

**Submission
No 314**

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

Organisation: Hello Ride
Date Received: 15 October 2024

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Committee Chair

Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: portfoliocommittee6@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes, and related mobility options

Dear Ms Faehrmann,

I write with reference to the Inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes, and related mobility options.

Regretfully we did not make the deadline for initial submissions to this important Inquiry, however please now accept our constructive input into the Inquiry.

On behalf of HelloRide, I am pleased to submit our contribution to the Inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes, and related mobility options.

About HelloRide

HelloRide is a company that believes every journey matters.

HelloRide, as one of the two prominent operators of e-bikes in the City of Sydney, seeks your support to both accept our submission and be aware of our willingness to address a future hearing by our senior executives.

At HelloRide we committed to improving sustainable transport solutions across Sydney, and we are eager to support the development of policies that will encourage safe and widespread adoption of micromobility services in time across the state of New South Wales and beyond.

Since entering the bike-sharing market in 2017, HelloRide has rapidly grown to become a global market leader through our strong execution and focus on customer satisfaction. This has particularly been the case across South East Asia.

To date, we had expanded our operations globally to over 500 cities, with 750 million registered users and a total distance travelled of 58 billion kilometres. This has contributed to a reduction in carbon emissions by 2,590 kilotons, demonstrating our commitment to promoting clean and sustainable mobility.

Sydney remains our principal and priority market in Australia. We however anticipate to soon grow our operational footprint across other Australian cities and regional centres specifically for e-bikes.

Our Australian operations are today now headed and overseen by one of South East Asia's most experienced micro mobility executives, Sydney-based, Lachlan McLean. Our Chief Executive is the internationally renowned micromobility expert, Mr. Simon Wang.

Our Commitment

HelloRide is fully committed to supporting NSW in delivering successful micromobility programs for the long term.

We adhere to Sydney's guidelines for hybrid dockless bike share operations and are further integrating parking technology in high-priority areas to support trials of a docked parking approach.

We believe these guidelines should be mandatory for all operators to ensure consistent enforcement citywide.

By maintaining uniform standards for every operator, we can effectively address challenges such as improper bike parking and safety concerns. This approach mirrors practices in other local jurisdictions, where accountability and high standards have led to best-in-class service delivery.

Summary of Key Recommendations:

HelloRide recommends that Transport for NSW (TfNSW) take on a central regulatory role to ensure consistent oversight and management of micromobility services across NSW.

This includes selecting operators through a transparent process, ensuring that only reliable, safe, and sustainable operators are chosen to provide e-bike and e-scooter services.

Infrastructure development is crucial to the future success of micromobility, not just for Sydney, but across the greater State.

We recommend the expansion of protected bike lanes and the installation of dedicated micromobility parking every 200 meters in recognised high-density areas. These steps will enhance rider safety, improve public space usage, and prevent clutter on streets and footpaths.

Parking is also one of the notable issues that we as a leading player want to work with authorities to help get right in the interest of a sustainable outcome.

Safety standards should also be clearly defined and more effectively communicated and marketed. At HelloRide, we acknowledge a role we can also play here with users.

These importantly include:

- A maximum speed limit of 25 KPH
- A minimum riding age of 16, and
- Mandatory helmet use are essential to ensure that both riders and pedestrians remain safe and we would welcome this common-sense approach which encourages good user behaviour.

Consistent regulations across councils will also help avoid confusion and ensure a seamless rider experience.

Our experience and insight of the Australian market to date has been too much change and interpretation around what should constitute the sustainable activity of micromobility transport, even in low concentration regional centres through to our CBDs and of course Sydney.

Fleet sizes should be managed dynamically, not arbitrarily, adjusting to local demand to avoid oversaturation and ensure tidiness in public spaces.

As an industry leader we have experience and insight of what it takes to achieve sustainable outcomes and a win/win for both the government entity where the fleets are positioned and contracted and the optimal scale. This flexible approach will allow for an optimal number of vehicles to be deployed without overwhelming communities. This is an important factor.

Further details and recommendations are provided in the attachment.

As outlined, I would also be very pleased to present these insights at a future hearing of this inquiry. Please contact me directly via email to facilitate this.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the inquiry. We look forward to working with you to raise the standard of the micromobility sector in New South Wales.

We welcome Parliamentarians from across the Legislative Council being so engaged around our sector and the great potential we can deliver for the communities you represent.

Kind regards,

Lachlan McLean
Head of Business Development - ANZ
HelloRide

ADDENDUM

To:

Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: portfoliocommittee6@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chair, Hon. Cate Faehrmann MLC, Deputy Chair, Hon. Sam Farrar MLC, and Committee Members,

HelloRide Submission to Portfolio Committee No. 6: Inquiry into the Use of E-Scooters, E-Bikes, and Related Mobility Options

HelloRide is pleased to provide further insights into the inquiry on e-scooters, e-bikes, and related mobility options. As one of two e-bike operators in Sydney, we see the potential for these services to transform urban transport in NSW. Below, we provide recommendations and responses to the specific terms of reference.

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A) The Role of All Three Levels of Government in Enabling and Encouraging Safe Electrified Active Transport Options

- **Federal Government:** The Federal Government should establish national standards for the importation and safety certification of e-bikes and micromobility devices. Uniform standards will ensure consistency in safety, product quality, and business operations across the country.
- **Transport for NSW (TfNSW):** TfNSW should take the lead in selecting operators, creating consistent regulations, and planning infrastructure. A central authority ensures that service providers meet safety, sustainability, and reliability benchmarks, resulting in equitable and effective services across the state.
 - **Operator Selection:** Transport for NSW should oversee a transparent operator selection process, ensuring only reliable and sustainable operators are chosen. This will enhance the overall quality of services and improve long-term operational safety.
 - **Infrastructure Development:** TfNSW should prioritise the development of protected bike lanes and micromobility parking spaces, especially in high-density

areas. We recommend setting up micromobility parking every 150-200 metres in these areas to ensure accessibility and prevent public space obstructions.

- **Consistent Regulations:** Standardised rules across NSW, including speed limits, operating hours, and safety protocols, are critical to ensuring a seamless user experience and avoiding conflicting regulations across different council areas.
 - **Local Councils:** Local councils should play a role in managing micromobility programs by collaborating with operators, offering local insights, designating parking locations, and promoting safety through targeted educational campaigns. However, regulatory authority should remain centralised with TfNSW to ensure statewide consistency and effectiveness, while allowing councils to tailor specific operational guidelines around parking and safety to their unique local needs.
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B) Opportunities to Reform the Regulatory Framework for Better and Safer Outcomes

- **Broad Access to E-Bikes:** Both e-bikes and e-scooters should be made available across Sydney and NSW, giving riders the flexibility to choose the most appropriate transport mode for their needs.
 - **Expanded Infrastructure:** Dedicated cycling infrastructure, including bike lanes and parking locations, should be prioritised. This will ensure the safe and orderly use of public spaces and prevent obstructions on footpaths and roads.
 - **Safe Riding Standards:** To ensure safer operations, we recommend setting a maximum speed limit of 25 KPH for micromobility devices, a minimum riding age of 16, and mandatory helmet use for all riders. These measures will help protect both riders and pedestrians.
 - **Dynamic Fleet Management:** Fleet sizes should be scaled based on demand in specific areas to avoid congestion. Data-driven fleet management allows for optimal service without oversaturation, ensuring a tidy and efficient operation.
 - **Operator Selection Through Competitive Processes:** TfNSW should implement a competitive tender process to select a limited number of operators. The focus should be on selecting operators that meet criteria for safety, reliability, and environmental responsibility.
 - **Transparent Fee Structures:** Fees charged to operators should be transparent and reflect the cost of administering the program. This will promote fairness while ensuring the long-term sustainability of micromobility services in NSW.
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C) Local Council, Industry, and Stakeholder Perspectives on Utilisation and Impact of E-Mobility Devices

E-bikes have already demonstrated significant value in urban settings, providing positive outcomes for both residents and businesses:

- **Economic Impact:** E-bike riders frequently visit local businesses during their trips, boosting foot traffic and generating additional revenue for local shops, cafes, and service providers.
 - **Social Equity:** E-bikes provide an affordable, accessible mode of transport, particularly for low-income residents who may not have access to private vehicles. By offering discounted fares and targeted programs, e-bike services can bridge the transportation gap and promote inclusivity in a city.
 - **Sustainable Tourism:** E-bikes are increasingly popular among tourists, offering a convenient and environmentally friendly way to explore the city.
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D) Opportunities to Improve Mobility, Customer Experience, and Safety

To further improve e-bike services, we propose the following initiatives:

