

Mr Greg Warren MP
Chair - Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
Inquiry into Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Batteries
NSW Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

21st December 2023

Submitted via email

Re: Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety Submission

Dear Mr Warren and Committee members,

Thank you for raising this inquiry with Bicycle NSW. Under the terms of reference for the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety Inquiry into Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Batteries, Bicycle NSW wishes to make a submission. This submission is particularly centred on the first term of reference:

(a) the risk and management of fires and other issues caused by batteries in electric and hybrid vehicles, including light electric vehicles.

Bicycle NSW is the peak body in NSW for recreational and commuter bicycle riders representing over 14,000 members across NSW. We have been advocating for almost 50 years to create a better bicycle riding environment for all bicycle riders. Bicycle riding is the 5th most popular physical activity in Australia and further growth is projected due to enhanced infrastructure and improved safety. Bicycle riding is healthy, social, beneficial to the environment and can be taken up by almost every age group and demographic. Bicycle riding is also proven around the world to be an outstanding social equity equaliser which is even more important with growing cost of living pressures.

In more recent years there has been a growing use of e-mobility devices, primarily e-bikes which are now making up a growing portion of bicycle ownership. In years to come they are likely to become more common than non-electric bicycles. Bicycle NSW is very supportive of these e-mobility devices (excluding private e-scooters until they are legalised in NSW public spaces) as they enable more people to ride more often as well as providing a solution to families and the less abled, resulting in all ages and abilities being able to ride.

Governments at all levels are increasing their support of e-bikes as active transport solution. These devices support their net zero emission targets as last mile transport makes up a significant portion of carbon emissions. Through members, staff and stakeholders, Bicycle NSW has a strong knowledge and lived experience in using, maintaining and storing e-bikes safely and effectively.

In our knowledge and understanding from members, the community and stakeholders, we have not been aware of any dangerous circumstances with well maintained and reputable e-bikes when they are being stored, parked or charged correctly. These e-bikes are compliant to European Standards EN 15194: 2009 and the accompanying battery chargers are Australian/New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 60335.2.29 and are matched to the specific e-bike model.

Our feedback, anecdotal information and sourced information suggests that hazards and fires associated with these e-bike vehicles are caused from:

- Non-compliant and non-AS and EU standard equipment.
- Modified equipment which is adjusted to increase e-bike speed or charging speed (online parts and tuition commonly available).

- Non compatible/compliant chargers or fast chargers which batteries aren't designed for (or mismatched chargers).
- Poor quality, non-compliant and poorly manufactured products which in some cases are imported illegally and sold online or in retail stores.

Bicycle NSW has not been able to source information on the detail and circumstances of these fires and hazards and **requests that information be collected to ensure a strong evidence base is used to make risk-based decisions in the future.**

This information includes fires which have occurred in NSW caused by lithium batteries and broken into the following categories and subcategories:

- How many fires are caused from lithium ion battery igniting or exploding in NSW?
- How many of these fires are from lithium batteries in electric cars, power tools, e-bikes, e-mopeds, e-scooters and other devices?
- Did these lithium battery fires occur during charging?
- Were these devices compliant, modified and were they AS-certified charging devices?
- Of the lithium battery fires in e-bikes, were these legal e-bikes?
- Are there any makes and models of devices known? Are there any trends or consistencies known?

National data would also be very helpful to strengthen the knowledge base and benefit all States and Territories.

Bicycle NSW has been informed that some strata bylaws are being introduced to exclude certain e-mobility devices due to being classified as high risk and hazardous items. Bicycle NSW is unaware of any well considered research or analysis that is driving these decisions. However, we are concerned this might become commonplace and be introduced into hotels, motels and other commercial accommodation. This non-evidence driven policy and regulation will jeopardise tourism, grow inequity and in some cases be discriminatory against less abled people and those who may not have access to other forms of transport.

If this information is not known, then it needs to be collected on an ongoing basis to ensure we have an evidence base for making decisions in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. Bicycle NSW would be pleased to provide any further information or discuss these matters directly with the committee.

Yours sincerely,



Peter McLean
Chief Executive Officer