

NON-REGISTERED MOTORISED VEHICLES

Organisation: Wyong Shire Council

Date Received: 30/04/2013

KK/KateKeogh

23 April 2013

The Chair
Joint Committee on Road Safety
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission - Inquiry into Non-Registered Motorised Vehicles

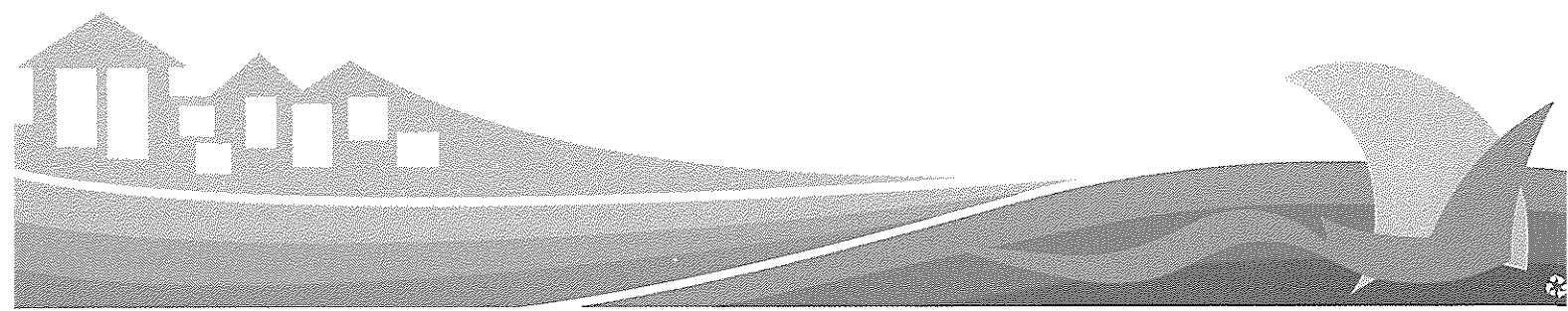
Wyong Shire Council wishes to provide the enclosed submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, Parliament of NSW, regarding the Inquiry into Non-Registered Motorised Vehicles.

In particular, this submission refers to non-registered motorised vehicles known as motorised wheelchairs (also known as mobility scooters and 'gophers'). This is an area of concern for Council with the projected number of residents in the Shire over 60 years of age expected to increase considerably over the next 10 years.

If you have any questions about specific areas of our submission or require clarification, please contact Council's Road Safety Officer, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Manager
COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



Inquiry into Non-Registered Motorised Vehicles

Submission - Wyong Shire Council

Wyong Shire Council wishes to provide the following comments with respect to non-registered motorised vehicles, in particular, those known as motorised wheelchairs (also known as mobility scooters and 'gophers').

The following are areas which require consideration:

Terminology

There is inconsistency regarding the terminology used for this equipment. NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) uses the term 'motorised wheelchair' however this can be confused with the type of equipment used by those who have paraplegia and quadriplegia and other illnesses or disabilities. Commonly used terms by community members are 'mobility scooter', 'motorised scooter' and 'gopher'.

Ideally, one term should be used by all agencies across all States and Territories to reduce confusion and provide consistency. It is Council's view that the term 'mobility scooter' best describes this equipment.

Data collection

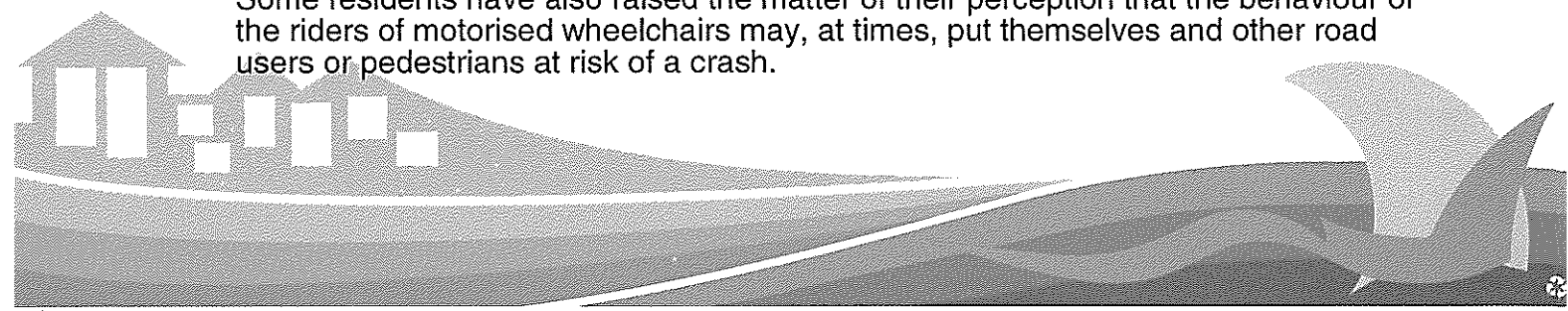
Crash data for Wyong Shire Council is provided by RMS. While comprehensive in many areas, crashes involving motorised wheelchairs are recorded within the broad category of "Pedestrian Crash". This does not allow differentiation between a "foot" pedestrian and a motorised wheelchair user.

