POSITION STATEMENT

Personal Mobility Devices including e-scooters

December 2025

Victoria walks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs), including e-scooters, are a growing part of Australia's transport mix. When managed well, they can offer convenience and expand mobility. However, their integration must support—not compromise—the real and perceived safety of public spaces. If people feel unsafe, particularly older adults and people with disability, they may avoid walking and become excluded from public life. Victoria Walks supports evidence-based regulation that integrates new modes in ways that keep streets safe, accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Key Positions

1. **Footpaths should be for pedestrians only**
   - Footpath riding increases fear, near misses and serious injury risk for vulnerable walkers.
   - PMDs should be used on roads, bike lanes and shared paths.
2. **Create parking spaces for PMDs off footpaths**
   - Parked PMDs can obstruct movement and create trip hazards.
   - Parking should be limited to designated off-footpath areas with strong compliance.
3. **Invest in safer infrastructure, supported by enforcement**
   - Reducing illegal footpath riding requires dedicated infrastructure, safer speeds, education and consistent enforcement.
4. **Ensure safe devices and responsible operation**
   - National safety and technology standards should be mandatory for hire operators.
   - Federal import rules must be tightened to require devices to meet minimum safety specifications.

Further Actions

5. **Ensure fair compensation for people injured in public space**
   - Pedestrians injured by PMDs currently fall outside existing road injury schemes. Dedicated no-fault insurance coverage is needed.
6. **PMDs alongside, not instead of, active transport**
   - Evidence shows PMDs mostly replace walking and public transport, not car trips, and offer minimal physical activity benefits.
7. **Collect comprehensive data to guide decisions**
   - Reducing illegal footpath riding requires dedicated infrastructure, safer speeds, education and consistent enforcement.

Implementing these measures will significantly improve pedestrian safety, confidence and accessibility—particularly for older adults and people with disability who rely on safe, walkable streets.

1 PURPOSE

Victoria Walks has developed this position in response to the rapid expansion of personal mobility devices (PMDs), including e-scooters, in Victoria and across Australia. While these devices offer potential transport benefits, they also present safety risks and accessibility challenges for people walking — particularly older adults and people with disability who rely on footpaths for safe and independent mobility.

As an evidence-based health promotion organisation and Australia's leading voice for pedestrian safety and walkable communities, we seek to ensure that emerging transport technologies are integrated in ways that maintain safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces for everyone. This position provides clear, evidence-based guidance for all levels of government and shared mobility operators to support safe, accessible, and equitable use of e-scooters and PMDs.

2 A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Victoria Walks uses the term **Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs)** in this position statement as the preferred umbrella term, consistent with national transport regulation. PMDs include small, electric devices such as e-scooters and e-skateboards, but not e-bikes. Mobility scooters, motorised wheelchairs and other assistive devices are not classified as PMDs.

In Victoria, e-scooters are the only PMDs currently legal in public space. They may be used on shared paths and some roads — but not on footpaths. Other PMDs remain illegal to use in public space. PMD regulations for all Australian states and territories are shown in the Appendix p. 15.

3 KEY POSITIONS AND ACTIONS

Victoria Walks' positions are based on available evidence and reflect international best practice, including many of the International Transport Forum's 10 Recommendations for Safe Micromobility (ITF, 2020). They are grounded in the principle that everyone—especially those most reliant on walking—should have access to public spaces that are safe, accessible and inclusive.

Immediate priority actions

While all of Victoria Walks' positions are important, some require immediate attention to protect pedestrian safety and public confidence. Implemented over the next one to two years, these measures will deliver the greatest safety and accessibility benefits for people walking. Victoria Walks urges all levels of government to prioritise the following actions.

3.1 Footpaths should be for pedestrians only

Footpaths must be spaces dedicated to pedestrians. E-scooters and other PMDs should be permitted on roads, bike lanes, and shared paths, but prohibited from footpaths. This ensures footpaths remain safe, inclusive spaces for people of all ages and abilities, particularly older people and people with disability who rely on footpaths for mobility and independence. Consistent regulation across bicycles and PMDs on shared paths improves predictability for all road users and supports safer integration without compromising space for walkers.

