

**Submission  
No 195**

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

**Organisation:** Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

**Date Received:** 23 August 2024

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22 August 2024

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Parliament House  
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Sydney NSW 2000

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Dear Ms Faehrmann

**Re: Use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options**

**Background:**

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), formed in 1927 is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, supporting more than 7,000 surgeons and 1,300 surgical trainees and Surgical International Medical Graduates.

As the peak body for surgery in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand we are very focused on the best outcomes for our patients and our communities, particularly within our State and Territory based Trauma Committees. Consequently, we appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback on the use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options. The majority of our submission will focus on the safety of e-scooters and related mobility vehicles users and those that they may affect while utilising these vehicles.

In 2022 RACS prepared and released a rounded position paper on Electric Mobility in Australia in which we recognised the impact that e-mobility devices are having on individuals and health systems when they are involved in a crash. To improve e-mobility safety RACS, in conjunction with the Australasian Injury Prevention Network, we developed a series of recommendations, key to these recommendations was the need for infrastructure to provide safe environments for users and members of the public, education around safe usage and legislation support to reduce risk to both the users and the public. The details of the recommendations can be found at [Electric Mobility in Australia \(2022\) | RACS \(surgeons.org\)](#)

On review of the online questionnaire for submission we are concerned that there was an allowance to increase the risk to, particularly, members of the public that are not users by asking for interest in allowing the vehicles on shared pavements and was asking for feedback on this. There are many factors that come into play with this, first and foremost the safety and risk associated with harm and death.

We would consequently strongly encourage you not to be swayed by public opinion, but rather consider the health and lives of the communities in NSW that can be impacted negatively by such a move. An example of the impact of injury associated with e-scooters can be found at [Injury patterns and circumstances associated with electric scooter collisions: a scoping review | Injury Prevention \(bmi.com\)](#) as part of a paper entitled "Injury patterns and circumstances associated with electric scooter collisions: a scoping review" by Manish Toofany, Sasha Mohsenian, Leona K Shum, and Herbert Chan

Further to the 2022 Electric Mobility in Australia Position Paper the State and Territory Committees of RACS emphasised in the 2023 Annual Report their commitment by highlighting that "the committees advocated on various issues and opportunities such as trauma including gun safety, the effects of alcohol abuse, vehicular speed limits, and e-scooters." [Annual Report 2023](#)



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([surgeons.org](http://surgeons.org)). They had great success in engaging, advising, and supporting the state and territory governments.

**With regards to the RACS NSW Trauma Committee recommend:**

There should be provision of protected and connected infrastructure, and clear signage as well as speed limits.

Riders must always wear an Australian Standards approved helmet that is securely fitted to their head.

There should only be one person riding an e-scooter.

As mentioned, we do not support shared paths with pedestrians, and there should be clear signposted areas of designated riding and parking.

Also, users should adhere to the same rules as other vehicle users around drug and alcohol usage as well as any mobile phone usage.

It is important that the Inquiry look at building on nationally recognised policy and regulatory frameworks to protect the public and reduce the risk of severe injury or death.

Finally, there needs to be a commitment to ongoing research and review, as e-scooters and other electrical vehicles continue to develop and change at a fast pace. In the very short period that electric scooters and other electric vehicles have been around the impact regarding trauma is well documented, we would cite the UCLA paper by Drs Trivedi and Liu's paper from 2019 entitled "[Injuries Associated With Standing Electric Scooter Use](#)" [Injuries Associated With Standing Electric Scooter Use | Emergency Medicine | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network](#) where they highlight that in the enormous growth of the use of these vehicles highlighting that in a two year period "two hundred forty-nine patients (145 [58.2%] male; mean [SD] age, 33.7 [15.3] years) presented to the emergency department with injuries associated with standing electric scooter use during the study period". This study was undertaken in Southern California when the trend started to come to the fore. Their conclusions provided "insight into the public health and safety risks associated with this rapidly growing form of transportation and provide a foundation for modernizing public policy to keep pace with this trend."

We look further to discussing these recommendations further should the opportunity arise.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Vikram Puttaswamy**  
Chair, RACS NSW Trauma Committee

**Dr Pecky De Silva**  
Chair, RACS NSW State Committee

## References

Electric Mobility in Australia (2022) prepared by Professor Kirsten Vallmuur, Associate Professor Ben Beck, Dr Tanya Smyth and Ms Louise Pfrunder on behalf of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and approved by the RACS Trauma Committee. Available from [Electric Mobility in Australia \(2022\) | RACS \(surgeons.org\)](#)

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Report 2023, p11

Toofany M, Mohsenian S, Shum LK, Chan H, Brubacher JR. Injury patterns and circumstances associated with electric scooter collisions: a scoping review. *Injury Prevention*. 2021 Oct;27(5):490–9. Available from <https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/27/5/490>

Trivedi TK, Liu C, Antonio ALM, Wheaton N, Kreger V, Yap A, et al. Injuries associated with standing electric scooter use. *JAMA Network Open*. 2019 Jan 25;2(1):e187381. Available from: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2722574>