

The Hon. Dr Jim Chalmers
Treasurer
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By email: jim.chalmers.mp@aph.gov.au

The Hon. Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
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By email: Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au

CC:
Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury
By email: Andrew.Leigh.MP@aph.gov.au

30th July 2025

Dear Treasurer,
Dear Minister King,

Re: E-bike regulation

On behalf of Bicycle Industries Australia, We Ride Australia and the Australian bicycle organisations listed at the end of this letter, we are writing to you to request urgent action to:

- address the serious safety issues related to non-compliance of e-bikes imported into this country, and
- ensure e-bikes sold and used in this country are fit-for-purpose and safe in terms of accepted international safety standards and speed capability.

The current crisis

The two solutions we propose would address the alarming situation being faced across the country for both the safety of users and pedestrians due to vehicles that can only be called illegal motorbikes and a lack of import controls on sub-standard machines and batteries that are resulting in unrestrained fires that have also resulted in tragic deaths.

To solutions to reduce the impact of these alarming events are:

- Re-establish an e-bike vehicle category within the Road Vehicle Standards act with a requirement to meet EN15194¹ for the import of an e-bike as a road vehicle
 - Require evidence of compliance for every e-bike imported to facilitate simple enforcement
- Update the definition of an EPAC in the National Roads Regulation to include the requirement to meet EN15194, the accepted global standard for such vehicles.

¹ Further requirements may be considered for the addition of a specific electrical product standard

Previous correspondence and legislative history

In a letter to Minister King twelve months ago we conveyed our concerns relating to the import of e-bikes and other light electric vehicles.

It was clear then that the 2021 amendment by the Minister assisting the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Hogan MP, removing the category AB class vehicles and modifying the definition of an e-bike from the Motor Vehicles Act 1998 (replaced with the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018), was resulting in a significant deterioration of the safety of riders and other impacted users.

This amendment has had a very deleterious impact on road safety as use of non-road legal e-bikes (or unroadworthy motorbikes) and e-scooters has boomed and we strongly urge you to consider reversing this amendment.

The explanatory notes associated with the amendment clearly show our industry sector was not consulted, and not only is the industry, which supplies affordable, accessible vehicles for short trips, suffering the consequences, wider impacts to safety are tragically also being experienced nationally. Prior to that amendment, e-bike imports were managed by the Motor Vehicle Standards Act.

Minister King, as stated in your response to our request to consider these issues (MC24-012750 of 9 September 2024) your office has advised that as e-bikes and e-scooters are not classed as 'road vehicles,' the Government does not play a role in regulating their design, importation or first provision to the Australian market.

We strongly seek your commitment to consider all forms of e-mobility as viable, economically productive and accessible road vehicles and to treat them as such in the legislation.

The change to the act 'opened' the door for poor quality product to enter the country with minimal 'checks and balances', significantly contributing to the current Lithium-ion battery concerns, and road safety concerns due to overpowered, un-regulated motors and the poor quality of the bicycles themselves.

Industry and economic context

Consumer sentiment continues to shift to the utilisation of light electric vehicles (LEV). Sales of e-bikes across the globe and in Australia show that the shift to electric vehicles is well underway.

- bicycles have consistently outsold motorcars each year in Australia for more than two decades
- new bike sales grew to 3.2million units during the 2020 and 2021 COVID years
- sales of e-bikes are now 25% of all annual bike sales and expected to grow to 50%
- the bicycle industry contributes \$16.2 billion to the Australian economy each year, and
- The industry supports 32,000 jobs.

Your federal leadership on this would assist efforts by your State and Territory colleagues to address the challenges they are all currently facing.

As states now 'go it alone', we have moved from a single definition of an e-bike to now being faced with 5 different definitions across 8 states and territories. This is unproductive, unsafe and unsatisfactory!

Summary of requested actions

Treasurer and Minister King, we urge you to undertake the following actions:

- Re-establish an e-bike vehicle category within the Road Vehicle Standards act with a requirement to meet EN15194 for the import of an e-bike as a road vehicle
 - Require evidence of compliance for every e-bike imported to facilitate simple enforcement
- Update the definition of an EPAC in the National Roads Regulation to include the requirement to meet EN15194, the accepted global standard for such vehicles.

Request for meeting

We request the opportunity to meet to discuss the issues associated with e-bikes and e-scooters and the management of these issues with you.

Minister King, this continues the journey that you, as Parliamentary Secretary, started in May 2012 when you adopted the global standard for e-bikes, EN15194.

We look forward to your response,

Regards



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On behalf of the following organisations:



Further information on next page.

Vehicle Not Compliance Reports

In February and March this year, 20 Vehicle Not Compliance Reports were submitted to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts for products. Also:

- They were imported as e-bikes but did not meet the Federal Governments own definition of an e-bike, including features that would categorise them as a motorbike.
- Of the 20 products, 17 did not apply for an advisory notice under the voluntary ROVER portal.
- The Department has yet to finalise their reviews.

State Inquiries into e-bikes

In the last two years:

- NSW has undertaken its second Parliamentary Inquiry that includes e-bikes,
- Qld and WA are currently undertaking Parliamentary Inquiries,
- Tasmania has undertaken a complete review of e-bikes,
- Victoria and NSW are developing legislation to ban all e-bikes from trains, and
- the NSW Office of Fair Trading has introduced additional sale and hire regulations, unique to any other jurisdiction in the world.

We have actively participated in all these inquiries and would be happy to provide you with copies of all submissions made by Bicycle Industries Australia for information.

Sales regulations

- The NSW Government's new requirements will increase costs to consumers, cost jobs and decimate the \$330M² NSW cycle tourism sector as bike hire fleets will be severely impacted.
- In their own words, the NSW Office of Fair Trading will also struggle to impact the dangerous product that is shipped directly to consumers from offshore as customs controls do not prevent its import.
- This issue is exacerbated by the import tariffs on e-bikes from Europe (which are generally higher quality) but exemptions from the tariffs for e-bikes from China (generally lower quality).

Insurance

- As products with power greater than 250w and assisted speed greater than 25kmh are deemed motor vehicles by the insurance sector, many consumers are being left without insurance and highly exposed to personal liability in the event of an incident.

² The Australian Cycling and E-scooter Economy in 2022