

**INQUIRY INTO USE OF E-SCOOTERS, E-BIKES AND
RELATED MOBILITY OPTIONS**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

July 10, 2024

NB. I am making this individual submission with the understanding that my name and address will not be published.

To Whom it may Concern

I wish to make a submission to the **'Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts inquiry into and report on the use of e-scooters, e-bikes (including shared schemes), and related mobility options'**.

The questionnaire seeking community feedback appears to be directed to users of these vehicles rather than community members, hence I am making an individual submission.

Overall, I support the use of e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility devices and acknowledge numerous environmental advantages to extending their use. I also welcome a formal inquiry as described in the Terms of Reference.

Despite my overall support, I wish to raise concerns which I believe the Inquiry needs to consider. These concerns are:

1. **Safety of pedestrians when these vehicles are used illegally in 'pedestrian only' areas or when they are ridden in shared spaces in an unsafe manner.** My concerns come from numerous 'near miss' incidents with e-bike and e-scooter riders in pedestrian areas (including a recent incident at Manly Corso when I had three young children with me). Pedestrians, especially frail elderly people or young children, are at additional risk of serious injury. There needs to be a safer separation of pedestrians and these vehicles – including clear signage and enforceable laws with meaningful penalties.
2. **Need for more bike paths - with better planning and integration of bike paths and services (eg shopping centres, sporting facilities).** Without this infrastructure the pedestrian safety issues above (1) will remain. Some local cycle paths appear to have been built where it was convenient to build rather than where they are most needed. Planning and funding of better infrastructure needs better coordination between levels of government.
3. Currently children under 16yrs are allowed to ride on footpaths in NSW. This appears reasonable when they are riding a standard bicycle. The level of risk to pedestrians from shared use of a footpath appears much greater when the young person is riding a large e-bike carrying 1-2 extra passengers. The weight and speed of these vehicles, especially if they have been illegally modified is comparable to a small motorbike. They are not suitable for footpaths shared with pedestrians regardless of the age of the rider. Again, better planned bike paths needed.

4. **Compulsory Third Party Insurance for e-bikes etc.** This comment comes from the experience of a close family member (a cyclist) who was seriously injured last year by a teenager riding a modified e-scooter. My family member sustained numerous injuries, including broken bones in his hand which required three operations. He was unable to work for several months, causing financial stress to his young family. The rider of the e-scooter was 15, uninsured and had fled the scene of the accident. There has been no compensation for medical expenses and lost employment. This is a real situation, not a 'hypothetical'. Without clear policies about legal responsibility and insurance, similar incidents may affect others.
5. **Inquiry to consider safety issues surrounding 'meal delivery riders' eg Uber Eats.** Some of the most unsafe examples of e-bike misuse - endangering pedestrians, other road users and the delivery riders themselves. Some riders do not appear aware of local traffic rules, look at digital devices while riding, ride quickly in crowded pedestrian areas or ride in inappropriate areas (eg Light Rail tracks in CBD). I was informed that local council (Northern Beaches Council) does not extend its rider education programme to delivery riders as there are apparently 'too many companies to deal with'. This suggests a need for better co-ordination between levels of government and additional inquiries into an industry which may pressure delivery riders into unsafe behaviour to meet deadlines.
6. **Dumping of hired e-bikes and e-scooters** after use. A common problem near transport hubs (eg Wynyard, large bus stops in Manly). My main concern is that the 'dumped' e-bikes create obstructions on crowded footpaths at bus stops and may be a trip hazard for people with vision loss. Multilevel government liaising with the hire industry for safer storage and drop-off points.