3.2 Create parking spaces for PMDs off footpaths

E-scooters and other PMDs should not be left or stored on footpaths. When parked in pedestrian areas, these devices can obstruct access, create trip hazards, and reduce the amenity and usability of public space. This is especially true for people using mobility aids or with vision impairment, and in areas with high pedestrian volumes. Parking should be provided in designated on-road locations, such as on-street corrals, to keep footpaths clear and accessible and ensure that trips do not start and finish on the footpath.

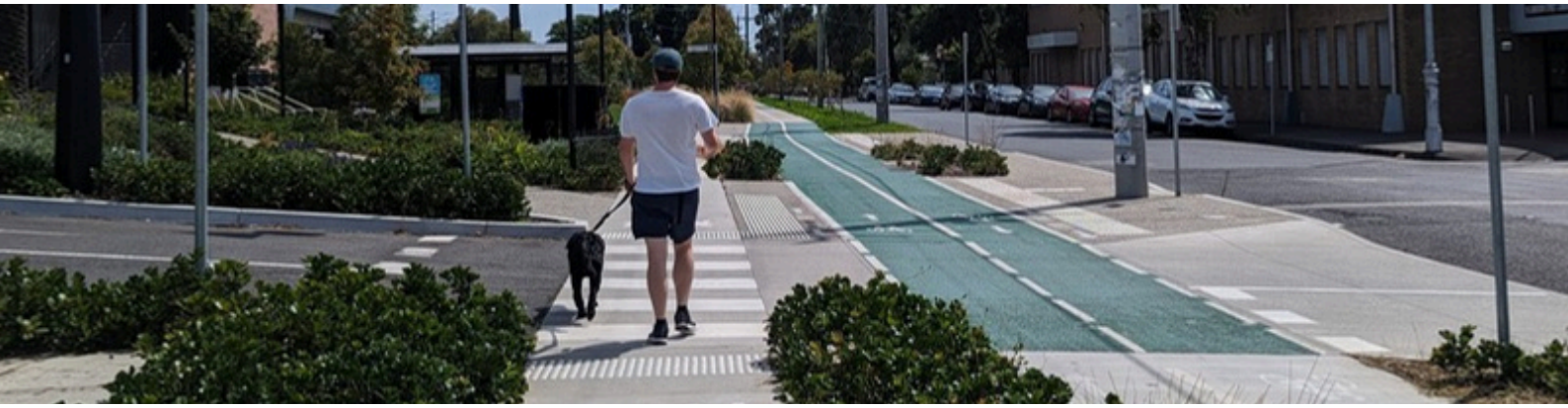
Santa Monica e-scooter parking corral by Gary Kavanagh. Image source: Streetsblog

Immediate priority actions (continued)

3.3 Invest in safer infrastructure, supported by enforcement

Safe, attractive on-road and path infrastructure for e-scooter riders will discourage footpath riding and reduce risks for people both walking and riding. This requires:

- Dedicated infrastructure (e.g. protected lanes).
- Safer speed limits on roads and streets.
- Public education on safe and respectful riding.
- Consistent enforcement of riding and parking rules by police, with a focus on preventing illegal footpath riding.



3.4 Ensure safe devices and responsible operation

High-speed, non-compliant devices – including throttle-controlled e-scooters and modified e-bikes – pose serious safety risks for people walking. Their proliferation has been fuelled by federal import law changes and weak enforcement, blurring the line between legal and illegal PMDs.

The Australian Government should act urgently to:

- Strengthen national import controls and product standards.
- Require devices to meet minimum safety specifications (e.g. effective brakes, inbuilt speed limiters).
- Prohibit tampering with speed or power limits, with effective mechanisms to ensure ongoing compliance.

