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

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

Submitted by:
Ivan Brinklow
Chairman – Elympic Sports Federation (ESF)
Director – Electronic Sports Entertainment Pty Ltd (ESE)
Board Member – Philippines Esports World Federation (EWSF)

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Inquiry:

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Ivan Brinklow

Chairman – Elympic Sports Federation (ESF)

Director – Electronic Sports Entertainment Pty Ltd (ESE)

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Organisation:

Electronic Sports Entertainment Pty Ltd (ESE)

Elympic Sports Federation (ESF)

Email: [redacted]

Phone [redacted]

Executive Summary

This submission supports the intent of the Transport and Other Legislation (Managing E-mobility Use and Protecting Our Communities) Amendment Bill 2026 to improve public safety, while recommending a more targeted, structured, and education-led approach to reform.

The key position of this submission is that e-mobility should not be treated as a single risk category. The primary issues identified are:

- The presence of non-compliant, high-powered devices
- Behavioural risks arising from lack of structured rider education
- The aggregation of data across fundamentally different user groups
- Elevated risk environments associated with shared/hire device usage

This submission identifies that current policy risks over-generalising e-mobility and applying broad restrictions that may penalise compliant users, small businesses, and legitimate transport use.

Key recommendations include:

- Targeting non-compliant and high-risk devices specifically
- Separating regulatory approaches for shared/hire systems and private ownership
- Embedding education as the primary safety mechanism
- Leveraging existing infrastructure to improve safety outcomes
- Recognising safe charging as an infrastructure responsibility
- Supporting structured participation models such as the NextGen Ride & Play framework

The central principle underpinning this submission is:
Public policy should not seek to eliminate risk, but to ensure it is experienced in environments that build capability rather than cause harm.

A targeted, education-led, and infrastructure-supported approach will deliver stronger safety outcomes, greater public confidence, and long-term sustainability for both communities and industry.

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1. Opening Statement

The objective of public policy should not be to remove risk from young people's lives, but to ensure that risk is experienced in environments that build capability rather than cause harm.

E-mobility represents a rapidly growing and valuable component of modern transport systems, youth participation, and urban mobility. The challenge facing government is not whether to restrict its use, but how to ensure it develops safely, responsibly, and in alignment with community expectations.

This submission supports the intent of the Bill to improve public safety, while recommending a more targeted and structured approach that distinguishes between device types, user behaviour, and risk environments.

2. Support for Reform – With Precision

There is clear evidence that safety concerns must be addressed. However, it is critical that reform is precise rather than broad.

E-mobility is not a single category. It includes:

- **Non-compliant, high-powered devices** (functionally equivalent to unregistered motorbikes)
- **Compliant e-bikes and e-scooters**, which provide legitimate transport, accessibility, and economic value

Policy must **differentiate between these categories**.

Targeting all e-mobility devices equally risks undermining:

- Responsible users
- Small businesses and retailers
- Alternative transport adoption
- Broader economic and environmental benefits

3. The Core Issue: Behaviour, Not Technology

The primary safety issue is not the existence of e-mobility devices, but how they are used.

The factors most commonly associated with incidents, antisocial behaviour, lack of rider education, poor shared-space awareness, and the use of non-compliant or modified devices, are not isolated issues. They are symptoms of a broader systemic gap: **the absence of structured rider development pathways.**

In effect, participation has scaled faster than education, guidance, and cultural norms.

This creates an environment where:

- Riders enter shared spaces without understanding spatial dynamics or risk
- Unsafe behaviour becomes socially normalised through visibility and repetition
- Responsibility is reactive rather than learned

From a policy perspective, this is not simply a compliance issue, it is a **developmental failure**.

Removing or restricting compliant devices does not resolve this underlying gap. It displaces behaviour without improving capability.

The solution is not to eliminate participation, but to **structure it**, ensuring that riders develop the skills, awareness, and responsibility required to operate safely within public environments.

4. Risk Cannot Be Eliminated – Only Managed

Australia has long accepted that participation in physical environments carries inherent risk.

Despite decades of investment in:

- Water safety education
- Public infrastructure
- Organisations such as Surf Life Saving

There were **357 drowning deaths in 2024/25**, representing a significant increase on long-term averages.

Similarly:

- Cycling has resulted in approximately **30–40 fatalities annually**
- These figures persist despite regulation, infrastructure, and education

The policy lesson is clear:

Risk is not unique to e-mobility.
Risk cannot be eliminated.
It can only be reduced, structured, and managed.

