

**Submission
No 147**

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

Organisation: Narrabri Shire Council

Date Received: 16 August 2024

Our Reference: 2187302 DLA:SR
Your Reference:
Contact Name:

Ms Cate Faehrmann MP
Chair
Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts
Parliament of New South Wales
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
Sydney, NSW 2000

By Email: PortfolioCommittee6@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Friday, 16 August 2024



Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts – Inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options 2 – Narrabri Shire Council Submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the above inquiry.

It is understood that the following terms of reference (ToRs) are applicable to the current review process:

- (a) the current and anticipated role of all three levels of government in enabling and encouraging safe electrified active transport options*
- (b) opportunities to reform the regulatory framework to achieve better and safe outcomes for riders and the community*
- (c) local council, industry and stakeholder perspectives on the utilisation and impact of e-mobility devices in the community*
- (d) opportunities to improve mobility, the customer experience, safety for users and the community*
- (e) the potential benefits and risks of existing regulatory and policy settings, including the Roads Act 1993, Road Rules and Road User Space Allocation Policy and other related legislation regarding safety, traffic, and personal convenience*
- (f) the extent that e-mobility devices have positive community benefits such as encouraging mode shift, relieving congestion, addressing social disadvantage and tourism*
- (g) opportunities across government to improve outcomes in regard to e-scooters, e-bikes, and related mobility options*
- (h) best practice in other Australian and international jurisdictions*
- (i) the economic analysis of e-mobility contribution to safe transport at night for shift workers and women, to mode shift and to first and last mile transport, and*
- (j) any other related matters.*



Local Context

Narrabri Shire is a [local government area](#) in the [North West Slopes](#) region of NSW. The primary settlement of Narrabri is located adjacent to the [Namoi River](#) and at the confluence of the [Newell](#) and [Kamilaroi Highways](#). The local government area (LGA) is strategically positioned halfway between Sydney and Brisbane, and is considered to be resource-rich. Key local industries include mining and agriculture. At the last census (2021) the resident population was 12,721 persons.

Narrabri Shire Council's vision is articulated in the Community Strategic Plan as follows:

"Narrabri Shire will be a strong and vibrant regional growth centre providing a quality living environment for the entire Shire community."

The township of Narrabri is considered to be one of the most flood prone settlements in NSW. The community of Wee Waa, located west of Narrabri, is periodically completely isolated by flood waters for long periods (up to two weeks) and is protected by a ring levee. Narrabri Shire contains a number of vulnerable and at-risk communities that are flood-affected. These communities have a high Aboriginal population, low socio-economic base and are also ageing in nature. There are also very limited public transport options.

Narrabri Shire Council provides the following feedback to the Committee, with specific regard to item (c) of the inquiry's terms of reference.

1. In the formulation of this correspondence, a request for feedback was forwarded to Council's Local Traffic Committee (LTC) to inform Council's response. The corresponding representations are summarised as follows:
 - From a local Police perspective, concerns were expressed around their use in high pedestrian traffic areas such as the CBD, the walkways on the bridges and footpaths in general. Local NSW Police representatives did not believe that our footpaths are designed in a way to lend themselves to general use of scooters, which, as opposed to e-Bikes, are completely propelled by a motor. In particular, concerns were expressed around their use during major events, both community and sporting. At present, young people are weaving in and out of pedestrian traffic on manually propelled scooters, which moderates their speed. E-Scooters would not have the same restrictions and an impact with a pedestrian could have dire consequences. Given the difficulty in footpath use, that leaves little choice other than using the general roadway, particularly around the CBD, which in itself carries a degree of risk. At this stage, without proper regulatory legislation and the personnel available to enforce it, the trial is not supported.
 - The Local Member Roy Butler MP and representative of the LTC advised that: *"I would like to see Barwon Councils engage with active transport but it really is a matter for each local traffic committee. I don't want to see scooters and bikes littered in Barwon towns but I think it should be part of our town transport*

system.

More pathways for mobility scooters would be a good start."

- Transport for NSW (TfNSW) LTC representatives drew Council's attention to the current trial program:

[Shared E-scooter Trial - Shared E-scooter Trial Pack June 2024 \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

2. Engagement was also undertaken with Council's Tourism and Cultural Services Team to elicit feedback from a visitor economy perspective, and the following feedback was received:

Current Status of E-Scooters and E-Bikes:

The Narrabri Shire Council area does not currently have any businesses offering e-scooters or e-bikes. Despite this, the Narrabri Visitor Information Centre, which attracts around 16,000 visitors annually, has received a number of inquiries about e-bikes.

Suitability for E-Scooters and E-Bikes:

The flat landscape of Narrabri Shire makes it particularly suitable for the introduction of e-bikes and e-scooters. With a relatively small population of approximately 13,000 residents, the central business districts (CBD) of our towns and villages are not heavily congested. This low congestion level presents a promising environment for implementing e-scooter and e-bike services.

Public Transport and Community Impact:

The current limited public transport options within the Shire further support the feasibility of introducing e-scooters and e-bikes. This initiative could significantly enhance transportation options for both visitors and local residents, addressing a gap in the existing public transport system.

Tourism and Community Engagement:

The Tourism team of Narrabri Shire Council is actively engaging with local tourism operators to explore interest in the introduction of push bikes. This effort is part of a broader discussion to assess the viability and potential benefits of e-scooters and e-bikes in enhancing both visitor experiences and local mobility.

Given the flat terrain, low congestion in urban areas, and the current limitations in public transport, Narrabri Shire presents a viable opportunity for the introduction of e-scooters and e-bikes.

Should you require any additional information or clarification in this regard you are invited to contact Council's Director Planning and Sustainability,

Yours faithfully,

Interim General Manager