

INQUIRY INTO USE OF E-SCOOTERS, E-BIKES AND RELATED MOBILITY OPTIONS

Organisation: Millers Point Community Resident Action Group
Date Received: 18 August 2024

Millers Point Community Resident Action Group

Hon. Cate Faehrmann,
August 2024

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Chair,
Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6
Transport and the Arts

Re: Inquiry into the use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options

Dear Ms Faehrmann,

Please find attached the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group's (MPCRAG) submission to the above NSW Parliamentary Upper House Inquiry.

The Community is very concerned at the impacts of the apparent lack of regulation around the use of E-Bikes in our area. They are often left on the ground and across resident's doorways causing pedestrian danger.

The vendors regularly park their bikes on our footpaths which we believe encourages rider to ride on the footpath often without helmets and at speed

Riders often leave left bikes or lying down across our footpaths. This not only creates a danger, but the bikes also pollute our streets and parks for weeks at a time. There seems to be no consequences to vendors.

We also note with interest that the City of Melbourne has recently banned E-scooter within their CBD.

We call on the Parliament to legislate strict regulations for both E-Bikes and E-scootersS use in NSW.

Understanding the Upper House Inquiry process, the MPCRAG formally request the opportunity to address the Inquiry committee regarding our concerns.

Kind Regards,

President

Millers Point Community Resident Action Group inc.

MPCRAG Submission to NSW Parliament on the “Use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options”

The Millers Point Community Resident Action Group (MPCRAG) is a not for profit community organisation representing the interests of the residents of Millers Point, Dawes Point, The Rocks and Walsh Bay, a State Heritage Listed Precinct within the City of Sydney.

The MPCRAG executive, on behalf of our members and community would like to express our dismay at the handling of the Share Bike Scheme and its profoundly negative impact on pedestrians in our community and in NSW.

We look to this inquiry with hope that some sensible discussions may be had and that much needed improvements can be made moving forward.

The issues;

- The failure to require these bikes to utilise a docking system
- The storage of bikes on footpaths instead of the road
- The uncapped number of bikes in the public domain
- More than one operator vying for market share
- Bikes without helmets
- The poor compliance of riders with road rules

Our suggestions;

- Only one approved supplier in the market, operators should be required to tender to TfNSW or to local Councils to become the approved operator for a period of 5 years with a maximum number of bikes permitted at any one time
- The maximum number of bikes should be determined based off usage data
- The approved operator should pay a bond that will cover costs of fines and removal or recycling of abandoned/damaged bikes
- A docking/geolocated parking system should be rolled out and bikes required to be hired from and returned to these points. These docks/racks should be located in spaces on the road
- More funding on cycleway and bike related infrastructure is needed so that cyclists are protected from cars and are not tempted to ride on footpaths, priority should be given to addressing breaks in existing cycling infrastructure such as completing the Sydney Harbour Bridge Southern Cycleway ramp and finalising the Oxford Street East Cycleway beyond Centennial Park.

Further, the inquiry addresses the use of e-scooters. The MPCRAG does not support the rollout of e-scooters in NSW. The reasons for which we have summarised below;

- E-scooters pose an unacceptable risk to pedestrians as they are almost always ridden on footpaths
- The risk of serious injury in young people is high and the lifetime costs of public healthcare outweigh any potential mobility benefits offered by this transport mode
- Unlike cycling, E-scooters offer no health benefits as the user is not physically exerted in their operation. In this respect they are a “lazy” mode of transport akin to Segways

- The argument that e-scooters assist the disabled is unfounded by evidence and the disabled community are placed at increased risk of injury from collisions with e-scooters and e-bikes on footpaths and in the cases where these devices are left blocking footpath access. Perhaps a system that permits those with disabilities to ride privately owned e-scooters might be acceptable

The current situation with regard to micromobility in NSW is untenable. In every single community meeting held by our organisation as well as external meetings attended by the executive, the frustration of the public at the mismanagement of e-bikes and e-scooters is discussed in heated fashion. Disabled members have been reduced to tears when recounting incidents of blocked access to footpaths and accessible ramps, and residents regularly find these bikes blocking front gates and doors. Residents and visitors with wheelchairs or prams are often required to walk on the road as footpaths are blocked by bikes and numerous incidents of near misses between pedestrians and ebike and scooter riders on footpaths are being reported every month.

Whilst we realise that share bikes have a role to play in our transportation network, their current management creates more harm than good. We do not support the roll out of e-scooters for the reasons outlined above.

We call on the NSW Government to show leadership in this space and to swiftly implement rules and regulations to ensure that share bikes work in the public interest and to minimise harm.

Attached:

Images taken over a two week period of share bikes on our streets