

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Mobility Scooters ---- Review And Survey

I write in relation to a proposal by Senator John Williams to have restrictions put on the use of Mobility Scooters by disabled and elderly citizens.

I would like to answer Senator Williams proposal in 3 separate sections-----

1—Most Mobility Scooters sold in Australia are manufactured overseas and operate on a battery driven motor limiting their speed to both 6 and 10kph

They offer little to no protection for the rider and the road rules in most states suggest they be ridden on footpaths otherwise on the roads with caution

Most scooters have a limited carrying capacity ---the larger ones can carry up to approx 150kg and the smaller ones much less.

They provide essential transport for the disabled and those elderly people who have trouble walking to reach their local shops and other amenities

Seldom will you see younger people riding or fooling around on these scooters.

2 ---Senator Williams wife was evidently injured in an accident with a Mobility Scooter rider in front of her office in the [small town of Bingara in western NSW](#) in 2016

He has stated to me that the accident cost him approx \$60000 and that his wife had to have a hip replacement as a result of the accident

Whilst he was unwilling to say whether the scooter rider or his wife were to blame for the accident we only have his word that the Hip replacement was due to the accident --the figure of \$60000 seems excessive considering Medicare would have picked up a lot of the cost and there was no mention of what injuries were sustained by the scooter or its rider .

Further --had it been the fault of the scooter rider and the matter was serious enough then , Senator Williams should have made a police report and sued the rider for compensation

Senator Williams also states that he has had numerous verbal reports of other people having accidents with mobility scooters and their riders --BUT--- has he received any comments verified in writing

3 To pass legislation to restrict the speed /weight or other aspects of riding /using mobility scooter or motorised wheelchairs is going to create great anxiety amongst the elderly who have a great need these scooters

How would you communicate any new rules to a lot of elderly who often don't have computers and----- most importantly how would you propose to enforce any new rules

Mobility scooter riders cannot check their speed because mobility scooters or wheelchairs are not equipped with speedometers.

Further I can foresee police unwilling and embarrassed in having to book elderly and disabled riders for exceeding a speed limit by 2 or 3 kph

Then—I question what penalty or fine would you propose with most mobility scooter riders being pensioners

Push bike riders, Segway riders ride on footpaths and often many times faster than 10kph---- and they are not restricted in the speed etc they travel at

If new rules are made who will you get to enforce them and who will the Government pay to have machines modified if needed

SUMMARY

Mobility scooters are used world wide and I know of no restrictions that apply in any other country
Pedestrians have a lot to answer to in their use of public footpaths etc and Senator Williams wife accident could easily be attributed to her not looking where she was going
Having been a Mobility scooter rider myself for some time I can assure you the antics of pedestrians would horrify you and it is amazing that more of them have not had accidents with bikes scooters etc
Whilst it is regrettable that Senator Williams wife had an accident --it is grossly unfair to impose restrictions on hundreds of Mobility scooter riders/owners because of the Williams accident
Mobility scooters provide assistance and convenience to a lot of physically impaired elderly people, most who are age pensioners

FOOTNOTE

It is disturbing to think that THE SENATE can waste this much effort on a matter as trivial as mobility scooters ,when there are far greater problems in the community
Leave the pld folk alone --they have enough problems with Government

R Fountain