

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 17 July 2024

Partially
Confidential

To the Honourable Members of Parliament,

I am writing to express my concern about the current legal framework that imposes heavy fines on electric skateboard and e-scooter riders.

I consider myself a good citizen. In my 40s, I hold a well-paying white-collar job, have never had any traffic violations since I was 17, have never been in trouble with the law, and have a great credit score. In short, I am as responsible a citizen as can be. However, I am made to feel like a criminal when I pursue my passion for skating on a Onewheel electric skateboard.

The current penalty for riding this 12 kg device at any speed up to its maximum of 23 kph is the same as the penalty for driving an unregistered 2000 kg SUV within the speed limit of 110 kph on a freeway. This comparison highlights a significant disparity.

I would like my submission to be based purely on physics and logical reasoning. In physics, the potential for damage in a collision can be understood by considering the kinetic energy of the objects involved. Kinetic energy is proportional to both the mass of the object and the square of its velocity.

A 2000 kg vehicle traveling at 110 kph has significantly more kinetic energy than a 12 kg vehicle traveling at 23 kph. Specifically, a 2000 kg vehicle traveling at 110 kph has a kinetic energy of approximately 933,062 joules, while a 12 kg vehicle traveling at 23 kph has a kinetic energy of only about 245 joules. This means the 2000 kg SUV would potentially cause 3808 times the damage compared to a 12 kg skateboard in the event of a collision.

The concept of reasonable force in law enforcement is pertinent here. Hefty fines and demerit points are used as a deterrent for unregistered and uninsured drivers of vehicles up to 2 tonnes driving up to 110kph. The same punitive measures are being applied to riders of 12 kg skateboards travelling as slow as 3kph, even though the damage a skateboard can cause is 4000 times less. This is a case of unreasonable force being used by law enforcement. I acknowledge that there are many people out there who might operate personal electric vehicles (PEVS) irresponsibly and that a deterrent of bad behaviour is needed, but the disproportionate nature of the penalties clearly needs a review. The principle of proportionality in law enforcement demands that penalties reflect the severity of the offence and the associated risks. Equal fines for electric skateboarders and uninsured SUV drivers violate this principle, leading to unreasonable and unjust outcomes. This approach not only undermines public trust in our legal system but also fails to address the real risks involved.

Furthermore, I would like to point out that PEVs are legal to ride in some states in Australia. This discrepancy raises questions. The devices being ridden are the same, and if deemed safe in one state, they should be safe in another. Assuming the average person in Queensland is no different from the average person in NSW, it remains that the problem lies with the state laws, not the devices or the people. Yet, it is the people who are being punished.

I urge the Parliament to reconsider the current regulations and legalise PEVs, or at least adjust the fines to reflect the true risk and impact associated with different modes of transport.

Thank you for considering this submission. Dated 17 July 2024