

**Submission
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ELECTRIC AND HYBRID VEHICLE BATTERIES

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NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA .

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The authors, Michael Lane and Graham Pryor have both worked in industries where there is a high risk of serious injury to people involved. This high risk environment has instilled a constant awareness of danger in all circumstances and a high standard of analysis of risk with an understanding of both intended and unintended outcomes of precautions. We have raised some issues here arising from the basic risks which have significant potential of danger to the public.

EV Fire Risks

The risk of a fire in a battery electrically powered vehicle is less than that of a fossil fueled vehicle. However, the intensity of the fire is much higher and the fire is much more difficult to extinguish. It is essential that fire authorities nationwide develop the capability to deal with these fires which may occur in parking areas and dwellings as well as on the roads.

The NMAA anticipates that developing countermeasures to protect against Lithium battery fires will be a continuing necessity.

While a fire on the road will cause significant damage and disruption, fires in parking areas and living quarters can be devastating. For

example, a fire at Luton Airport in the UK destroyed a three-story building and some 1,200 cars.

There have been numerous reports of battery powered scooters and bicycles catching fire in residences. It is apparent that a significant factor was that the charger was left on even after the battery was fully charged, resulting in a fire.

It is reported in the UK that insurance for battery electric vehicles is as much as 10 times higher than for similar performance petrol fueled cars because of the heightened total destruction probability not only from fire but also write-off due to battery damage caused by impact in a vehicle crash.

Similarly, insurance for battery electric vehicles is much higher in Australia than for petrol and diesel powered vehicles as the insurance claim is much more likely to be a write-off. It is recommended that the Staysafe Committee consults the major vehicle insurers in this regard to obtain accurate data.

It is also recommended that the Staysafe Committee commend the Department of Planning to liaise with fire experts to develop appropriate standards for fire prevention and control in apartment buildings and commercial buildings. It is also suggested that they liaise with the equivalent Departments in other States and Territories as well as Commonwealth authorities in order to generate national standards.

It is also suggested that Body Corporates of apartment buildings be required to introduce rules to prevent residents taking electrically powered scooters and bicycles into apartments and to disallow recharging within a residential building. Insurance companies are likely to support this and require that rule as a “condition of insurance”.