State governments should:

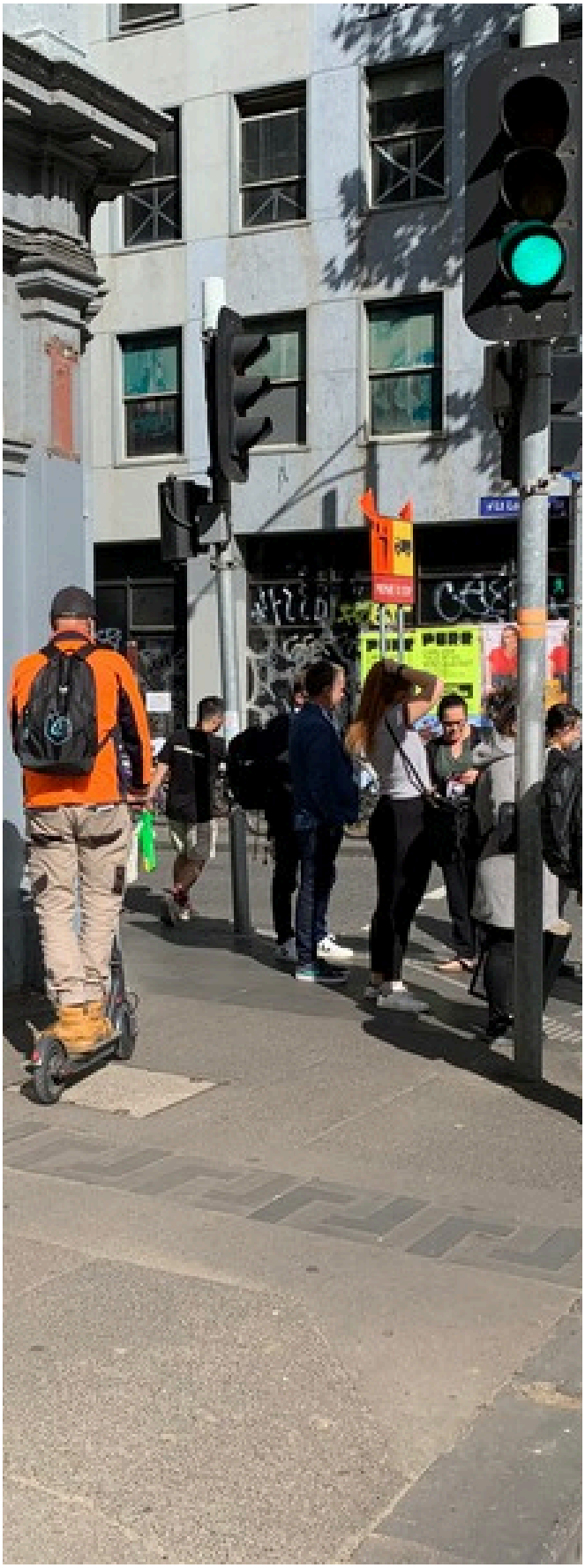
- Enforce existing laws to remove illegal devices from public space.

Victoria's new framework, established under the Transport Legislation Amendment (Vehicle Sharing Scheme Safety and Standards) Bill 2025, will require all shared e-scooter operators to meet Department of Transport and Planning safety and operational standards by early 2026.

Victoria Walks supports clear, enforceable standards for shared schemes, and recommends that:

- Similar minimum safety requirements be adopted nationally to ensure consistency across jurisdictions.
- All required technologies be independently verified and demonstrated to be effective in reducing illegal riding and protecting pedestrians – including footpath detection, helmet verification, impairment (alcohol and drug) detection, and parking management systems.

Further actions



3.5 Ensure fair compensation for people injured in public space

State and territory governments should introduce no-fault insurance schemes, similar to existing compulsory third party insurance schemes (e.g. TAC in Victoria), to support people injured by PMDs in public space. Current legal and insurance gaps leave people walking unprotected when struck by (legal and illegal) e-scooters, bikes, and other devices.

3.6 PMDs alongside, not instead of, active travel

Transport and land use planning should prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, which deliver clear physical activity and emissions benefits. Evidence shows that e-scooters often replace these trips rather than car travel, so PMDs should not be promoted as active travel or an alternative to private vehicles without demonstrated mode shift.

