 15 km/h on footpaths and shared paths. • Usage: Permitted on footpaths and shared paths; limited road use for short distances under specific conditions.
WA	• Weight Limit: Up to 25 kg (35 kg for commercial operators) • Speed Limit: 10 km/h on footpaths; 25 km/h on roads and shared paths. • Usage: E-scooters can be used on footpaths, shared paths, and bicycle lanes on roads with a speed limit of 50 km/h or less.

As shown above in **Table 2**, in Queensland, the legislated weight restriction is significantly higher than other Australian States and Territories and has been in place since 2018.

Beam is of the view that a strength of the Queensland Government's regulatory approach with regards weight restrictions is that the market can capture newer and heavier vehicles as they come out.

Higher weight limits for e-scooters unlock greater potential for innovation, particularly with regards to safety. With a higher weight allowance in Queensland in comparison to other jurisdictions, it allows micromobility operators to integrate advanced safety features into their vehicles, including:

- Larger batteries for improved range and power management.
- Reinforced frames for crash resilience.
- Better suspension systems for stability.
- More robust braking mechanisms.

These enhancements, while increasing the total weight, directly contribute to safer, more reliable rides. Conversely, enforcing strict low weight restrictions – as is done in other jurisdictions – constrains the ability of micromobility operators to incorporate safety-focussed innovations to ensure compliance. This in turn stifles innovation and limits the evolution of micromobility technology to the benefit of not only riders, but also pedestrians.

Other Considerations

Additionally, higher weight allowances have played a crucial role in fostering meaningful competition amongst micromobility operators in Queensland, allowing operators to focus on engineering the safest and most durable vehicles possible – without being hamstrung by an arbitrary weight ceiling. Indeed, this design flexibility has allowed companies to compete on the basis of real safety and reliability, rather than on compliance with outdated or oversimplified benchmarks.

With regards to speed, Beam is of the view that speed regulations pose less of a regulatory hurdle for shared micromobility providers primarily because of geo-fencing capabilities. Geofencing allows micromobility operators to automatically regulate scooter speeds based on specific geographic zones, in turn ensuring a higher degree of compliance with local speed limits and safety ordinances without relying on rider behaviour alone. Private micromobility devices often lack these technological safeguards, with most devices not having geofencing capabilities or integrated speed-limiting systems tied to geographic data. Beam is of the view that this poses a significant regulatory gap and enforcement challenge not only for the Queensland Government, but also local councils, increasing the risk of accidents and pedestrian incidents due to the lack of proper regulatory oversight.

Concluding remarks

With micromobility transport options set to become an essential component of Queensland’s future transport network, Queensland’s regulatory framework has helped foster an environment conducive to collaboration, innovation, and safety. Beam looks forward to working with the Queensland Government, local councils, and stakeholders to create a cohesive and efficient e-mobility ecosystem for Queenslanders.

CONTACT	
Beam welcomes any further discussion about this submission.	
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