

**Submission
No 96**

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

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As a mature member of the community at 63 years old who has been riding an electric unicycle for approximately 5 years, I would like to support the legalisation of any personal mobility device with the following evidence and opinion.

Firstly it is inevitable that localised transport enhancements that render the car less desirable is the way of the future and supported with the Government Transport Sustainability Plan initiative.

My electric unicycle (EUC) weighs 13 kg, my car is 200 times as heavy, takes up 200 times the space, and has no parking issues when I get to the station by way of example. My EUC is no larger than a small wheeled carry on suitcase used in overhead stowages on aircraft. Any fire risk from the lithium batteries on public transport, trains, busses, cars or taxis can be easily mitigated by passengers moving away or quickly stopping the vehicle, obviously not possible in an aircraft, and remember that they are mostly dangerous only when being charged. Lithium ion batteries are remarkably safe as demonstrated by the few random fire events that occur outside the charging arena, and these batteries can be found in a huge number of devices. Proof of this statement is supported with the following question to you, "when have you heard of a tradesman's battery operated hand tools going up in smoke"? , it simply rarely or never happens.

Now to the safety of the devices when being legally given access to the road. This is an opportunity for government to leverage off this consideration for legalising personal mobility devices to make it a legal requirement to carry and produce some form of identification. This identification is mandated to be produced by anyone with authority or another member of the public who has due cause, such as involved in an accident with the said personal mobility device. Anyone not producing a licence relinquishes any entitlement to their image being publicly circulated to identify them. Of themselves these devices are safe, agile, and reliable with solid state electronics, their reliability mandated by the very nature of what they do and how they function. The act of safe riding is no different from any other mode of transport, speed, manoeuvring or interacting with other traffic users. I mention traffic meaning the EUCs and others will have to be given the same access and entitlement along with the same obligations as bicycle riders. My EUC is no wider than my hips, which means I can mostly go around parked cars in the parking lanes or otherwise have probably half the lateral footprint of a pushbike, and probably narrower than scooters. My device is speed limited to 24 km/hr, others have the ability to go faster but few riders travel at speeds anywhere near the maximum when interacting with other riders or traffic. Cyclists would overtake EUC riders consistently and often.

It would be remiss of me to not admit to riding my EUC from time to time on the footpath. My speed is normally about 10 km/hr no different from an electric wheelchair, a speed slow enough to manage my safety with the driveway threat, often being overtaken by school kids on my local street commuting to school. Age should not be discriminatory, if it's ok for primary aged children it should also be allowed for seniors such as myself. I give right of way to every pedestrian and believe it could be legislated such that access to footpaths which are not dual purpose is allowed with the proviso of a right of way rule for pedestrians. If this is too legally onerous I would expect EUC and other personal mobility device riders should have equal access to any privilege a cyclist has.

In closing I would like to advocate the legalisation of EUCs and any other personal mobility device that has a significantly smaller carbon footprint than a car or motorcycle. It is the way

of the future, is inevitable and the non-legalisation of them is only slowing what is happening around us, I see bicycles being ridden responsibly by riders without pedalling, electric scooters are everywhere and the sheer convenience of a mode of transport that physically can be carried by the same person it transports, stored and charged in a safe manner even whilst at work, far outweighs the inevitable exceptions brought on by their uptake.

Based on the government initiatives of things like the Transport Sustainability Plan I see few reasons that EUCs and other portable mobility devices should not be made legal in NSW, and my opinion is that of someone with an extensive career in a safety related industry as 28 years a Qantas Captain prior to my retirement.

I hope for a positive outcome in the near future and thank you for considering my submission.