3.7 Collect comprehensive data to guide decisions

Consistent, transparent monitoring is essential for evidence-based policy and investment. Governments should collect and publish data on PMD use, with a focus on injury, crash and compliance data, trip patterns, and impacts on people walking. Operators should be required to share trip and compliance data with government.

Policy settings should be reviewed at least every three years to reflect rapid technological changes, informed by data and consultation with pedestrians, people with disabilities, older adults, and local government stakeholders.

4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Growing PMD use creates challenges for people walking

The use of PMDs has expanded rapidly across Australia and internationally in recent years. Shared e-scooter schemes now operate in every Australian capital city except Sydney (as of September 2025) and PMDs are increasingly visible in metropolitan areas with high pedestrian activity. The legalisation of private e-scooters has increased numbers further. As the number of PMDs in circulation rises, so does the likelihood of conflict with pedestrians – especially in busy activity centres and other places with high levels of walking.

In Victoria, shared operators logged over 3.7 million e-scooter trips in the 13 months to March 2023 (State Government of Victoria, 2023), averaging around 8,000 trips per day in the inner city (Baggs, 2022). In Brisbane, where PMDs have been permitted since 2018, daily trips averaged around 10,000 in 2025 (Brisbane City Council, 2025). Nationally, between 350,000 and 400,000 PMDs were estimated to be privately owned in 2024 (Balfoort & Greaves, 2024). Internationally, cities such as Paris, Berlin and Portland have seen similarly rapid uptake.

Evaluations of PMD schemes are not routinely conducted or publicly reported in Australia. The Department of Transport and Planning conducted an evaluation of the Victorian e-scooter trial, but only headline results have been released and the full report is not publicly available. This lack of transparency impedes assessment of pedestrian outcomes and reinforces the need for consistent, public monitoring.

Available evidence, however, consistently shows that many PMD trips replace walking, with far fewer substituting for car travel. For example, an independent survey of 500 Melbourne users found 37% of e-scooter trips replaced walking while only 3% replaced private vehicle travel (Sift Research, 2024). QUT (2025) report that 60% of shared e-scooter trips in Brisbane and 65% in Canberra replaced walking. It doesn't say what proportion of trips replaced driving or were only for fun. Overseas, shared e-scooters replace walking and public transport for more than 60% of trips in Germany (Weschke, Oostendorp, & Hardinghaus, 2022), 72% in Paris (Christoforou, de Bortoli, Gioldasis, & Seidowsky, 2021), and walking and cycling for 62% of trips in London (DfT, 2022). In addition, e-scooters are widely perceived as fun (Kopplin, Brand, & Reichenberger, 2021), with some trips made for leisure or recreation rather than essential transport.

This demonstrates that much of the growth in PMD travel has come at the expense of active travel modes that provide clear health benefits. According to the Australian Transport Assessment and Planning Guidelines (ATAP, 2023), active travel is defined as human-powered mobility, primarily walking and cycling. The guidelines further note that e-scooters do not deliver health benefits and are associated with safety concerns. Bicycle Network also consider that e-scooters are not active transport, citing negligible physical activity benefits, and have accordingly excluded e-scooters from their upcoming strategy (personal communication, 3 September 2025). PMDs therefore represent a relatively passive form of mobility with comparatively high injury rates (Seitakari, Pakarinen, Harjola, Castrén, & Vasara, 2025), undermining both public health and pedestrian safety.

4.2 People walking at risk of injury from PMDs

PMDs can cause serious injuries to people walking, both when being ridden and when parked. Pedestrian safety concerns of this kind were a major factor in the ban on shared e-scooter schemes in Paris in 2023 (Le Monde with AFP, 2023) and in the City of Melbourne in 2024 (Bell & Waite, 2024).

Singapore provides a clear example of effective regulation to protect pedestrians. The Land Transport Authority allows e-scooters only on cycling paths and requires all devices to meet strict technical and fire-safety standards, and mandates registration and two-yearly inspections to ensure ongoing compliance (Government of Singapore, 2025).

