

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Parliamentary Inquiry Committee E-Scooter and E-Bike Safety

Queensland Parliament

Cnr George & Alice Streets

Brisbane

QLD 4000

Dear Committee Members

Re: E-Scooter & E-Bike Inquiry Safety – Submission of N.J. Gibson

Please find attached the Media Statement of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads – The Honourable Brent Mickelberg MP - in regard to the Crisafilli Government's inquiry into the above matter.

Benefits of e-mobility devices

It certainly was heartening to hear the Minister on the ABC Breakfast Radio Show earlier this week speaking in such positive terms about the great benefit to Brisbane commuters of E-Scooters and E-Bikes.

Everyone should own one. They provide wonderful accessibility to Brisbane - in and around its CBD and Suburbs – on the road, footpaths, and extensive bikeways that have been put in place around our city – and for workers and casual riders alike.

Minister Mickelberg highlighted the importance of E-Scooters to our tourism industry – and projected forward in his ABC Breakfast Radio interview the benefits they bring as the Olympics approach.

As a 71-year old resident – I am rarely off my e-scooter – which allows me to carry items I could otherwise not be in a position to carry with me.

Having used an e-Scooter for over four years – I have seen first-hand the massive benefits they bring in commuting – as well as observe the few who act irresponsibly and ride unsafely and unlawfully – and in so doing give e-scooters and e-bikes a bad name when in my own experience e-Scooter and e-

bike riders – particularly those who own their own scooters and bikes – are considerate of other carriageway users and ride lawfully.

The 12 km per hour limit on the footpath – when used as a common carriage way with pedestrians - is fast enough and appropriate. In that context it is simply a matter of being courteous to others using the pathway – as I find often pedestrians are to me.

The 25 Km per hour limit on the road – although generally enough in the circumstances I encounter - riding on the dedicated bike lanes on the road as I sometimes do – is less than some peddle cyclists ride at. I have encountered some who ride their push bikes at speeds in excess of 45 Km per hour. I am often passed by these push bike riders on the street moving far faster than I am riding on my e-scooter.

Accordingly – I do not see it as an imperative - or necessary - to have the power of e-scooters and e-bikes unilaterally restricted and have imposed on them limitations as some in the community have called for. It is an over-reaction.

But there needs to be safety guidelines. They need to be improved to limit the rising injuries (and worse) that we are seeing.

In those regards – a requirement of full face helmets on e-scooters and e-bikes should be mandatory – with requisite and appropriate enforceable penalties imposed for non-compliance with any new laws introduced. Particularly when using the higher powered e-scooters and e-bikes (say, above 2000 watts).

Unfortunately – it is often the delinquent few who draw the wrong attention to the masses who ride their e-scooters and e-bikes responsibly and with due consideration of other road users.

I would be in favour of the implementation of high powered e-scooters – and e-bikes – requiring full face helmets and other appropriate safety gear to be used to promote better safety for their use – particularly on the roads where it is necessary – in often the interests of road safety – to be able to travel faster on an e-scooter or e-bike – and at similar speeds as the surrounding traffic.

As is apparent in the statistics set out in Minister Mickelberg's media release attached – there has been an unacceptable rise in the injuries – including fatalities – of e-scooter and e-bike riders – which includes PMD riders such as the electric tricycles popular with elderly immobile riders. These PMD tricycle users invariable use the footpath. I myself – in many situations – prefer to ride my e-scooter on the footpath – as it is often safer to do so than on the road. So I use both options depending on the traffic conditions.

These electric devices are indeed replacing other forms of transport as a means of getting to work, getting to school or university, or linking with public transport (buses, trains and ferries) – and I see them everywhere being used in this manner - but there is a need for regulation centred around e-scooter and e-bike user's to have enforceable consequences to rein-in the delinquent few who flout the law (such as riding without a helmet – an all too common occurrence).

The Police do good work in our community – but are variously let down in the court process by the courts failing to enforce outcomes that impose appropriate penalties for those who do not wish to follow the rules as the rest of us do.

[REDACTED]

Enforcement approaches

Accordingly – I believe safety risk can be mitigated by 1. The requirement for a full face helmet (80 % of the e-scooter and e-bike injuries are head and facial) to be worn for e-scooters and e-bikes of higher power (say, over 2000 watts) and 2. mandatory fines to be introduced for failure to obey the speed rules (and possible confiscation of devices for repeat offenders) – to promote more responsible approach to e-bike and e-scooter riding with enforceable consequences for bad conduct. This could be supplemented by instant fines by the Police (to ensure their good work is not wasted).