- **Integrated Public Transport Solutions:** E-bikes should complement public transport systems by offering first- and last-mile connectivity. This can be achieved by establishing dedicated micromobility parking hubs at major transit points, making it easier for riders to seamlessly switch between modes of transport. HelloRide is currently supporting TFNSW in a [Shared e-bike parking pilot](#) to further integrate our service with Public transport whilst improving poorly parked shared e-bikes around stations.
 - **Safety and Education Initiatives:** Government-led campaigns focused on rider safety and proper usage will help reduce accidents and improve overall rider behaviour. These campaigns should cover helmet use, adherence to speed limits, and proper parking etiquette.
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E) Potential Benefits and Risks of Existing Regulatory and Policy Settings

While the current regulatory framework has been helpful in establishing a foundation for micromobility services, we see opportunities for improvement:

- **Update the Roads Act 1993:** The Roads Act should be updated to explicitly include e-bikes and other micromobility devices. This would clarify the legal status of these vehicles, provide clear guidelines for their operation, and ensure safety for all road users.
- **Infrastructure Mandates:** We recommend mandating the inclusion of bike lanes and dedicated parking facilities in all new road development projects. This will ensure that e-bikes have the necessary infrastructure to operate safely and effectively.
- **Data Sharing and Privacy:** TfNSW should implement a clear framework for data sharing between operators and government authorities. This data should be relevant to planning and operational improvements, while respecting rider privacy in accordance with best practices. We recommended a central data platform to be used and ingest operators data and insights to further improve programs.

F) Extent of Positive Community Benefits

E-bikes provide significant benefits for NSW communities:

- **Mode Shift and Congestion Reduction:** Since launching our fleet of industry-leading e-bikes, we have scaled to approximately 3,000 e-bikes, completing over 300,000 trips and covering more than 500,000 kilometres. Our E-bikes help reduce reliance on private cars for short trips, alleviating congestion and lowering carbon emissions in urban areas.
- **Tourism and Business Support:** E-bikes offer an enjoyable and sustainable way for tourists to explore cities, while also driving traffic to local businesses. This creates economic opportunities and enhances the overall visitor experience.

G) Opportunities to Improve Government Outcomes for Micromobility

We recommend the following to further improve micromobility outcomes:

- **Promote Regional Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration between councils to ensure that e-bike services operate seamlessly across local government boundaries. This will allow riders to travel freely across regions and reduce issues related to geo-fencing or restricted service areas.
- **Incentivise Sustainable Transport:** Financial incentives for micromobility services, such as reduced fees or tax credits for operators, will encourage investment and expansion, particularly in areas underserved by public transport.

H) Best Practices from Other Australian and International Jurisdictions

International examples provide valuable insights into how NSW can optimise its micromobility operations:

- **Centralised Regulation:** Adopting a similar approach of running tenders for micromobility services at the state level ensures consistency and high-quality service delivery. This model could serve as a blueprint for centralising regulation in NSW under TfNSW.
 - **Dense Parking Infrastructure:** London offers a great example of developing a robust micromobility parking network. By establishing dedicated parking locations across the city, they have improved service reliability and reduced public space clutter.
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I) Economic Contributions to Night Transport and First/Last Mile Transport

E-bikes contribute to a safer and more efficient night-time economy:

- **Safe Night-Time Transport:** E-bikes offer a secure and reliable option for individuals commuting at night, including shift workers and women who may feel vulnerable walking long distances. By making e-bikes available 24/7, TfNSW can enhance safety and ensure access to transport during all hours.
 - **Connecting to Public Transport:** E-bikes provide vital first- and last-mile solutions for commuters, making it easier for them to reach public transit hubs from their homes or workplaces. This increases the overall convenience and accessibility of NSW's transport network.
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J) Any Other Related Matters

We encourage the NSW Government to consider the following additional initiatives:

- **Public Sector Leadership:** The government can lead by example by incorporating e-bikes and e-scooters into public sector operations and promoting micromobility within its own workforce.
 - **Sustainability Commitment:** Expanding support for micromobility as part of NSW's broader climate goals will encourage the use of low-emission transport options and contribute to a reduction in overall transport-related emissions.
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Conclusion

HelloRide is genuinely committed to working alongside government and local councils to provide safe, reliable, and sustainable e-bike services. With expanded Australian management we are able to engage and support the adopting the recommendations outlined in this submission.

We firmly believe that the NSW Government through working with sustainable industry players like HelloRide can create a thriving micromobility ecosystem that supports both urban and regional communities.