4.2.1 Moving PMDs pose serious injury risks

Even at relatively low speeds, crashes involving PMDs can result in severe injury, particularly for older adults, who are the group most often killed or seriously injured as pedestrians. Crash data from 2008 to 2017 shows that prior to the introduction of e-scooters in Victoria, approximately 6.8% of pedestrian hospitalisations were already caused by crashes with non-motor vehicles such as bicycles or mobility scooters (Oxley, Stephan, O'Hern, Burtt, & Rossiter, 2020). The growth of PMDs has added to this burden.

Most available injury data does not identify which road users are injured in PMD crashes, making it difficult to assess the true scale of harm. The Australian Automobile Association has highlighted 'glaring inconsistencies' in the way e-scooter fatalities and injuries are recorded across states and territories, and has called for improved collection and reporting to ensure policy decisions are evidence-based (AAA, 2024). *The only Australian data that specifies pedestrian injuries shows that nine pedestrians were admitted to one hospital (the Royal Melbourne) after crashes with e-scooters in the year to January 2023 (Cevik, et al., 2023).*

International studies point to similar risks: in Germany, 6% of e-scooter related hospital admissions were pedestrians or bicycle riders (Kleinertz, et al., 2023) and 1% to 10% of all injuries due to e-scooter crashes are estimated to be to pedestrians (ITF, 2020).

Research also shows that when pedestrians are struck, the consequences can be severe. A study by Paudel, Yap, Rosli, Tan, & Xu(2023) found that pedestrians hit by e-scooters are more likely to sustain severe injuries than those struck by bicycles. Unsafe behaviour like footpath riding compounds these risks. In Melbourne, 63% of survey respondents identified footpath riding as the leading concern about rider behaviour (Sift Research, 2024). Victoria Police issued 243 fines for illegal footpath riding in less than a year during the Victorian trial, highlighting ongoing risks for pedestrians (Rees, 2022). Although technologies like geofencing are promoted as solutions to detect and deter footpath riding by hire scooter users, they have not been shown to work reliably and do not actually prevent riders from using the footpath.

4.2.2 Stationary PMDs also pose serious injury risks

Injuries to pedestrians from PMDs are not limited to crashes – falls and tripping also play a major role. The leading reason people end up in hospital for any injury (road safety related or otherwise) is due to falls, with the risk of serious injury increasing sharply with age (AIHW, 2025). Research conducted for Victoria Walks found more people are hospitalised due to falls while walking in the street than from pedestrian crashes with vehicles (Oxley, O'Hern, Burtt, & Rossiter, 2016).

Shared e-scooters have added to this burden when left scattered on footpaths. They create tripping hazards, particularly for people with vision impairments or with balance difficulties (Bozovic, Parkin, Chatterjee, & Flower, 2025). Shared mobility provider Veo (2025) noted that even when parked legally, shared PMDs can still obstruct pedestrian access. International evidence highlights the scale of this problem, with ITF (2020) estimating that 59% of e-scooter related pedestrian injuries occur after tripping over parked devices. These risks are particularly acute for older adults, with pedestrians presenting to emergency departments after tripping over parked e-scooters in Germany having a median age of 61 years (Kleinertz, et al., 2023). With an ageing population, fall-related injuries are projected to rise, heightening the need to manage new risks created by PMDs in pedestrian environments.

4.2.3 Addressing insurance gaps for people walking

Legal and insurance frameworks have not kept pace with the growth of PMDs. People injured by e-scooters are not covered by state or territory road injury insurance schemes (e.g. TAC in Victoria), which generally apply only to crashes involving motor vehicles (TAC, not dated). This leaves pedestrians unprotected when struck by bicycles or PMDs (legal or illegal), in contrast to protections available when injured by motor vehicles.

4.3 Poor PMD integration undermines accessibility and equity

Beyond physical injury, PMDs in pedestrian spaces undermine people's sense of safety and willingness to walk. These impacts fall most heavily on groups already at higher risk of reduced mobility and social isolation. Older people report feeling less confident walking in environments where PMDs are ridden, due to fear of being hit, or where PMDs are parked on footpaths, due to fear of tripping (Sift Research, 2024; Victoria Walks, 2019; DfT, 2022).