5. Data Integrity and Risk Segmentation

A critical limitation within the current analysis is the **aggregation of incident data across all e-mobility users**, without clear segmentation between:

- Privately owned devices
- Shared/hire devices
- Rider experience levels

These groups operate under **fundamentally different risk conditions**.

This distinction is critical to ensuring that policy intervention is proportionate, evidence-based, and directed at the highest-risk environments.

Shared/Hire Device Risk Profile

Shared e-mobility devices are frequently associated with:

- Inexperienced riders
- Tourists or casual users unfamiliar with local rules
- Night-time usage
- Higher likelihood of alcohol involvement
- High-density urban environments

Private Ownership Profile

By contrast, privately owned device users:

- Develop skill and familiarity over time
- Exhibit more consistent behaviour patterns
- Have greater personal accountability

Policy Implication
Without isolating shared-device data, the current evidence base risks:

- Overstating the systemic risk of e-mobility
- Misidentifying the primary source of incidents
- Applying broad restrictions that penalise compliant users

Effective policy requires precise problem definition.

Without segmentation, regulation risks addressing symptoms rather than causes.

6. Targeted Regulation of Shared E-Mobility

Given the elevated risk profile of shared devices, consideration should be given to **targeted regulatory intervention**, including:

- Mandatory rider education prior to use
- Time-of-day restrictions (particularly late-night operation)
- Geofencing and automated speed controls
- Stricter provider accountability
- Enhanced enforcement of intoxicated riding

If evidence confirms disproportionate incident rates within shared-device usage, a **temporary suspension or staged restriction of hire schemes** should be considered until appropriate safety frameworks are established.

7. Infrastructure as Part of the Solution

Australia has made significant long-term investments in cycling infrastructure across metropolitan and regional areas, including dedicated bike lanes, shared pathways, and active transport corridors.

However, utilisation of this infrastructure remains inconsistent across jurisdictions, with many corridors operating below intended capacity, particularly outside peak commuter periods.

This presents an immediate and practical opportunity.

Rather than introducing broad restrictions, policy should prioritise:

- Increased utilisation of existing cycling infrastructure
- Integration of e-mobility into active transport planning
- Clear delineation between pedestrian and rider environments
- Improved connectivity between infrastructure segments

Underutilised bike lane networks can be leveraged to:

- Reduce pedestrian conflict
- Improve rider safety
- Provide a controlled environment for skill development

From a planning perspective, this is not a new investment challenge, but an **optimisation opportunity**, aligning existing infrastructure with emerging modes of transport.

8. Safe Charging Infrastructure as a Critical Safety Layer

The issue of safe charging represents a growing and legitimate concern within the e-mobility ecosystem, particularly in relation to lithium-ion battery safety, improper charging practices, and the use of non-compliant equipment.

As adoption increases, unmanaged charging environments introduce risks including battery overheating, use of incompatible systems, and charging within unsuitable residential or high-density environments. These risks are not inherent to e-mobility itself but arise from the absence of structured charging infrastructure and clear safety standards.

Safe charging should therefore be treated not as an individual compliance issue, but as an **infrastructure and system design challenge**, similar to how fuel systems are standardised and regulated within traditional transport environments.

Electronic Sports Entertainment (ESE) has developed a safe charging concept framework focused on controlled environments, system compatibility, and user behaviour alignment. While proprietary in detail, its purpose is to shift risk from informal, unmanaged settings into structured, compliant infrastructure.

Policy Opportunity

The introduction of safe charging infrastructure presents an opportunity to:

- Reduce fire and safety incidents at their source
- Support responsible adoption of e-mobility
- Provide clarity for consumers, retailers, and insurers
- Align safety with infrastructure rather than enforcement alone

Recommendation

It is recommended that safe charging be incorporated into policy as:

- A recognised infrastructure requirement, not solely a user responsibility
- A standardised framework aligned with device compliance
- A complementary measure to rider education and device regulation

9. Education as the Primary Safety Mechanism

Education must be positioned as the foundation of safety, not a secondary measure.

Education is not expected to eliminate all injuries. Its role is to reduce incidents, improve decision-making, and build long-term behavioural capability.