Additionally, crashes which do not occur on public road (ie. footpath, shopping centre car park, etc.) are not captured by RMS data.

Community feedback

Some community members have raised concerns with Council's Road Safety Officer about motorised wheelchairs being used on roads as a motor vehicle would be driven (ie. in the centre of the lane rather than on the side of the road). For the most part, residents' concerns are for the safety of riders of motorised wheelchairs.

Some residents have also raised the matter of their perception that the behaviour of the riders of motorised wheelchairs may, at times, put themselves and other road users or pedestrians at risk of a crash.



Education

Currently, there are no requirements for users of motorised wheelchairs to attend training/skills development, or be certified, before using a motorised wheelchair. Anecdotally, some suppliers of motorised wheelchairs offer purchasers a brief educational session in use of the equipment.

It appears that there is a general perception that the users of motorised wheelchairs have the same rights as motor vehicles. Increased community education among both riders of motorised wheelchairs and drivers of motor vehicles about rights and responsibilities may be beneficial.

Previous Wyong Shire Council initiatives

In the past, "Motorised Wheelchair Workshops" have been held in the Wyong Shire. This involved presentations by Council's Road Safety Officer and NSW Police Force. Due to competing workload priorities, these workshops have not been held for some years.

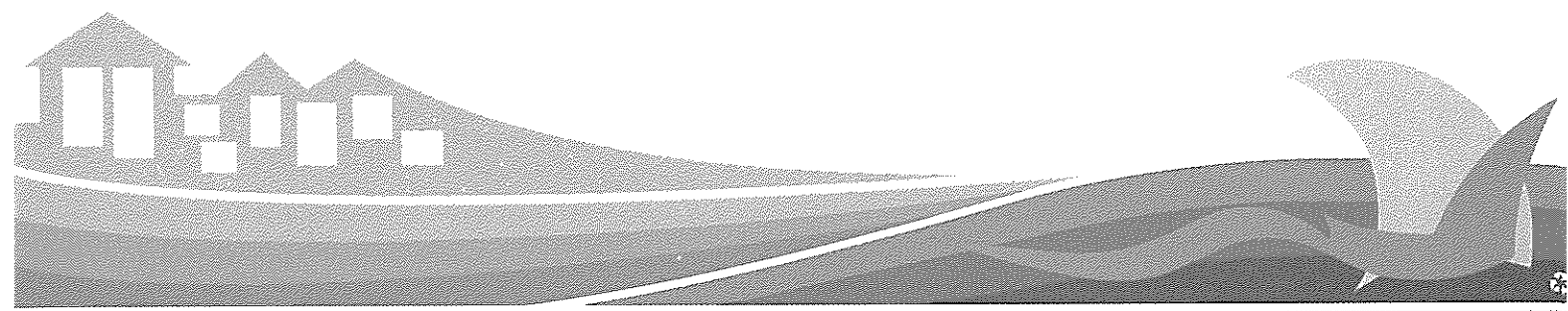
There was also development of a motorised wheelchair information booklet ("Scooter Survival Guide") as a combined project with other local Councils. There was positive response received from distributors requesting these guides to provide to clients. Guides were also distributed to community groups and aged care facilities.

In more recent years, the Scooter Survival Guide, fluorescent seat covers, and safety flags have been distributed by Council and at seniors' events (such as Seniors Week activities) and general community events/workshops.

Additionally, in 2012 and 2013, half page advertisements promoting safety tips for motorised wheelchair users were printed in the Central Coast Express Advocate (Wyong Edition) community newspaper during Seniors Week.

Wyong Shire Positive Ageing Strategy

Wyong Shire Council is currently drafting a Positive Ageing Strategy which will provide a strategic approach to respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population to better meet the needs of our ageing population in the future. The overall aim is to support older residents to lead healthy, active and independent lives as they age, enhancing participation and quality of life. One component of the Strategy will review the use of recharge outlets in the Wyong Shire for motorised wheelchairs.



By 2021 the number of people aged over 60 years in Wyong Shire is expected to increase by 8,348 people, and represent 26.3% of the total population. Currently, this group represents 24.8% of Wyong Shire's population. The current state average for this group is 20.3%.

This suggests that there will be an increase in the number of residents who will use a motorised wheelchair over the next decade.

NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012 – 2021

Older road users are considered by the NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012 – 2021 to be “at-risk” road users. A key focus area identified in this Strategy is to “improve mobility scooter safety for older road users”.

