



THE PADDINGTON SOCIETY
FOR COMMUNITY AND HERITAGE
EST 1964

Ms Cate Faehrmann, MLC
Chair
Portfolio Committee No.6
NSW Legislative Council
By email

Dear Ms Faehrmann,

Inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility devices

I am writing on behalf of The Paddington Society to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility devices.

Background

The issues raised in the Committee's terms of reference are relevant to Paddington and are of interest to the Society. In broad terms, Paddington covers the area from Moore Park Road in the south to New South Head Road in the north and from South Dowling Street/Boundary Street in the west to Jersey Road and Trumper Park in the east.

By way of introduction, the Society is an incorporated body first established in 1964 with the overall purpose of protecting the heritage of Paddington and supporting a vibrant local community. The Society's objectives include:

- To promote Paddington as a sustainable, compact, pedestrian neighbourhood where the pedestrian has priority over vehicles.
- To encourage improved traffic management and reduced traffic speeds through sympathetic urban design measures which are not detrimental to the heritage environment.
- To augment the sustainable form of Paddington by encouraging the introduction of appropriate technologies which reduce energy and water consumption without harmful effects upon the heritage environment.
- To promote a friendly, sociable and safe living environment for use by people and families of all ages.

Further information on the Society is available at: <https://paddington society.org.au/>

Scope of this submission

This submission is focused on the use and regulation of e-bikes and e-scooters (including shared schemes). It does not address regulatory and other issues associated with the use of motorised buggies, wheelchairs, etc, except to observe that as the number of older people increases, the regulation of (and planning for) these devices is likely to become an increasingly important area of transport policy.

Overall observations

Given the organisation's objectives, the Paddington Society encourages greater use of cycling and scooters. These devices can complement the use of public transport, improving access within and beyond Paddington, and with lower environmental impacts (emissions, land required for parking, etc) than the use of motor vehicles. That said, it is important that:

- the introduction of cycling facilities and associated equipment such as parking areas for shared devices occurs in a planned manner (with meaningful and effective community input)
- the use of these devices is managed in a manner that acknowledges the use of streets and the public domain by pedestrians and others.

The experience with shared mobility devices in Paddington suggests there is a need for some regulatory change, both for those using their own mobility devices and those using shared devices.

In addition, the importance of planning for e-mobility devices is likely to increase. Growing use of these devices, and some of the potential regulatory changes, will require thorough planning, e.g. planning will be required to ensure parking for shared devices is convenient to users while also recognizing that other users will need to use the public spaces where these facilities will be located. In comparatively dense areas, like Paddington, there will almost certainly be difficult trade-offs. Resolution of those trade-offs will require input from local communities and councils.

Use of shared mobility devices in Paddington – Issues and opportunities

The Society does not hold detailed, quantitative information on the utilisation of e-bikes and e-scooters in Paddington. At least in respect of shared devices, that information is presumably available from the operators of those schemes.

Members of the Paddington community have observed that the use of e-bikes (especially) has increased over the last few years. As yet, e-scooters are not widely used in Paddington.

The principal current problems with the use of e-mobility devices are:

- a) Parking of shared devices at the end of a trip - As in other areas of Sydney, shared bikes (and scooters) are frequently left in locations where they obstruct pedestrians. Often, the bikes are not parked in a standing position; rather they are simply left lying across the footpath. In other cases, bikes are parked in a standing position but in an awkward location, and/or are knocked over and then left obstructing the footpath. (Two photos of bikes having been left inappropriately or parked in a poor location are attached).
- b) Risks to pedestrian safety when e-bikes and e-scooters (whether shared or not) are operated at high speeds on footpaths, or through pedestrian areas/malls. Given the density of Paddington and the popularity of some of its key local centres – e.g. along Oxford Street and around ‘The Fiveways’ junction - this is a particular issue.

Possible Areas for Reform

The Society is pleased to see that a group of NSW agencies is working on these matters.¹ In summary, the Society sees the main opportunities for reform occurring in the following areas:

1. Establishing a regulatory framework which has standardised rules for share e-bike operators.
2. Empowering local councils to penalise share e-bike operators for breaches of such rules to encourage compliance. For example, Part 7 of Transport for London’s *Dockless Bike Share Code of Practice* provides for financial penalties on share-ride operators in the event of breaches of the code. The code includes a number of other provisions that may be useful ideas for recommendations arising from the inquiry.
3. Allowing councils to limit the number of share e-bikes and e-scooters in their LGA.
4. Establishing designated pick-up and drop off zones for share e-bikes and e-scooters. This would reduce the obstruction on footpaths and accessibility issues. Geo-fencing technologies

¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/geo-fence-technology-to-be-used-in-sydney-share-bike-crackdown-20240708-p5js13.html>

should be used in this regard. It would also minimise environmental hazards arising from dumping in waterways.

5. Setting speed limits for all e-bikes and e-scooters, whether personal or shared.
6. Imposing restrictions on the use of e-bikes and e-scooters in areas with high pedestrian traffic
7. Encouraging local councils to address these matters in their:
 - a) Overarching strategic documents, principally those under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, i.e. the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan
 - b) Their land use planning controls, principally their Local Strategic Planning Statements, Local Environmental Plans, Development Control Plans, and their developer contribution mechanisms.

The Society believes the measures set out in the *Guidelines for Dockless Bike Share Operators* applied by Woollahra and other inner city councils are worthy of support.²

Finally, the Society notes that the former Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe) reported on the safety dimensions of non-registered motorised vehicles in March 2014.³ While the Society has not had an opportunity to review the report's conclusions and recommendations, it will no doubt provide a useful resource to the current inquiry.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this matter

Yours faithfully



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² <https://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/Services/traffic-and-transport/Cycling>

³ [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/inquiries/2009/Non registered%20Motorised%20Vehicles.PDF](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/inquiries/2009/Non%20registered%20Motorised%20Vehicles.PDF)

Photos of e-bikes having been left inappropriately or parked in a poor location in Paddington

