

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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20 June 2025

Mr Jim McDonald MP
Chair
Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland
State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee
Email: SDIWC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr McDonald,

Submission to e-mobility inquiry from Sandy Bolton MP for Noosa

Since 2022, we have been receiving complaints into our office regarding reckless e-bike and e-scooter and illegal e-motorbike usage. These have included severe concerns for their users, as well as the overall impacts on the safety of those using our pedestrian pathways, bike lanes and roads, and we have submitted potential solutions raised by residents, to increase community safety.

What started as the issue of e-bikes overtaking too fast on footpaths, has become hooning through our streets on e-motorbikes creating danger for all. We have multiple reports of residents being overtaken by helmetless teens on e-motorbikes at speeds excessive of the speed limits, and across Queensland, injuries and fatalities.

Here in Noosa earlier this year a teenage girl received potentially life-threatening injuries in an e-bicycle crash in the suburb of Peregrine Springs.¹

On the Sunshine Coast an e-bike rider was hospitalised with life-threatening injuries after a crash involving a car², and last year a twelve year-old girl in Maroochydore was critically injured riding a e-scooter on the footpath after impacting with a car³.

These reports are becoming more frequent, and we are seeing the data to back up these individual reports. The Jamieson Trauma Institute shows e-scooter injury presentations to thirty Queensland emergency departments increasing to 150 per month, up from 100 per month two years ago.⁴

¹ Teen girl in potentially life-threatening condition after e-bicycle crash, Noosa Today, 27 March 2025.

<https://noosatoday.com.au/news/27-03-2025/teen-girl-in-potentially-life-threatening-condition-after-e-bicycle-crash/>

² Man hospitalised with life-threatening injuries after crash involving e-bike and car, Sunshine Coast News, 5 April 2025, <https://www.sunshinecoastnews.com.au/2025/04/05/e-bike-rider-suffers-life-threatening-injuries-in-crash/>

³ 12yo e-scooter rider in critical condition after being hit by a car on footpath on the Sunshine Coast, 21 August 2025, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-08-21/schoolgirl-hit-by-car-while-riding-e-scooter/104250204>

⁴ E-scooter fatality in Townsville as severe head injuries become major hospital concern, ABC News 2 June 2025, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-02/private-e-scooter-injuries-two-thirds-of-hospital-presentations/105365722>



A report from April 2025 on injuries presenting to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, shows that for the twelve months to 31 December 2024 there were 176 paediatric e-scooter trauma presentations, with a median age of fourteen years. Falls accounted for seventy eight percent of crashes, while thirteen percent involved motor vehicles. Helmet non-compliance was documented in forty-two percent of the presentations, twelve percent involved doubling, and thirty-six percent exceeded the 25 km/hr speed limit⁵.

This issue seems to be replicated in other states, for example in NSW a St Vincient's Hospital doctor was reported saying, *"there's been a huge spike in the number of presentations relating to e-bike accidents, definitely over the last two years, and I'd say specifically over the last year,"* he said. *"They've just increased in the numbers and the availability across Sydney, especially in the eastern suburbs in the inner city – they're dotted around the place everywhere."*⁶

Just recently Queensland Police released data that four people have been killed in e-scooter accidents on roads this year⁷ (noting the data is limited to roads only).

We do not have comprehensive data on e-mobility injuries and deaths as the Australian Institute and Health and Welfare "Injury in Australia: Transport accidents"⁸ report does not separate out e-mobility as a category. The national road safety data is limited to public roads and does not capture footpaths, pedestrian bridges and other examples.

Over the time since 2022, we have endeavoured to reduce e-mobility issues by working with our community groups, first responders and residents and then advocate to government. In addition, we have raised awareness through the media, made speeches to Parliament including most recently with an adjournment address in April this year⁹, seeking a fresh approach to managing these devices safely. We have also sought pilots in our schools for e-tags as part of better education and identification which is a major constraint for our police.

The responses we have received from state government have been limited to highlighting the legitimate use of e-mobility devices as a viable transport option and the regulations that have been in place. This inquiry is thus a welcome opportunity to have a much-needed broader conversation on the impacts and management of these devices, which have also had a range of names which has created confusion in the community.

E-scooters, e-bikes, Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs), pedalecs, e-motorbikes, with many of those names contained in legislation and having quite specific regulatory definitions (and not always in alignment with common usage) – so the term used by the inquiry, e-mobility, is a good catch all name to refer to all forms of electric motor assisted mobility devices.

As has been pointed out, there are regulations in place to control e-mobility devices, such as 'pedalecs' which must cut out the electric motor at 25 kilometres per hour, irrespective of whether the pedals are being used, and must only provide initial assistance without pedalling up to a maximum speed of six kilometres per hour.