Disability advocacy groups, including Vision Australia and Guide Dogs Victoria, have raised concerns that poorly parked or illegally ridden PMDs create significant barriers to independent mobility. In a Vision Australia survey of people who are blind or have low vision, 35% reported using footpaths less often due to e-scooters and similar devices (Vision Australia, 2021). Multiple options are needed for reporting fallen or obstructive vehicles, as no single reporting method is accessible to everyone (Veo, 2025).

At the same time, the profile of e-scooter users shows a clear mismatch between who benefits and who bears the risks. Surveys consistently find that e-scooter users are typically men in their 20s, often well-educated and with higher incomes (Neuron Mobility, 2025; Delbosc & Thigpen, 2024; Christoforou, de Bortoli, Gioldasis, & Seidowsky, 2021; Sanders, Branion-Calles, & Nelson, 2020). Evidence is very limited, but a global Neuron survey found around 5% of users reported disability, mainly mild mobility impairments where fatigue or pain made longer walks difficult (Alexiou, 2023).

While evidence is limited, studies consistently find that the costs and risks of PMDs fall disproportionately on more vulnerable pedestrians. People who rely most on walking and accessible public space are least able to adapt when footpaths become less safe or less accessible. Physical activity most commonly occurs in public space and recreational walking is the most common physical activity in Australia (50% of adults participate), including for people with disability (46%) and people aged 65 or older (56%) (ASC, 2025). By contrast, PMD use is often optional and discretionary for those who ride them.

The system is broken. It does not work for me as a pedestrian. I am expected to do parking enforcement. I am not being paid and I don't have time … [a City Representative] wanted me to take pictures and read the braille numbers and I said 'I am at a bus stop where there are 12 bikes and scooters … blocking the bus stop sign and sidewalk.' I said 'I don't have time, I am trying to go home.'

– focus group participant (Veo, 2025)

4.4 High-speed devices compromise pedestrian safety

High-speed devices such as throttle-controlled e-scooters and modified e-bikes may be illegal, but still present a substantial problem, undermining safety, public confidence, and legal clarity.

Federal import law changes in 2021 relaxed controls on the types of e-bikes that could be imported, directly fuelling a proliferation of high-power, high-speed devices (We Ride Australia, 2025). While the reforms applied to e-bikes, they created a pathway for a wider range of high-powered micromobility devices – including PMDs, bicycles and e-bikes – to enter the Australian market. Since then, reports of battery fires and device tampering beyond legal limits have escalated. A 2025 Melbourne study of delivery e-bikes found widespread non-compliance, with only 4% of riders observed pedalling — despite Victorian law requiring pedal assistance — and around 1 in 5 travelling faster than the 25 km/h speed limit (Delbosc, Rose, & Lawrence, 2025). NSW Police inspections found almost all e-bikes at Waverley College (99%) and most at Cronulla High (75%) to be illegal (Williams, 2025). Technically, these devices operate as illegal, unregistered motorbikes, given their speed and power, but lack registration, licensing and insurance safeguards.

Concerns about the scale of the problem with high-powered imports and battery safety are widely shared, internationally (e.g. Walker, 2025; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 2023) and across Australia. In July 2025, Bicycle Industries Australia and WeRide Australia called on governments to take urgent action in response to the growing safety risks posed by these devices, while state transport ministers have also written to the Federal Government seeking stronger controls on imports (We Ride Australia, 2025). In November 2025, the Australian Government announced it 'will reinstate the EN-15194 standard' and 'work towards a regulatory framework for e-mobility devices to ensure safe and consistent supply and use' (Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting, 2025). However, the communiqué signals intent only, providing no detail on implementation, enforcement or timelines, underscoring the need for continued regulatory action.

The presence of such devices blurs the line between what is legal and illegal, making it difficult for the public — and often for enforcement agencies — to distinguish between them. This not only creates regulatory confusion but also tarnishes public perception of compliant, legal e-bikes and e-scooters.

