



Speech By  
**Sandy Bolton**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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**TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION (MANAGING E-MOBILITY USE AND PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (12.03 pm): As we have seen, Queensland has experienced exponential e-mobility growth. We now have 230,000 legal e-bikes and 70,000 legal e-scooters. This is a result of high fuel and living costs, limited public transport, promotion of and need for sustainable active transportation and recreation alternatives to reduce congestion, address parking shortages and improve health for Queenslanders of diverse ages, abilities and locations. I have advocated the benefits over the years; however, I have repeatedly—I think since 2022—called on successive governments to address illegal e-motorbikes and the dangerous behaviours which have become a daily occurrence in not only my own community but also many communities across Queensland. Everyone who shares our roads and pathways needs greater safety, and these illegal e-motorbikes and modified devices have been a huge issue—not those who are riding the legal ones. We sought restrictions on modifications and the types of devices being imported and sold. We sought funding for an e-tag identification system, school-based education programs, which have been very successful in New South Wales, and more resourcing for police to enforce existing laws.

Not enough was done, nor quickly enough, and in Queensland last year 12 lives were tragically lost and more than 6,300 people went to hospital as a result of accidents. During that time in my own electorate, our Noosa Coolumbah police did a sterling job through Operation Zappo Stoppie and were awarded for their outstanding work on e-bike safety and enforcement. They were honoured for addressing the illegal and dangerous use of devices. In addition, they work with our high schools and students and alongside fabulous organisations like the Tewantin-Noosa Lions Club, TMR and QAS to host community safety days and to educate parents. I want to thank them very much.

In May last year the government announced an inquiry. The committee tabled its report 10 months later and made 28 recommendations—a number were welcomed; others were not—which we took on behalf of our community to the minister. They regarded needed protections for those using legal e-bikes safely; options for those unable to get a driver's licence; changes to the 10-kilometre-per-hour pathway speed limit; clarity on the device clarification system; and a commitment to extra QPS resources. The legislation introduced in March did not sufficiently address these. The result was, overall, nearly 5,000 public submissions, with Bicycle Queensland saying 95 per cent of those submissions were telling government they had gotten a lot wrong.

Where did we end up? In addition to the inquiry recommendations, the bill permits legal devices to be ridden on roads with speed limits up to 60 kilometres per hour, giving greater choice for riders—

**Mr McDonald:** That is for scooters.

**Ms BOLTON:** For scooters; I take that interjection. Thank you, member. The bill also restricts the sale of e-mobility devices to those over 16; mandates certification and labelling for compliant e-bikes—although this still needs some work; and introduces offences for the dangerous practice of rented devices being dumped rather than safely parked. There is also an expansion of existing laws around

hooning, evading police and drink riding to include e-mobility devices. This is all good. However, there were still some issues, with the committee, stakeholders and, finally, the government, through amendments, acknowledging overreach and unintended consequences. These included: licensing requirements and age restrictions that would negatively impact many for whom legal devices provide independence and transport alternatives; families and young people under 16 who ride to school, work and sport; others with medical conditions or disabilities; older Queenslanders; and those with mobility or financial barriers who cannot obtain or afford a licence and/or a motor vehicle.

To address this, there were 122 amendments—although that is being contested—circulated just before we started debate on the bill, but these have not gone through any appropriate scrutiny process. Some are improvements which I have been able to glean quite quickly, such as an exemption framework for those with medical conditions or disability; however, others fall short, such as the exemption for 12- to 17-year-olds to continue to ride with parental supervision. On the surface, this is partially welcomed, but what about younger siblings or others getting to school? Most submissions oppose licensing requirements entirely. This includes Sunshine Coast bicycle user groups, bike hire businesses and Endeavour Foundation, with Bicycle Queensland stating there is no supporting evidence.

The 10-kilometre-per-hour speed limit proposed for footpaths and shared paths was also highly controversial, with submitters explaining that bikes become unstable at that speed and the limit would be impossible to safely adhere to as well as being against the department's own guidelines, with local departments decrying the lack of research. This has changed in the amendments to 12 kilometres an hour around pedestrians—a compromise. However, as we have heard during this debate, there still seems to be a lot of confusion around some of this.

The bill also required that devices meet the EN15194 standard, which would have rendered tens of thousands of legal e-bikes instantly unusable. The equivalent safety standards will now apply from when the devices were manufactured. I think there was a sigh of relief from many families. However, again, the angst this caused could have been avoided if proper consultation had been undertaken during drafting.

Clarity is still needed on many aspects. This includes for tourist operators in my electorate of Noosa who operate family-friendly trail rides. They continue to face uncertainty, as do all with proposed carve-outs, exemptions and guidelines that still need to be developed. Given the amendment by the member for Aspley to send this bill back to the committee failed, the review of this legislation in 12 months must include stakeholder feedback and be made public so that what needs to be remedied is identified.

The reality is this e-mobility legislation, while having some positive changes, has missed the mark for many everyday Queenslanders who are doing the right thing. Hopefully we will see a reduction in illegal devices and dangerous behaviours that have caused deaths and injuries and have terrorised our communities. However, without increased resourcing for the QPS and increased funding for active transport networks, trauma will still be experienced and the battle between decades of effort to transition away from cars to reduce parking rage and congestion and ensuring safer pathways and biking will continue.

I want to thank the chair, committee and secretariat for the enormity of work undertaken and I thank those who joined public hearings and community forums en masse. To Noosa residents who continue to share their experiences to guide our advocacy and those who safely and actively use, with respect, our roads, parks, trails, pathways and footpaths, thank you. For those doing the wrong thing, think about the wellbeing of others if you will not do it for yourself because you are the problem, not the majority who ride legally, safely and respectfully and who are now paying the price for your behaviours.