

# The Medical Journal of Australia • MJA

# MEDIA RELEASE

## **E-SCOOTERS: HELMET USE, ROAD RULES NEED ENFORCING**

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ALMOST half of the riders of shared electric scooters in Brisbane are doing so illegally and without helmets, according to the authors of a research letter published online today by the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

In the Brisbane City Council area, Lime received a permit to operate shared e-scooters from November 2018.

“The permit allows riding on roads only to cross them or to avoid obstructions on footpaths. Queensland road rules for rideables (including e-scooters) regulate their maximum dimensions, speed (maximum 25 km/h), and weight,” wrote Professor Narelle Haworth and Ms Amy Schramm from the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland. “Riders must be at least 12 years old (and supervised by an adult if under 16) and wear a bicycle helmet ... riding on higher speed and wider roads is forbidden.

“More than 500 000 e-scooter trips were undertaken during the first three months of the trial.”

Haworth and Schramm observed shared and private e-scooters and bicycle traffic for 4 days in February 2019. They found that 45% of the shared e-scooters they observed were ridden illegally (rider not wearing a helmet, riding on the road, or doubling a passenger), as were 10 private e-scooters (9%); correct helmet use was less common than for share bicycle riders (81%). Not wearing a properly fastened helmet (no helmet or helmet not properly fastened) was the most frequent risky behaviour, and was again more common among shared than private e-scooter riders (39% v 5%).

“The low helmet-wearing rate among shared e-scooter riders indicates the need to ensure that helmets remain available and that police enforce helmet rules,” they concluded.

“Further, whether bicycle helmet standards are adequate for e-scooters should be examined.”

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