

NON-REGISTERED MOTORISED VEHICLES

Organisation: Ballina Shire Council

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enquiries refer
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ballina
shire council

22 April 2013

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

Dear Chair

Re: Submission - Inquiry into the use of non-registered motorised vehicles

Council welcomed the announcement by the Parliament of New South Wales on the 28 February, 2013 to conduct an inquiry into the use of non-registered motorised vehicles and their impact on road safety.

The unregulated nature of the use of non-registered motorised vehicles, including the use of mobility scooters and electric bikes is a concern to the residents of Ballina Shire. A spate of mobility scooter incidents including a recent incident, which occurred on Cherry Street, Ballina leaving two elderly women seriously injured has further prompted Council to advocate for a review of the use of non-registered motorised vehicles. The increased use of these vehicles has resulted in an increased risk to the riders themselves and to people sharing public roads, footpaths, shared paths, and other public lands.

As acknowledged at the launch of the review, non-registered motorised vehicles have become an increasingly viable option for road users to maintain independence and engagement with the community and provide physical, social and health benefits to the user; for older people using mobility scooters; and for the social, commuter and/or less mobile riders using electric bikes. For these reasons Council clearly supports their use however there are also important safety concerns that have emerged.

This submission highlights Council's concerns surrounding the use of non-registered motorised vehicles on its road network and identifies a need to review the following:

- Road rule definitions for non-registered motorised vehicles. Consideration should be given to specific definitions of motorised wheelchairs, mobility scooters, electric bikes and quad bikes
- The permitted speed of non-registered motorised vehicles scooters on footpaths, shared paths and on roadways (the latter specifically referring to the use of motorised bikes)
- There is no formal testing or medical clearance required to determine the health and competency of a mobility scooter user. Consideration should be given to the user acquiring a certificate/letter/statement from a medical practitioner, a registered occupational therapist or a registered physiotherapist confirming that the user is eligible to use a mobility scooter (that the user has a reasonable need to use a mobility scooter due to physical disability or limited mobility) and that the user is fit to operate the mobility scooter
- There is currently a lack of regulation in relating to the use of mobility scooters. In NSW, a mobility scooter does not require registration or a user does not require a licence

- There is a lack of and knowledge of third party insurance schemes for users. Consideration should be given to the insurance implications of injuries and fatalities sustained and caused by users of non-registered motorised vehicles
- The inadequacy of data collection for fatalities and injuries arising from the use of non-registered motorised vehicles
- The supply of mobility scooters to the Australian market and concerns that the unregulated nature of the industry could be contributing to the unsafe and inappropriate use of mobility scooters
- Concerns about the quality of imported models and second-hand motorised mobility scooters being purchased
- General lack of policy related to motorised scooters suggesting the incorporation of mobility scooter use in planning, transportation and aging documents
- The need for mobility scooter training and education to improve the safety of users and the wider community
- The design of mobility scooters in terms of stability, lack of safety design features, poor visibility of scooters, steering, braking, speed and size of mobility scooters
- Environment conditions for operating scooters such as surface quality and access to footpaths, and provisions of places to park and charge scooters within the community.

All levels of government have a role to play in improving the safety of non-registered motorised vehicle use in the community. Council has always been a strong advocate of local government's role in road safety. As a long-term supporter of the Local Government Road Safety Program, including the employment of a Road Safety Officer, Council currently works with the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and key stakeholders to address road safety and related behavioural issues impacting on our community.

In summary, we support the inquiry conducted by the Safesafe (Road Safety) Committee into the use of non-registered motorised vehicles and their impact on road safety.

We look forward to reviewing the recommendations of the inquiry.

Yours faithfully



Paul Hickey
General Manager