Importation Laws

I do not consider there is any need for changing the Importation laws surrounding e-Scooters and E-Bikes per se. Currently there are e-scooters available of in excess of 8,000 watts – and which can reach speeds of 100 km per hour and reach distances of 150 km before having to be charged. They are an expensive item. Somewhere in the vicinity of \$4.5K to \$8.5K for e-scooters – and up to \$14 K for e-bikes. Some e-bikes have carriers that allow parents to take their children on the e-bike on a Sunday afternoon – and require the extra power to transport the extra weight of Dad and two kids on the one e-bike – as I have seen occur. Also – the extra power is required to negotiate the hills in an about Brisbane. So restricting the power at the importation stage would create un-intended problems for e-scooter and e-bike riders – as well as e-tricycle riders (many of whom are seriously overweight).

Communication and education

This aspect could be dealt with by wide spread advice to the public as to the new laws to the extent they are introduced. Including public awareness of the penalties and enforceability of anyone tampering with the power settings on the maker's specifications. This tampering is popular with young riders – who often get around enjoying themselves as young kids do – and as many of us older once did at their age.

Stakeholder views

As I understood it from the ABC Breakfast Show interview with the Honourable Minister Mickleberg earlier this week – not only has the public been invited send submissions to the committee considering e-scooter and e-bike safety – but there will also be an opportunity for the public to attend a forum to speak publically.

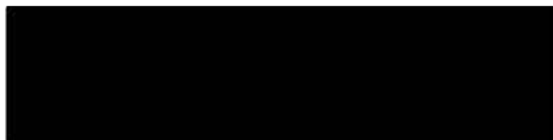
This is what is require to disabuse some sections of the public who are somewhat ignorant in the response and views to e-scooters and e-bike – particularly when ridden on a common footpath carriageway – with some even expressing that it's illegal to ride an e-scooter or e-bike on the footpath – when clearly that is not the case.

It is all a matter of the Crisafulli Government mantra – of fairness and balance for all stakeholders involved. In this case for road users and pedestrians.

Faithfully,

James Gibson

Brisbane



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Minister for Transport and Main Roads
The Honourable Brent Mickelberg

MEDIA STATEMENT: Crisafulli Government launches inquiry into E-scooter and E-bike safety

Crisafulli Government launches inquiry into E-scooter and E-bike safety

- Crisafulli Government announces a Parliamentary Inquiry into e-mobility safety in Queensland.
- Committee to consider safety improvements to address community concern with a rise in serious incidents.
- Community and stakeholders are encouraged to make submissions during a consultation process.

The Crisafulli Government will hold a Parliamentary Inquiry into the use of personal e-mobility devices (PMD), such as e-scooters and e-bikes, to improve safety and address community concerns across Queensland.

These devices are replacing vehicles and being used more and more as a means of getting to work, education or to link with public transport.

This increased use has raised issues around public safety and most concerningly, incidents of injuries and fatalities are on the rise.

There was a 112% rise from 2021 to 2024 in injuries to PMD riders, passengers, and pedestrians. Tragically, eight PMD users died last year.

Labor failed to meet community expectations with inadequate laws and ignored the availability and use of illegal e-scooter and e-bikes, some with high-powered motors and throttle-control.

The Crisafulli Government is committed to restoring safety on our roads and footpaths across all Queensland communities.

The Parliamentary Inquiry will be established by the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee and will focus on the:

- benefits of e-mobility devices;
- safety risks;
- current rules and how they compare with other jurisdictions;
- enforcement approaches;
- importation laws;
- communication and education; and
- stakeholder views.

Minister for Transport and Main Roads Brent Mickelberg said he was committed to improving safety for all road users and pedestrians.

"The increase in injuries and deaths we are seeing because of unsafe and unlawful riding cannot be ignored and I share the community's concern," Minister Mickelberg said.

"Labor failed to tackle dangerous and illegal e-scooter and e-bike use and left our police service woefully understaffed to enforce the regulations.

"The Crisafulli Government will hold a Parliamentary Inquiry to ensure we are doing everything we can to boost safety for both pedestrians and riders.

"We want to hear from community members, road use groups, disability advocates, health and trauma experts, academia, the E-mobility industry, and all levels of government.

"It's important we consider all research and opinions, to ensure a safe and reliable future for e-scooters and e-bikes, especially as we welcome visitors from all over the world for the 2032 Games."

ENDS

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