

## Victoria Police issues raised in response to the questions posed by NTC Issues paper.

### Barriers to the safe use of innovative vehicles and motorised mobility devices; January 2019.

1. **What characteristics need to be considered when defining what an innovative vehicle is?**
  - How can we influence the universal naming conventions to identify types?
    - i) Based on the level of 'familiarity' of vehicle category (cycle / skateboard / scooter / chair)
      - (1) i.e. are they more like pedestrians or cycles
      - (2) confusion between 4 different *scooter* types (foot / child's / e / Vespa type)
    - ii) These vehicle fit into three overarching categories –
      - (1) Mobility appliances (motorised wheelchairs and motorised mobility scooters)
      - (2) Cycles (powered mono, bi & tri cycles)
      - (3) Personal Electric Transportation Devices (PETD) (electric scooters, skateboards etc)
  - What is the intended purpose? Recreation vs commuter?
    - i) Are they a transport option or a necessary health aid? (e.g.: able bodied choice vs disabled necessity)
  - Maximum size and weight to address portability / manual handling on public transport
  - When do they cease to be a PETD and become a motor vehicle?
    - i) Speed – maximum capable / maximum allowed?
      - (1) How does the user measure speed?
    - ii) Commercial use – if used to generate income do they require registration / insurance
  - What is the source of motive power and the maximum power generated?
2. **What differences between motorised wheelchairs and mobility scooters need to be recognised by this project?**
  - Who the intended users are / could be.
  - Rules around who can use both devices need to be clearer? Should we require a medical / Occupational Therapist certificate for a person to use same?
  - Wheelchairs are generally an only option, and absolute necessity for any mobility
  - Mobility scooters can be a choice, users have some mobility – can lead to a decline in mobility
  - Do we need to regulate use when drug / alcohol impaired?
3. **What uses of innovative vehicles need to be considered as part of this investigation?**
  - Is it a necessary or the sole source of mobility (i.e. quadriplegic - motorised wheelchair)
  - Is it a mobility 'assistive' device (age / infirmity / injury = mobility scooter)
  - Commuter choice (either whole journey or first / last) (Work / School / Uni / Shopping?)
  - Commercial use – Courier / Food delivery
  - Recreational use – Adult / Child
4. **What key factors need to be considered when determining safe rules of operation (including speed) for innovative vehicles on roads and road-related areas?**
  - Mandatory protective safety equipment (helmets / wrist guards?)
  - Maximum ungoverned capable speed
  - Maximum dimensions – width / length for use on shared network infrastructure
  - Weight (public transport compatible)
  - Motor is tamperproof – power unable to be increased by removing a governor

- Defined areas of operation for each “group” of devices
  - i) Paths
  - ii) Shared paths
  - iii) Bicycle lanes
  - iv) Roads
    - (1) All?
    - (2) Less than 40km/h?
    - (3) Undivided?
    - (4) Rural environment
- Ability to exercise effective control – one / two handed
  - i) ‘dead-man switch’ to prevent runaway?
- Minimum safety equipment (brakes / lights / warning devices / minimum noise levels)
  - i) Warning for hearing / visually impaired – minimum noise level required
- Hours / conditions of operation (day/night)
  - i) Lighting / reflective clothing
- How the power is accessed – Throttle? Pedal? Hand control unit?
- Victoria police officers receive some training in relation to the identification of power assisted pedal cycles. However, identifying various vehicle types is made difficult by the absence of the requirement for markings on primary / auxiliary motors identifying their power output, and the inability to test the stated power outputs – some units imported and branded as 200W actually produce over 580W

**5. What are the practical and measurable outcomes required from a nationally-consistent policy and regulatory framework for innovative vehicles?**

- Consumer clarity and understanding as measured by compliance
- Compliance with importation standards (ACCC?)
- No increase in road trauma resulting from non-compliance with safety equipment requirements
- No increase in trauma associated with non-compliant network use

**6. What evidence-based distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable levels of risk associated with the use of innovative vehicles could be considered to inform the way innovative vehicles are regulated?**

- Victoria Police is not prepared to stipulate that there is any acceptable level of risk
- We, as road safety proponents, cannot allow new devices onto the network without introducing measures to prevent trauma resulting from that introduction – particularly as it refers to the interaction between different classes of vulnerable road users
- The number of injury / serious injury / fatal crashes reported would be the only national measure available, but without total device sales numbers it would be difficult to qualify this data

**7. What barriers and health or safety risks are associated with the use of a motorised mobility device that does not meet the needs of a user because of the current restrictions?**

- One suggested ‘barrier’ is the current maximum speed limit of 10 km/h. It has been suggested that this needs to be raised to 20 or 25 km/h to allow greater access to the network and increase the range of travel available. (10 km/h is representative of the speed of an average jogger)
- This also presents as a health and safety risk to both the user and the wider community as the devices – both mobility scooters and motorised wheel chairs - are not designed for that speed across the existing infrastructure of footpaths and cross overs. The stability of the

devices, combined with the capacity to control and respond to changes in terrain and circumstance present significant risks to the user.

- The proposal to increase the weight limit of the devices, combined with the weight of the user could see a vehicle in excess of 200kg travelling at potentially unsafe speed on pedestrian infrastructure.

**8. How do current classifications of drivers of wheelchairs as both 'pedestrians' and 'vehicles' in the Australian Road Rules create confusion?**

- There is no significant confusion identified as wheel chairs are not a significant issue on the network at this time, nor are they over represented in trauma or offence data.
- If the design parameters were to change however this could present a point of confusion.

**9. Is there a need for construction and performance requirements for motorised mobility devices to ensure safe use on public transport infrastructure?**

- PTV advises that there are maximum weight and dimension limits required to permit their safe use on the public transport network.
- There could be additional manual handling issues experienced by Protective Services Officers (PSOs) if they were required to assist users on the train network.

**10. What evidence is available on the road safety risks associated with motorised mobility devices that could be used to inform the way motorised mobility devices are regulated?**

- There is very limited empirical data available at this time, anecdotal evidence centres on network sharing, footpath widths and minor altercations with pedestrians.
- Reports of collisions involving mobility devices are infrequent but where they are reported it generally involves serious injury or fatality

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