

28 August 2024

Hon Tom Koutsantonis MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Minister for Planning
GPO Box 11032
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Minister,

RE: Statutes Amendment (Personal Mobility Devices) Bill 2024

I am writing to share feedback and insights from older South Australians in relation to the Personal Mobility Devices Statutes Amendment Bill, which will pave the way for private electronic scooters (e-scooters) to be used on public roads and paths.

As you know, COTA SA is committed to ensuring older South Australians have the opportunity, capacity and ability to navigate the changes of ageing in their place of choice; and, that they can do all of this safely when out in their communities. Since the introduction of legislation to Parliament, we have received concerned enquiries from our members and members of the public, specifically, regarding the safety of both pedestrians and other road/ path users.

We acknowledge the consultation that the government carried out last year and note that the engagement process highlighted mixed views in the community. While respondents were more likely to support the ongoing use of e-scooters on public roads and paths, it is important to recognise that most respondents to the consultation were under the age of 50 years, male and from metropolitan Adelaide.

COTA SA has recently completed a survey of our members seeking further information on how our community felt about all e-scooters (both privately owned and public e-scooters) and a snapshot of results is attached for your reference.

A strong majority (70%) of older people tell us they do not support the legislative change.

The principal concerns of older people include:

- Feeling personally unsafe around e-scooters when walking or driving on the road (81%)
- Trip hazards and environmental litter due to insufficient parking provision (77%)

Our community members have told us: "it is not sufficient to require the rider to ring a bell because they rarely do. I have experienced riders not ring their bell when walking along a shared path and they go whizzing past me. This frightens me and also has the potential to cause serious injury to me and the rider."

They have also stated: "For older South Australians and those with mobility issues e-scooters are a real problem when being used on footpaths, weaving in and out. Then being "dumped" wherever, a real trip hazard on narrow footpaths and egress and ingress to buildings."

Pedestrians not only feel unsafe, but also unwanted on footpaths. As the State moves to amend this legislation to increase e-scooter access, we must ensure that this doesn't deter older South Australians from leading active lifestyles, because of real and perceived increased risks to their safety when walking.

One older South Australian told us: “As a walker I’m forever having to dodge electric scooters especially on Linear Park...I feel walkers are being ‘pushed’ aside. You can no longer go for a leisurely walk...it’s sad, because there are lonely older people who would at least go for a walk and no longer do so as they feel it’s not safe...Walkers have been completely forgotten.”

We acknowledge the broad range of experiences among older people including around 9% who are e-scooter users and who use these regularly to commute, for leisure, when travelling, or simply to give them a go. Unsurprisingly, e-scooter users are more likely to feel positively towards their use in the community.

As the Government moves forward in drafting the legislation, however, we seek clarification from you as to how the concerns of a majority of older pedestrians and road users will be addressed.

In particular:

- How will legislation assure the safety of all footpath and road users with respect to
 - Parking, cluttering and vandalism
 - Riders potentially being unlicensed and unfamiliar with the device or with road rules
 - Riders travelling above the recommended speed limit, and how will the maximum speed be determined?
 - Riders being unregistered therefore not trackable
 - Riders’ lack of insurance
- Who will be responsible for monitoring the above issues, for example, the police, local council parking inspectors, and will this be adequately resourced?
- Will e-scooters be required to have a recognised sound that can support pedestrians to hear the e-scooter approaching?

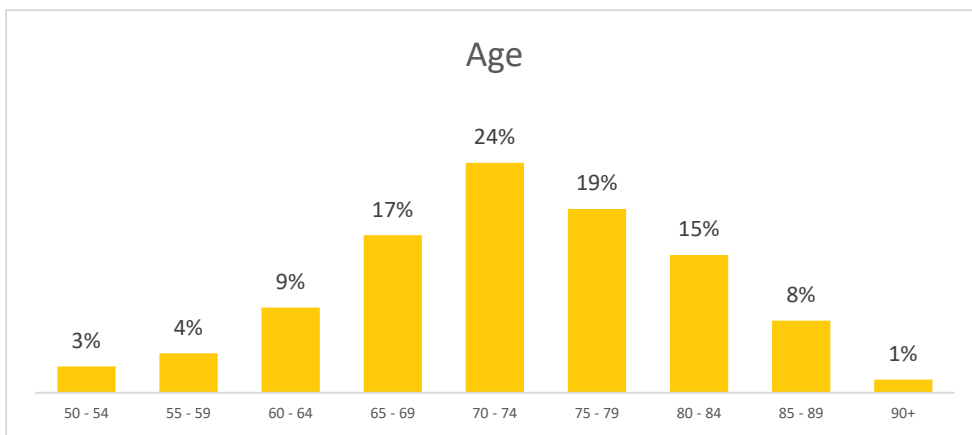
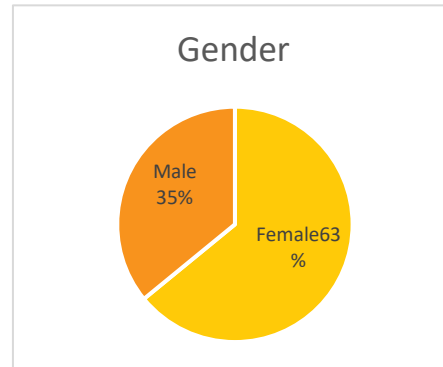
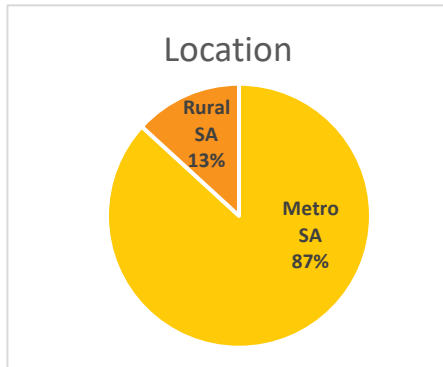
We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss these concerns and to understand what measures may be planned to ensure the safety and ongoing wellbeing of older people when walking and driving around e-scooters. We would be pleased to be able to share your feedback and other useful information with our community, to reassure them that their concerns are being addressed and to assist them to prepare for the commencement of the legislated changes, as may be appropriate.

Thank you, as always, for your consideration of these issues and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Miranda Starke
Chief Executive

COTA SA E-SCOOTER MEMBER SURVEY SNAPSHOT, 2024



How strongly to you agree or disagree with the following statements:

