

**Submission
No 117**

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

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Submission to the Parliament of NSW Inquiry into the Use of E-bikes and E-scooters

Comments in this submission are based on my observations on the roads of the Northern Beaches area of Sydney.

I walk daily on the Pittwater Road footpath in Bayview between Bayview Reserve and Pittwater High School. I need oxygen to walk and use an oxygen concentrator on a trolley to provide it. I have often felt in danger for my well-being when I am passed at speed by an electric vehicle within centimetres of me. I know that children under 16 years of age are permitted to ride E-bikes on the footpath, but just as many adults as children pass me on my walks. Many riders travel at speeds that would exceed 25 km per hour and less than half of the riders are wearing helmets.

The silent approach of E-bikes is a significant danger to me, and the danger is increased by the refusal of riders to ring their bell to warn of their approach. Although a small number of riders show some remorse for the near collisions, the vast majority do not.

I have also observed significant numbers of E-bikes on the roads travelling at the same speed as the traffic which would be between 50 – 60 kmh. Extraordinarily, many of these riders do not wear helmets, and the bikes often carry a passenger and sometimes two. These riders travel on public roads without any age restrictions or requirements to know the road rules. Although the engine capacity may differ, there appears to be no practical difference between E-bikes ridden in this way and a licensed rider of a registered motor scooter or bike.

Large numbers of students travel to and from our local high school on E-bikes. Many of them are not wearing helmets and they travel at speed on footpaths and roads. Schools should have some responsibility for ensuring the safety of their students.

The current rules for helmets, speed and ringing a bell are rarely followed and enforcement of these rules is infrequent. Fines that are not large enough to act as a deterrent are pointless. Riders are dying and being seriously injured in collisions with

cars, and unless the Government recognises the seriousness of the issue and acts to control E-bikes and Scooters, the number of deaths will only increase.

There are frequent reports of accidents involving E-bikes and E-scooters but no readily available data on serious injuries and deaths. Central collection of this data is necessary to inform the decision-making of the Government.

Although I have not witnessed this myself, I understand that E-bikes are used by adults to avoid alcohol limits while driving. This was investigated in a study by St Vincents Hospital in Sydney released in February 2024. The results of the study revealed the alarming road trauma trend involving E-bikes which highlights the misuse of E-bikes when they have so few restrictions on their use and no requirement to be licensed.

Recommendations

1. Legislate more restrictive rules for E-bikes.
2. Introduce age restrictions for E-bikes that are the same as E-scooters i.e. riders must be at least 16 years of age.
3. Register E-bikes that travel on public roads and require that they have a number plate.
4. Introduce Road Rule Knowledge Tests for E-Bike riders who use public roads.
5. Give right of way to pedestrians on footpaths and shared paths.
6. E-bikes must have a bell that is used to warn pedestrians of the approach of a rider.
7. Use council rangers and Police to enforce the rules.
8. Increase fines to act as a real deterrent.
9. Introduce education programs in schools for students and parents on the rules, risks and responsibilities of riding E-bikes.
10. Collect data on the use and misuse of E-bikes and E-scooters and the number of accidents, serious injuries and deaths involving them. This data should be available online.ccc