

Transport and Other Legislation (Managing E-mobility Use and Protecting Our Communities) Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 1818

Submission By: Caloundra Off Road Cycling Association

Submission on Proposed Queensland E-Bike Legislation (2026)

Submitted by: CORCA MTB Club Committee

Website: corca.com.au

Aaron Jones - President CORCA



1. Introduction

This submission responds to the Queensland Government's proposed reforms to electric bicycle (e-bike) legislation, including potential requirements for minimum rider age, licensing, and revised speed limits.

E-bikes are an increasingly important transport mode in Queensland. They support affordable mobility, reduce congestion, improve public health, and contribute to emissions reduction goals. Any regulatory reform must carefully balance **safety outcomes with accessibility, practicality, and transport equity**, while also recognising the distinct role of e-bikes in both urban transport and recreational settings.

2. Current Legislative Framework

Under existing Queensland law:

- E-bikes are treated as bicycles and:
 - Do not require licensing, registration, or insurance
 - May be used on most roads and paths where bicycles are permitted
- Legal e-bikes must:
 - Be pedal-assist (not throttle-only)
 - Have a maximum motor output of 250 watts
 - Cut motor assistance at 25 km/h

This framework aligns with national and international standards and has enabled strong uptake of e-bikes as a safe and low-impact transport option.

3. Overview of Proposed Changes

Recent proposals and inquiry recommendations include:

- Introduction of a minimum rider age (e.g. 16 years)
- Requirement to hold a driver's licence (or learner permit)
- Reduced speed limits, including proposals such as 10 km/h on footpaths
- Increased penalties and enforcement powers

These proposals are intended to address rising safety concerns associated with e-mobility devices.

4. Key Concerns

4.1 Disproportionate Impact on Accessibility

Requiring a driver's licence would exclude:

- People with disabilities
- Individuals medically unable to drive
- Young people relying on e-bikes for school, work, or daily transport

Such measures risk reducing independence and mobility without directly addressing unsafe riding behaviours.

4.2 Misalignment with Risk Profile

Compliant e-bikes:

- Are lighter and slower than motor vehicles
- Pose significantly lower risk to others

Applying licensing frameworks designed for motor vehicles is not proportionate to the actual risk profile of e-bikes.

4.3 Risk of Modal Shift Back to Cars

Overly restrictive regulation may:

- Discourage active transport
 - Increase reliance on private vehicles
 - Undermine congestion and emissions reduction strategies
-

4.4 Enforcement Should Target Non-Compliant Devices

Many safety concerns relate to:

- High-powered, throttle-controlled devices
- Modified or non-compliant e-bikes

Existing laws already prohibit these devices. The priority should be:

- Targeted enforcement
 - Retail and import compliance
 - Rider education
-

4.5 Practicality of Proposed Speed Limits

A blanket 10 km/h limit on footpaths may be:

- Unrealistically slow for safe cycling
 - Difficult to enforce
 - Likely to push riders onto roads, increasing risk
-

4.6 Impact on Off-Road and Mountain Bike Use

The proposed reforms risk unintentionally affecting electric mountain bike (e-MTB) use in off-road environments.

E-MTBs are widely used on:

- Designated trail networks
- Forestry roads
- Private property
- Mountain biking parks and recreation areas

These environments differ significantly from urban settings, with:

- Limited interaction with pedestrians in many cases
 - Controlled riding conditions
 - Established trail etiquette and safety norms
-

a) Impact on Established MTB Communities

Organisations such as CORCA play a key role in:

- Trail construction and maintenance
- Rider education
- Promoting safe and responsible use

Local trail networks such as Sugarbag Road Mountain Bike Trails are:

- Purpose-built for off-road cycling
- Community-supported
- Managed with strong safety and environmental standards

E-MTB riders are already integrated into these systems, and broad regulatory changes risk disrupting well-managed recreational ecosystems.

b) Barriers to Participation in Healthy Recreation

E-MTBs enable participation for:

- Older riders
- Riders recovering from injury
- Individuals with lower fitness levels

Overregulation may discourage engagement in outdoor activity, negatively impacting public health outcomes.

c) Economic and Tourism Impacts

Mountain biking contributes to:

- Regional tourism
- Local businesses and employment
- Events and visitor spending

Key destinations such as:

- Hidden Vale Adventure Park
- Smithfield Mountain Bike Park
- Finch Hatten MTB Trails
- Sugarbag Rd MTB Trails
- Noosa Trail Network
- Parklands MTB Trails
- And many more

...demonstrate the growing importance of MTB tourism in Queensland. E-MTBs are a significant contributor to this sector.

d) Misalignment with Land Management Frameworks

Many trail networks:

- Operate under local government or private management
- Have tailored rules specific to the environment

A blanket state-wide approach may conflict with these established frameworks.

e) Enforcement Challenges

Enforcing licensing or speed restrictions in off-road environments would be:

- Impractical
 - Resource-intensive
 - Ineffective
-

5. Recommendations

5.1 Maintain Current No-Licence Framework

Retain the classification of compliant e-bikes as bicycles:

- No licensing
 - No registration
-

5.2 Target Illegal and Modified Devices

Focus enforcement on:

- High-powered e-motorbikes
 - Modified e-bikes
 - Non-compliant retailers and imports
-

5.3 Consider Tiered Regulation

If reform is required:

- Differentiate between compliant e-bikes and higher-powered devices
 - Apply stricter rules only where risk is demonstrably higher
-

5.4 Invest in Infrastructure

Improve safety through:

- Dedicated cycling infrastructure
 - Separation from pedestrians and vehicles
 - Better urban design
-

5.5 Expand Education and Awareness

Support:

- Safe riding campaigns
 - Helmet use
 - Shared path etiquette
-

5.6 Carefully Consider Age Restrictions

Avoid blanket age limits that restrict youth mobility without clear safety benefits.

5.7 Introduce a Clear Off-Road Exemption

- Compliant e-bikes used off-road should be **exempt from additional licensing and restrictions**, particularly when:
 - Used on designated trail networks such as Sugarbag Road Mountain Bike Trails
 - Operated within organised club environments such as CORCA
 - Used on private or controlled-access land
 - Regulation should focus on **public road and shared path environments**, where risk to others is greater.
-

6. Conclusion

While safety concerns are valid, the proposed reforms risk **overregulating a low-risk, high-benefit transport and recreational mode**.

A balanced approach should:

- Preserve accessibility and equity
- Target unsafe and illegal behaviour
- Support active transport and recreation
- Recognise the distinction between urban and off-road use

Electric bikes—particularly within established trail networks and organised club environments such as CORCA and Sugarbag Road Mountain Bike Trails—present a **different and well-managed risk profile** and should not be regulated in the same manner as devices operating in public traffic environments.

E-bikes are a key part of Queensland's transport and recreation future. Regulation should enable safe participation—not unnecessarily restrict it.