Evidence across multiple public safety domains demonstrates that **education-led models consistently outperform enforcement-first approaches** in achieving sustained behavioural change. Where individuals understand risk, develop practical skills, and internalise responsibility, compliance becomes voluntary rather than imposed.

In the context of e-mobility, this includes:

- Understanding braking distance, speed, and spatial awareness

- Navigating shared environments safely
- Recognising risk in real-time situations
- Developing consistent and responsible riding habits

Without structured education, participation becomes reactive and inconsistent. With education, participation becomes skilled, predictable, and safer.

An education-led approach therefore represents the most effective long-term mechanism for reducing incidents while maintaining participation and public confidence.

10. A Structured Alternative: NextGen Ride & Play Framework

The Elympic Sports Federation (ESF), through Electronic Sports Entertainment (ESE), has developed the **NextGen Ride & Play Program**, a structured public safety framework designed to address the underlying causes of e-mobility risk.

This framework is built on three core principles:

- **Education before enforcement**
- **Participation before restriction**
- **Culture before compliance**

It delivers a practical, scalable model through three integrated components:

1. Education Layer (Schools & Youth Programs)

- Age-appropriate rider safety education
- Kinetic literacy (balance, braking, spatial awareness)
- Shared-space etiquette and hazard perception

2. Community Activation Layer

- Police-led safe riding initiatives
- Pop-up controlled riding environments ("skills zones")
- Community engagement events linking riders, parents, and authorities

3. Cultural Reinforcement Layer

- Role modelling through ambassadors and peer influence
- Social normalisation of safe riding behaviour
- Integration with digital platforms and youth engagement channels

Indicative Outcome Metrics

A structured rollout of this model is designed to achieve measurable outcomes, including:

- Reduction in youth-related e-mobility injury presentations
- Increased voluntary helmet and safety gear adoption
- Improved rider compliance without increased enforcement pressure
- Increased parental confidence in participation pathways
- Reduced conflict between riders and pedestrians

Policy Alignment

This framework directly supports government objectives by:

- Reducing long-term enforcement burden
- Improving safety outcomes through prevention
- Maintaining participation, economic activity, and public confidence

It provides a clear pathway for governments to **lead without over-restricting**, and to **protect without suppressing participation**.

11. Economic and Social Considerations

E-mobility is not only a transport issue, but also part of a broader economic and social ecosystem.

The sector supports:

- Retail businesses and supply chains
- Service and maintenance industries
- Emerging micro-mobility markets
- Tourism and urban mobility services

At the same time, it provides:

- Affordable transport alternatives
- Increased accessibility for non-drivers
- Reduced reliance on private vehicles
- Opportunities for youth independence and participation

Policy Risk

Broad or undifferentiated restrictions risk:

- Penalising compliant users and responsible riders
- Disrupting small businesses and local retailers
- Reducing adoption of alternative transport solutions
- Limiting accessibility for lower-income and younger populations

Balanced Approach

A targeted and structured policy approach ensures that:

- High-risk behaviours and devices are addressed directly
- Legitimate participation is preserved and supported
- Economic activity continues to grow responsibly
- Public safety outcomes improve without unintended economic consequences

12. Conclusion

E-mobility is not a problem to be eliminated. It is a rapidly emerging system that must be structured.

The evidence presented through this inquiry demonstrates that safety concerns are real. However, the underlying drivers of risk—non-compliant devices, unstructured participation, and gaps in rider education require targeted and proportionate responses.

Broad restrictions applied across all e-mobility categories risk misidentifying the problem, penalising responsible users, and undermining the economic and social benefits that compliant devices provide.

A more effective approach is clear:

- Remove non-compliant, high-risk devices from public environments
- Differentiate between user groups and risk profiles
- Address high-risk environments, particularly within shared-device ecosystems
- Leverage existing infrastructure to improve safety outcomes
- Embed education as the foundation of long-term behavioural change

At its core, this is not simply a transport issue. It is a question of how emerging forms of participation are guided, shaped, and integrated into society.

Australia has consistently demonstrated that risk within participation, whether in water safety, cycling, or other public environments, is not eliminated through restriction alone, but managed through education, infrastructure, and cultural alignment.

E-mobility should be approached in the same way.

The objective of policy should not be to remove risk from young people's lives, but to ensure that risk is experienced in environments that build capability rather than cause harm.

A balanced, education-led, and targeted framework will deliver stronger safety outcomes, greater public confidence, and a sustainable pathway for both communities and industry.