

Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

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Submission for Sunshine Coast Public Hearing, 24 July 2025 - Inquiry into E-Mobility Safety and Use in Queensland

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Introduction

The surge in e-bike and e-scooter usage across Queensland has introduced serious safety concerns on our roads, footpaths, and public spaces. While these devices offer benefits like reduced traffic and emissions, their rapid adoption has outstripped the development of necessary regulation, infrastructure, enforcement, and public education.

Key Concerns

1. Non-Compliant E-Bikes

Many e-bikes in on the Sunshine Coast and across Queensland exceed legal power and speed limits, effectively functioning as unregistered motorbikes. These should be reclassified accordingly—with mandatory licensing, registration, insurance, and age restrictions—to ensure consistent and enforceable standards.

2. Inconsistent Laws governing E-Bikes and E-Scooters

E-bikes and e-trikes are currently classified as bicycles, while e-scooters fall under the category of Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs), resulting in different legal requirements. When it comes to children, the laws governing the use of these motorised vehicles are inconsistent, with stricter rules applying to PMDs. To improve safety and simplify compliance, these regulations could be aligned by reclassifying compliant e-bikes as PMDs.

3. Breaches of Road Rules

Common violations include:

- Riding without Australian Standard-approved helmets
- Carrying passengers or oversized items
- Ignoring traffic signals or using mobile phones while riding
- Performing tricks or travelling at unsafe speeds in shared zones including roads, footpaths and parks

These behaviours increase risks for both riders and the general public.

4. Inadequate Infrastructure

Queensland's roads, footpaths, and public trails were not designed for the speed and volume of personal mobility devices. Riders often default to footpaths, putting pedestrians—particularly seniors, children, and people with disabilities—at risk.

5. Lack of Enforcement

Despite frequent and visible breaches of the law, there is minimal enforcement by local authorities. This undermines both safety and respect for the rules.

6. Safety Risks from Inappropriate Use

Children and teenagers frequently operate e-bikes and e-scooters without:

- Helmets or appropriate safety gear
- Knowledge of safe riding practices
- Adult supervision
- Legal awareness or training

Recommendations

In light of the above, I respectfully urge the Queensland Government to:

- **Reclassify non-compliant e-bikes as motorbikes**, with associated licensing, registration, and insurance requirements
- **Reclassify compliant electric bikes and trikes as Personal Mobility Devices** to improve safety and simplify compliance.
- **Advocate for bipartisan reform**, working with the Opposition to create clear, enforceable laws to support safe e-mobility use
- **Coordinate with all levels of government** to align enforcement, infrastructure planning, and education campaigns
- **Implement the following safety measures:**
 - Tightened and consistent regulation and visible law enforcement to ensure compliance for riders of e-scooters and e-bikes/e-trikes.
 - Mandatory age limits, adult supervision for minors, and basic rider training with certification.
 - Targeted public education campaigns to increase compliance and awareness including safety information and road rules for devices at the point of sale.
 - Infrastructure upgrades, including safer bike lanes and clearer signage.

Conclusion

E-mobility offers genuine benefits, but not at the cost of safety. A comprehensive approach is needed—one that includes reclassification of high-powered e-bikes, adult supervision mandates, rider education, enforcement, and infrastructure reform—to ensure that Queenslanders can share roads and footpaths safely.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.