

June 2025

Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland

AMA Queensland thanks the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee (the Committee) for its invitation to make a submission to its inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland.

Doctors are horrified at the rapid increase in e-mobility injuries and deaths they are witnessing in our hospitals, especially of children. Our members report treating soft tissue damage, facial injuries including lost teeth and serious head injuries. The death or permanent injury of a child is devastating for families, communities and treating clinicians and leaves the long-lasting imprint of trauma on all affected. The fact these harms are readily preventable with sensible regulations exacerbates the distress felt among health professionals.

Medical practitioners are also rightly frustrated that e-mobility harms unnecessarily increase the stress on our overloaded public hospitals and health services at a time when they are experiencing some of the highest rates of burnout reported. This inquiry presents an opportunity to urgently halt further deaths and harms through much-needed regulation and active travel investment and to relieve our health workforce of avoidable patient cases. AMA Queensland urges the Committee to prioritise community safety and implement the recommendations set out in this submission.

Background

In June 2025, the Australia and New Zealand Journal of Public Health published a retrospective review by Dr Matthew Clanfield of 176 paediatric e-scooter trauma presentations at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2024. Patients had a median age of 14 years and 71% were male. Results included the following:

- Falls accounted for 78% of crashes, while 13% involved motor vehicles.
- Helmet non-compliance was documented in 42% of the presentations, 12% involved doubling and 36% exceeded the 25 km/hr speed limit.
- Fractures occurred in 37% of cases, 18% required computerised tomography scans and 11% sustained life-threatening or potentially life-threatening injuries.

Dr Clanfield concluded that e-scooters pose a significant safety risk to child users and recommended raising the minimum age for use to 16 years until improved safety measures could be proven effective.

In another study earlier this year, University of Melbourne researcher Associate Professor Milad Haghani reviewed Australian media reports of e-scooter fatalities. He found:

- A total of 30 fatalities were reported in the media between January 2020 and April 2025.
- Of that 30, 15 were in Queensland and, tragically, six of them were children.

- Australia-wide, more than one in three deaths were of children under 18.
- Children involved in e-scooter accidents were more likely to be hit by other vehicles, as opposed to adults, who were more likely to be involved in single vehicle accidents.

Dr Haghani noted that while children under 12 are currently banned from using e-scooters in Queensland and 12- to 15-year-olds must be supervised, older children were still at greater risk than adults, possibly due to their poorer hazard perception, lack of road awareness and smaller stature. He concluded that children should not be riding on public roads.

Recommendations

AMA Queensland urges the Committee to recommend sensible regulation of e-mobility devices to protect all Queenslanders, but particularly children. AMA Queensland submits that these regulations should include the following:

- Restriction of riders to persons aged 16 years and older.
- Mandatory, evidence-based maximum speed limitations (e.g. 20km/hour) on all e-mobility devices.
- Review of current speed limits (e.g. 12km/hour on footpaths and shared paths; 25 km/hour on bike paths) to ensure these are evidence-based and provide adequate protection for pedestrians and all e-mobility and other vehicle users.
- Improved enforcement of:
 - speed limits (e.g. 25km/hour) on public roads
 - laws requiring riders to have drug and blood alcohol levels in line with current drug and drink driving legislation
 - mandated wearing of approved (certified compliant with the relevant Australian Standard) helmets for e-mobility riders.
- Compulsory code-compliant safety equipment in line with relevant safety standards (e.g. lights, horns, reflectors etc).

In addition, we urge the Committee to recommend the Queensland Government:

- Rapidly invest in separated road-e-mobility-pedestrian infrastructure such as dedicated cycleways and pathways to minimise shared use among road vehicle drivers, e-mobility users and pedestrians. This is essential in areas near schools, parks and other places frequented by children (please see separate section on active travel below).
- Implement a statewide education campaign targeting both e-mobility users and non-users, especially road drivers including:
 - to improve e-mobility driver behaviour, traffic awareness and understanding of the health and safety risks of improper e-mobility device use and the benefits of safe use;
 - to improve licenced drivers' awareness of e-mobility devices and users.
- Provide adequate policing and other resources to enforce existing and new regulations for e-mobility use.

- Advocate for consistent regulation across Australian jurisdictions, in line with the Australian Road Vehicle Standards law and Australian Road Rules (model law).
- Work with the Australian Government to improve automobile technologies such as child presence detection, vehicle safety assist technologies, autonomous emergency braking and lane keep assist to prevent and minimise the effects of accidents and provide incentives to incorporate these technologies in new vehicles.

Active Travel

In addition to the above, AMA Queensland urges the Committee to make supporting recommendations for greater investment in active travel by the Queensland Government. AMA Queensland is an enthusiastic proponent of active travel and e-mobility devices are an important part of encouraging non-vehicle use among Queenslanders. Their affordability, availability and ease of use makes them a popular mode of transport in addition to traditional active travel measures like walking and cycling.

The [AMA Queensland Active Travel Position Statement](#) sets out the importance of active travel to public health and in decarbonising transport in Australia. Queensland's own Department of Transport and Main Roads has concluded that well-positioned active travel infrastructure returns five dollars for every one dollar invested, with the biggest beneficiary being health. In addition, the Queensland Government's 'Making Healthy Happen 2032: A strategy for preventing obesity in Queensland' also notes the need for communities and neighbourhoods to be 'designed to encourage physical activity and provide easy access to local outdoor recreation and active travel opportunities'.

The current inquiry provides the state government a timely chance to boost investment in safe active travel infrastructure. Providing dedicated bike and non-vehicle lanes in built up areas and around schools and hospitals will enable safer use of e-mobility devices, especially for inexperienced and higher risk riders like children.

The Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management published 'The Path to Net Zero: Decarbonising Australia's Transport System' in December 2024, setting out evidence-based actions to achieve net zero carbon emissions in the transport sector. A key action is for all governments to allocate 20% of their transport budgets to walking and cycling infrastructure.

The recent federal election saw the state and federal governments pledge \$7.2 billion dollars towards improving the Bruce Highway, with Queensland contributing 20% of the cost (\$1.44 billion). AMA Queensland urges the state government to allocate 20% of that spending (\$288 million) over the forward estimates to active transport infrastructure in the upcoming Budget. While the government's recent announcement of \$19.1 million from July 2025 for local government grants for improved walking and cycling facilities, this represents just 6.63% of the spending on the Bruce Highway project alone – well short of the 20% target.

The Queensland Government must also advocate for requisite federal government investment in active transport infrastructure. This would provide a much-needed boost to our decarbonisation efforts while improving human and environmental health and reducing fatal incidents.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this submission and recommendations.