For people walking, the consequences extend beyond footpaths and shared paths. High-speed, non-compliant devices increase risks for pedestrians when crossing roads, with unpredictable behaviour and excessive speeds undermining confidence that laws keep people safe on the road network. These risks heighten perceptions of danger, discourage walking and reduce independence, especially for groups who most rely on safe pedestrian environments.

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Victoria Walks is an evidence-based health promotion charity, leading the move for walkable communities in Australia since 2009.

Our vision: Healthier, connected communities through more people walking more every day

Our purpose: To influence investment and inspire more people to walk more every day

Our role:

- To facilitate and inspire more walking throughout the community
- To capture, translate and promote evidence on the impact and value of walking
- To be a trusted expert, positively influencing decision-makers.

Our impact, the outcomes we seek:

- Increased walking participation – we see more people walking more every day throughout our community.
- Demonstrable investment – meaningful action and investment from government at all levels and decision-makers throughout our community.

Registration No. A0052693U

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APPENDIX – PMD regulations around Australia (September 2025)

The table below outlines the PMD regulations in various jurisdictions. Summary:

- PMDs are permitted everywhere except NSW (no private or wide-spread shared schemes) and the NT outside Darwin (where only shared e-scooters operate).
- Footpath riding is banned in Victoria (and NSW, since PMDs are not legal), but mandatory in the ACT and Darwin.
- Where footpath riding is permitted, speed limits range from 10 to 15 km/h.
- Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory are the only jurisdictions that allow children under 16 years of age to ride PMDs in public.

Jurisdiction	PMD requirements	Devices permitted (private / shared)	Footpath riding	Speed limit on footpath [1] (km/h)	Minimum rider age	Footpath parking	Notes	Link
Victoria	e-scooters only: • max weight 45 kg • max speed 25 km/h	Private and shared	No	N/A	16	Yes	Only e-scooters are legal PMDs. Private use legalised in April 2023.	Transport Victoria
New South Wales	PMDs not permitted (outside limited trials)	Shared only (limited trials)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Government has signalled change, but current rules still prohibit public use. Shared e-scooter trials began in 2022.	Transport for NSW
Queensland	PMDs: • max 125 cm by 70 cm, 135 cm high • max weight 60 kg	Private and shared	Yes (including crossings)	12	12 (supervision required under 16)	Yes	Legal since 2018, the longest-running framework in Australia.	Queensland Government
South Australia	PMDs: • max 125 cm long, 70cm wide, 135 cm high • max weight 45 kg	Private and shared	Yes (including crossings)	10	16	Yes	Private PMDs legalised in July 2025; review due 2026.	My Licence

[1] While this is the speed limit outlined in legislation, the practicality of it is only as good as enforcement.

APPENDIX continued – PMD regulations around Australia (September 2025)

Jurisdiction	PMD requirements	Devices permitted (private / shared)	Footpath riding	Speed limit on footpath [1] (km/h)	Minimum rider age	Footpath parking	Notes	Link
Western Australia	eRideables: • max 125 cm long, 70 cm wide, 135 cm high • max weight 25 kg • max speed 25 km/h	Private and shared	Yes (including crossings)	10	16	Yes	Legal framework for eRideables since 2022.	Road Safety Commission
Tasmania	PMDs: • max 125 cm long, 70cm wide, 135 cm high • max weight 45 kg • max speed 25 kg	Private and shared	Yes (including crossings)	15	16	Yes	Government committed to reviewing PMD rules within one year of their introduction in 2021; review not yet published.	Department of State Growth
Australian Capital Territory	PMDs: • max 125 cm by 70 cm, 135 cm high • max weight 60 kg	Private and shared	Yes, required (including crossings)	15	12 (younger if supervised)	Yes	Footpath use mandatory where possible. One of the earliest jurisdictions to legalise PMDs, in December 2019.	Transport Canberra Road Transport (Road Rules) Regulation 2017
Northern Territory	E-scooters only	Shared only (Darwin)	Yes, required (including crossings)	15	18	Yes (ride credit for parking in designated zones)	Footpath use mandatory where possible. Shared scheme operates under exemptions to Motor Vehicles Act and Traffic Act. Private PMD use remains prohibited.	Northern Territory Government City of Darwin