

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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E Bike and E Scooter Submission
The main beneficiary of e bikes and e scooters are young people. A large user age group amongst young people are the under 16 age group who based upon current legislation are not legally allowed to ride on suburban roads unless supervised. E bikes provide benefits of independent mobility and any changes must consider, could these changes discourage uptake amongst those who do not wish to own or purchase a motor vehicle nor obtain a licence, undermining e bikes role as an accessible, sustainable transport option. If a drivers license was required, it would most likely reduce the underage usage of e bikes and e scooters. This would make enforcement easier as police and enforcement personnel have issues confronting minors on illegal use. Current limits on ebikes of 250 W on pedal assist (200W for Throttle assist) with a 25 km/h assist cap were introduced some time ago and e bike technology and market demand has advanced rapidly in the past decade whilst legislation has remained static. This has created a notable gap between what e bike motors are capable of and what is legally permissible. Many e bikes marketed as 250W compliant have the ability to deliver much higher peak power. High end motors are now capable of peak outputs of 600W but are electronically limited to 250W continuous output for road legal models. Most e bikes are rated for continuous power, (the amount they can sustain indefinitely) but peak power is much more. Most manufacturers design motors to comply with the letter of the law for 250W continuous power whilst providing higher peak outputs for hills and acceleration making the legal rating somewhat symbolic. Riders and retailers sometimes badge higher powered bikes as 250W to appear compliant, reflecting a disconnect between regulation and practical use. This has resulted in a widening gap between what e bikes can do and what is legally permitted. Enforcement of current regulations are resource heavy. Requiring regular street checks and active policing which can stretch police resources. Some riders, particularly, teens evade police or ignore the rules making enforcement difficult. High powered or illegally modified e bikes are often indistinguishable from compliant models at a glance. There is no rapid roadside technology to verify compliance of e bikes or e scooters. Registering all ebikes is said to be economically unrealistic and may provide an administrative nightmare however Pedal assisted e bikes over 250 w, bikes capable of more than 25km/h and throttle assisted bikes over 200 w are required to be registered. If as is general knowledge aftermarket conversions via you tube and outlets providing this service as well as online imports of high powered devices complicate compliance and enforcement then why not just register all ebikes. Non Compliant e bikes - often imported or converted with high power motors and throttles, are increasingly popular, especially amongst the most vulnerable, our youth, a very strong case should be made for licensing and registration. Many e bikes and e scooters can reach speeds of 60kmph plus far exceeding legal limits. Originally regulations allowed for throttle assisted e bikes up to 200 W intended for Australia Post, but were exploited by food delivery and other commercial operators to use electric motorcycles disguised as e bikes. These vehicles often operate without pedalling, making the lines between e bikes and mopeds blurred and evading regulations. These e bikes are now used in large numbers by our youth. These e bikes and e scooters are effectively unregistrable electric mopeds, posing significant safety hazards and undermining the legitimate e - bike industry and a flagrant disregard for existing regulations.

Recommendation 1. All e bikes and e scooters riders should have a learners permit.
Recommendation 2 All e bikes and e scooters should be registered and have CTP insurance. Vienna in Austria is often cited as having clear rules and compliance for e scooters and e bikes. It is said compliance is high due to a mix of effective law enforcement as a result of clear and enforceable regulations. There are several places in the world, including China, Japan, and Finland where bike registration is mandatory and strictly enforced. In regions where

enforcement is inconsistent or registration for low powered e bikes and scooters is not required, the results are limited and illegal and unsafe use continues. Our regulations are not so clear and obviously not enforced such as age, use of helmets if 46% of admissions to hospitals were not wearing a helmet, roads with posted speed limits over 50kmph when a lot of suburban roads have a posted speed limit of 60kmph, and roads with a centre white line and non segregated bike lane. Make it simple like Vienna and how the local government would prefer, make pedestrians safe by, Recommendation 3. Make it illegal for ebikes and e scooters to be used on footpaths. Councils should ensure proper signage is installed around busy pedestrian areas to ensure there is compliance. Recommendation 4. All Councils increase dramatically, with access to state and Federal funding, the number of segregated bike lanes and pathways and bike only lanes in our cities and suburbs, providing the necessary infrastructure for this growing trend of environmentally friendly transport. Recommendation 5. Where available e bikes and e scooters should use these bikeways to travel on roads. Recommendation 6 It should be illegal for people to double up carrying an extra passenger Recommendation 7. The speed limit will be raised to 30kmph and enforced by Police, Transport inspectors and Councils for footpath use.