

**Submission
No 126**

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

Name: Ms Christina Ritchie

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Submission to Inquiry into E-bikes, E-scooters and related mobility options.

I wish to express my concerns about the lack of regulations in respect of the use, parking (dumping), and charging of E-bikes, E-scooters and recreational share bikes in NSW, particularly in the high-density areas of Sydney, such as the CBD.

There are safety and street degradation issues that need to be addressed by the introduction of regulations, monitoring of those regulations and application of meaningful fines and/or removal of non-compliant vehicles.

I live in Millers Point and walk around the Sydney CBD on most days.

Safe pedestrian navigation has become difficult due to share bikes and E-bikes and E-scooters creating hazards for pedestrians.

It is even more difficult for disabled, the elderly and young families.

Tourists must find it unpleasant to walk around our city now.

Pedestrians are the life-blood of our city.

Footpaths are designed for foot traffic. They surely must not be used by commercial or recreational traffic, or transport vehicles.

In particular, any vehicle that has assisted mechanical or electrical movement belongs on the road, not on footpaths, with the exception of low-speed limited mobility chairs for disabled persons.

Every day, share bikes are ridden at pace on footpaths, and strewn over the footpaths, some lying across accessways, sometimes covered in graffiti, with rubbish in the baskets and helmets lying on the ground separately from the bikes. Bikes can be found dumped in garden beds.

There are plenty of options for transport into and around the CBD, and we are about to add the Metro to those. Walking is surely the most suitable option for navigating the CBD area itself.

Share bikes are not needed for transport purposes.

As recreational vehicles, share bikes are not suitable for riding in the CBD.

Businesses have display windows and doorways blocked by share bikes deposited in front of their premises, deterring would-be customers.

The number of bikes in the city of Sydney need to be limited to those that can be stored in designated off-footpath parking locations and regulated so as to avoid use on pedestrian footpaths.

There is currently a serious situation that has developed at Fort St school on Observatory Hill, where access to the school by young children and accompanying adults, is not safe due to the narrow pathway being shared with speeding bicycles, E-bikes and E-scooters. This is untenable and the government needs to act quickly to remedy this dangerous situation for both pedestrians and bikes. An appropriate well considered solution for separate access is needed asap. Extending the bridge bike path to a bike lift might be a cost-effective, earlier implementation option for both ends of the bridge.

This is another example of the government turning a blind eye, or being too slow to act, on unsafe practises in relation to bicycle and E-vehicle use.

I believe there was a proposal prepared for a bike access path at the Southern end of the bridge, but this has been set aside.

Delivery E-bikes race along footpaths at speed, ride through red lights and weave around pedestrians at pedestrian crossings, seemingly without being apprehended and without penalty.

E-scooters use pedestrian walkways as recreation areas, scooting swiftly through the middle of the pathways, with no consideration for pedestrians for whom the pathways are designed. Barangaroo and other pedestrian gathering places are favoured locations for this practice.

Safe charging of E-bikes and E-scooters is an issue that also needs to be addressed. The frequency of explosive fires associated with charging these vehicles has increased dramatically in recent times, as they have become more popular. Charging of such vehicles must surely only be allowed in separate dedicated outdoor spaces, not within a building.

I ask that the State Government introduces legislation to regulate safe and appropriate use and depositing of share bikes, E-bikes and E-scooters, and applies meaningful penalties to assist enforcement of the regulations and reduce non-compliance.

The necessary funding and personnel need to be provided to monitor the subject vehicles for compliance. Regulations without monitoring and application of penalties is of little or no benefit.

I ask that the State Government considers the above information, concerns and suggestions during the inquiry process and introduces appropriate measures to provide a safe walking and riding environment.

I'm sure the Government, State and local, representing the interests and safety of its citizens, would want to support measures to ensure Sydney is a pleasant, safe, pedestrian friendly city, and that our regional towns and cities are also pedestrian safe.

Regards

Christina Ritchie