

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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I appreciate the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland.

I am an avid e-scooter user, and admittedly from both my own observations and a consideration of the previous submissions, apparently one of the few law-abiding users. I only ride while wearing a helmet and ride on local roads & dedicated bike paths on a scooter that complies with the 25km/h limits imposed in Queensland.

E-Mobility devices provide a greater opportunity for community members to access services (such as shopping centres and public transport hubs) when they may not have access to, or be able to use a car, taxi or bicycle, and access to a private e-scooter has reduced the number of private car trips that I undertake every week from 14 to fewer than 5. This also results in me doing additional walking trips to/from by destination as well, as often my trip will involve using the scooter to access a train or bus, and then finishing my journey on foot.

While I acknowledge the additional risks that scooters introduce, it is clear to me that it's not the scooters themselves that are the primary cause of incidents.

I will deal with 6 main areas of focus, which responds to terms of reference 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Helmets

I fully support the requirement to wear a compliant helmet while using an e-scooter, and would welcome additional enforcement of this requirement. While it is impossible to compel all users of bicycles, e-scooters and even motorcycles to wear a helmet, strong education into the dangers, and a focus on enforcement would help reduce the impact on the health system. Additionally, I would welcome research into the appropriate type of helmet (e.g. whether more support than a basic bicycle helmet) is justified to help reduce injuries.

As with all new technologies, there is a complacency in its adoption, and just as we don't call for bicycles to be banned because a minority of users choose not to wear a helmet, nor should we call for a ban on scooters when a minority of riders refuse to wear one.

Speed Limits on Scooters

I fully support the 25km/h limit of e-scooters, and would welcome more active enforcement of these restrictions. I believe this alone will go a long way to reducing the

injury rates to both scooter users and other shared-space users. I would also welcome additional research into whether 25km/h is the appropriate speed limit, and would support a reduction to 20km/h if that saw a decrease in the injury rate to both scooter users and other footpath users.

Powers to confiscate illegal e-mobility devices

I fully support expanding the powers to confiscate non-complying e-mobility devices as a way to reduce the risk on roads and footpaths. I also support the expansion of bans on the purchase and ownership of off-road/private use variants of e-scooters in particular, as there are clearly very limited opportunity for their use.

I would also support a tracking and registration system of higher-power e-motility devices (which should also apply equally to small motorbikes/dirtbikes) which are purported to be purchased and used for off road or private purposes, to ensure that they are not being utilised illegally in the road & pedestrian networks. I note that many motorbikes remain available to purchase, despite the fact that they can be used illegally on road and on footpaths, but this hasn't yet lead to greater restrictions on their purchase and use.

Allocation of Road/Path Space

We currently disproportionately provide space to road users over other active transport users. This is obvious from the number of submissions that have highlighted footpaths and bikepaths that are below the 2.5m width considered "acceptable", and the recent closure of the Story Bridge footpaths, while maintaining full access for motor vehicles.

Were greater consideration given to bicycle and scooter riders in planning our streets and neighbourhoods, the risk of conflict between pedestrians and mobility users could be greatly reduced. Bike and scooter riders do not want to be using footpaths - however, due to the lack of cycling infrastructure, they are often forced to share these narrow, dangerous paths.

Injury Statistics – and the recency bias

I note that in previous submissions to the enquiry, much focus has been made on crash statistics for scooter riders, and the dramatic increase in presentations to emergency rooms.

To quote from the RACQ's submission, but updated (in red) with road statistics rather than scooters – "Since 2018, nearly **53,000** people presented to Queensland emergency

departments with injuries from a motor vehicle crash, many of which suffered severe injuries. Most of our members recognise that **motor vehicles** have their benefits but the scale of lawlessness and subsequent trauma on Queensland's roads and paths demands urgent action." *Source Queensland Road Crash Weekly Report – Published by Department of Transport and Main Roads.*

To put this in perspective – while there are definitely fewer scooter users than car users, we must also acknowledge that we *already dedicate* a vast amount of public space to the motor vehicle, and there are still a large number of accidents which involve serious injuries to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. Why are we shocked when scooters which we *force* to interact with pedestrians by requiring them to operate in an unsafe environment have such a high instance of injury?

The fastest way to reduce this rate of injury is to provide more, and better, active transport facilities, including the reprioritisation of road space to cyclists and e-mobility users, while at the same time, enforcing the existing helmet and speed requirements.

Minister's Statements – Cherry Picking of Statistics & Response

In establishing the inquiry, the Minister also provided some statements around injury statistics – which again – I have updated in red to highlight motor vehicle statistics.

"Between 2020 and 2024, there was a **28** per cent increase in injuries to **road users**, and, tragically, we have seen **296** fatalities in the past year. We must do more to ensure no-one else is injured and not another life is lost." *Source Hansard 2025-05-01 and Queensland Road Crash Weekly Report – Published by Department of Transport and Main Roads.*

This last statement is clearly a mistruth, as there are many steps we could take to dramatically reduce the road toll, e.g. by reducing speed limits dramatically (say 25km/h, in line with e-mobility devices) but as a society we have chosen not to.

Additionally, there are extra requirements could be introduced to motor vehicles that would be like those imposed on e-mobility. By way of example – the current maximum posted speed limit in Queensland is 110km/h, but the laws do not impose the same requirement to have a speed limiter installed on cars. So why have we have applied this requirement to e-mobility devices?

While I am not arguing for the removal of speed-limiters on e-mobility devices, I'd only ask that the department apply this requirement equally to all road and public shared space users. A number of shared e-mobility providers in Queensland already limit their devices in high traffic areas to 8km/h – if the technology can be applied to a ~\$500 scooter, why can't it also be applied to vehicles on the road?

Conclusion

I again thank the committee for the opportunity to provide this submission. When interviewing citizens of countries with high-cycling rates (such as The Netherlands) respondents always point out how they take bicycle safety seriously, because *everyone* is basically a cyclist at some point.

I believe that applying the same attitude to the e-mobility space (as well as of course to traditional cyclists) here in Queensland would result in safer outcomes for all road users, and I would implore all committee members to get out and experience e-mobility devices (and the poor urban environment that we expect them to operate in!) first hand.