⁵ Breaking bones and the rules: An audit of paediatric e-scooter trauma in a regional Queensland hospital, Matthew Clanfield, Isabelle Sharman, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1326020025000263>

⁶ The big e-bike problem. They hurt, Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May 2025. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-big-e-bike-problem-they-hurt-20250521-p5m12l.html>

⁷ Four people have died in e-scooter crashes in Queensland so far this year, data reveals, ABC News, a6 June 2025, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-16/queensland-e-scooter-deaths-injuries-2025/105420490>

⁸ Injury in Australia: Transport accidents, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/injury/transport-accidents>

⁹ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/speeches/spk2025/Sandy_Bolton-Noosa-20250401-664213225848.pdf

As we have seen on our streets, there are ways to circumnavigate these laws, for example through the individual import of non-compliant bikes from overseas direct-to-consumer sales sites, by mis-specifying usage (eg “off-road” bikes used on-road) and modifications with the assistance of YouTube.

Enforcement is vital; however, it is difficult under the current constraints. Noosa Police undertook Operation Zappo Stoppie from 1 July to 4 November 2024, where they completed twenty-seven street checks identifying and warning thirty-one juveniles, issued eight infringements and impounded three bikes. However again, the constraints of identification of rider or device, police cannot easily pursue a device without danger to themselves, riders, pedestrians and other road users, and without registration have no way of identifying.

A multi-pronged approach has been identified, covering all aspect of managing devices, ranging from product design standards and infrastructure to compliance and enforcement:

1. **Product design standards:** Establish fair and appropriate design standards for e-mobility devices that cannot be circumvented. For example, if a device is limited to a certain speed for road use, it should not be possible to circumvent this requirement by nominating the device as “off-road” or YouTube hacks.
Potentially fitting some form of speed limiter or immobiliser if speed limits are exceeded, as called for by the Sunshine Coast Council in 2024. There have been claims that ‘locking’ a 750 watts plus bikes computer to a ‘250 watts mode’ allows the bike to fall under the electric bike definition.
2. **Usage regulation:** That laws set out appropriate usage requirements include speed limits and consistent minimum age requirements.

This could also include licensing of users and/or registration of devices to assist with education and enforcement. Identification of users is important to improve the ability of police to identify offenders, and for the purpose of issuing cautions, fines, etc.

Consideration of stronger laws with restrictions on sale of illegal e- bikes potentially with the licensing of retailers and rules on the sale of bikes.

Any scheme should consider the experience of those on the National Disability Insurance Scheme using mobility devices.
3. **Insurance:** Queensland’s CTP insurance covers motor vehicles on the road, but not necessarily accidents involving e-mobility devices (depending on who, what and where). This should be clarified and expanded to ensure that appropriate coverage is provided for e-mobility accidents.
4. **Compliance and enforcement:** Ensure that laws and regulations are enforceable by police as well QPWS rangers with additional resources to conduct regular enforcement exercises including in schools, beaches and National Parks.

In addition, it has been suggested police abilities should include:

- a. to have more caution options.
 - b. to charge parents for ‘not taking reasonable care’ in relation to supplying their child high powered motor vehicles.
 - c. Regarding retailers, to be able to charge with ‘not taking reasonable measures to prevent offending’.
5. **Education:** Once appropriate rules and laws are established, a comprehensive education campaign designed to inform both young people and their parents on the rules. A focus on schools could extend to police visiting and specialist training exercises for school age children similar to motor vehicle and bicycle training. Special Constables

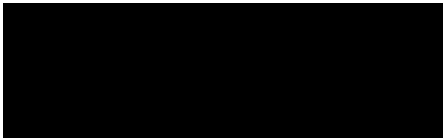
or other training resources could be utilised so as to not reduce other policing operations and resources.

- 6. Improve data collection:** Better collection of e-mobility accidents on and off-road, and collaborate with other States and national bodies to rapidly increase data quality and availability.
- 7. Dedicated bike paths:** Separation of pedestrians, bikes and motor vehicles to reduce dangerous interactions. This could be achieved by accelerating the Queensland government bike path strategy and increasing funding to local councils to build out their bike paths.
- 8. Import controls:** Considering the high number of e-bikes, e-scooters and e-motorbikes that do not comply with Australian Design Rules being imported from overseas and being purchased online, this needs to be raised at national level for Australia wide controls to be implemented.

With the efforts over the last decade for a modal shift to reduce congestion, and promotion of healthier alternatives to driving part of improving the health of Queenslanders, the combination of improved design rules, policies, education and infrastructure can lead to fundamental changes in behaviour and the much-needed safety for all.

Thank you for the work the committee is doing and if you have any queries regarding this submission, please contact my office on (07) 5319 3100 or at noosa@parliament.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



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Member for Noosa