

Submission
No 181

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 16 August 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear committee

I have lodged a submission via a form supplied by an eMobility company.

In this second submission I want to make four key points. First some background

1. I am a strong supporter of cycling. It reduces road congestion. It reduces emissions. It increases population health. It is often quicker and more convenient for journeys of up to say 30 minutes than all other options in the inner city.

2. I am a 64 year old male

3. I ride my own bike for exercise about once per week

4. I commute and run errands using an eBike 3-6 days per week x 2-3 journeys each day

5. I almost always take my own bike helmet with me when I plan to use an eBike as while it is much better than it used to be, they are still not reliably present on Lime bikes. And sometimes when they are they are not fully functional.

6. E-bikes are more convenient than my own bike for reasons of safe and convenient parking. In addition in summer you can generally get away without showering at the office which adds a lot of complication to ones day [I used to do this]

Key point 1: I completed a submission offered by Lime to its users. Presumably that submission will have reached you. I think it was disingenuous of Lime to fail to differentiate between eBikes and eScooters in some of the questions in their submission form.

Key point 2: eScooters are clearly significantly more dangerous than eBikes both to the rider and to other road and footpath users particularly pedestrians. I form this conclusion based on my own experience of an accident with an eScooter in another city and on media reports of the rate of presentation to Melbourne hospitals caused by various kinds of eScooter accidents. Casual eScooter use via a rental company will be even more dangerous than use of an eScooter you own - at least in terms of lack of experience of many riders, frequent non availability of helmets, and - if the experience is similar to eBikes - a higher level of mechanical problems some of which may impact safety. In my opinion the harm caused by eScooters for hire vastly outweighs the benefits of wider use of low emissions transport. While I accept a number of people would be prepared to use an eScooter who would not use an eBike eg for skills reasons I think there would be a large % of scooter users who in the absence of scooters would use an eBike

Key Point 3: To increase usage of eBikes there are a number of things government could do to support the system. These include cycling infrastructure, including better maintenance of the signposting of where bikes are allowed on footpaths both to ensure pedestrians know it is a shared zone and to encourage cyclists to ride slowly [and a cautious expansion of those zones]. There also needs to be a lot of work done to address problem intersections to allow bike passage at least as conveniently as car passage. However the number one issue under this point relates to helmets. I counsel both carrots and sticks. The % of Lime bikes with helmets available has significantly increased compared to say 18 months ago. However we should be aiming for much closer to 100%. While I think the obligations on the rental company should be increased - perhaps they should not be allowed to let the user ride unless they declare they are wearing the supplied or their own helmet - I do have some sympathy for the company in that there is an obvious level of theft and neglect/mistreatment of helmets. Some

government action to set standards of behaviour in relation to rental helmets whether through public education or regulatory response (fines) should be considered.

Key Point 4: My assessment is that the cost of commuting 25 minutes by Lime Bike is roughly between 200% and 400% of the public transport alternative. I think this puts eBikes out of reach of some proportion of the community. This means that the community as a whole fails to benefit in the savings from reduced road traffic and positive health benefits. One problem may be the near monopoly position of Lime in Sydney ie the lack of competition. However there is probably a role for government to consider supporting the extension of eBike availability for example with eBike subsidies for low income users, helping address regulatory roadblocks that limit availability to only some council areas and support for eBike companies struggles with the cost of stolen helmets.

Thanks for considering these matters