

E-bikes (power assisted bicycles) in South Australia

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Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure
and Transport

**Build.
Move.
Connect.**

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters.

We pay our respects to the diversity of cultures, significance of contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Build Move Connect.

by Jaylene Ware

Wirangu, Kokatha and Antakirinja
Matu-Yankunytjatjara Artist



Contents

Introduction	5
E-bikes (power assisted bicycles) in South Australia	6
Background	6
E-bikes in South Australia	6
National standards for e-bikes	6
Changes to national definitions in 2021	6
Non-compliant devices.....	7
Reinstatement of EN15194 in 2025	7
What is a compliant e-bike in South Australia?	7
Non-compliant devices (illegal e-bikes).....	8
Electric motorcycles	9
Regulatory framework in South Australia	10
Rules for compliant e-bikes.....	11
Insurance and liability	11
Road crash data reporting	11
Offences and Penalties.....	12
Compliant e-bikes in other Australian states and territories.....	13
Discussion	14
Review of the South Australian e-bike regulatory framework	14
Compliant e-bikes.....	14
Key considerations to improve safety in South Australia	14
Use of compliant e-bikes and incidents.....	14
European standard EN15194.....	15
The minimum age of a rider	15
Speed limits on footpaths and shared paths	15
Drug and alcohol testing for E-bike riders	16
Non-compliant devices (or illegal e-bikes).....	16
Seizure and destruction of non-compliant devices	17

Introduction

Work is currently underway at a national level to develop a harmonised regulatory framework for electric mobility devices, including e-bikes and Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs). This work aims to ensure the safe and consistent supply and use of these devices in the Australian market, while still promoting mobility and innovation.

Separate to the national work, the South Australian Government has committed to reviewing the state-based PMD regulatory framework to ensure that the rules remain appropriate, safe, and fit for purpose. Although e-bikes are regulated separately, they are being included in this review in response to their increasing use and concerns raised about their safe operation.

As part of the state-based review, the South Australian Government is seeking feedback on both the PMD and e-bike regulatory frameworks. To support this process, separate Discussion Papers and surveys have been developed for each framework.

It is important that you read both papers before completing the surveys.

E-bikes (power assisted bicycles) in South Australia

Background

E-bikes in South Australia

E-bikes (also known as power assisted bicycles) that meet regulatory requirements have been permitted in South Australia since 2014. They are regulated under the same rules that apply to bicycles.

National standards for e-bikes

Before 2021, all Australian states and territories used a single national standard for e-bikes called the European Standard EN15194. At that time, e-bikes were commonly referred to as “pedelecs”. This standard was adopted through the Australian Design Rules (ADRs), which are administered by the Australian Government.

Under EN15194, an e-bike must:

- have a motor with a maximum power output of 250 watts.
- only provide motor assistance while the rider is pedalling.
- stop providing assistance when the rider reaches 25 km/h, or when the rider stops pedalling (above 6 km/h); and
- meet specific safety requirements for brakes, frame strength, electrical systems, and batteries.

EN15194 also includes strict requirements for battery, electrical, and fire safety, as well as measures to prevent tampering with speed and power limits.

Changes to national definitions in 2021

In 2021, the Commonwealth Government updated the definition of an e-bike that could be imported and used as a bicycle. The term “pedelec” was removed and replaced with two new categories:

- Power Assisted Pedal Cycle (PAPC), and
- Electrically Power Assisted Pedal Cycle (EPAC).

At the same time, EN15194 was no longer directly referenced in the ADRs. However, the definition of an EPAC closely matches the requirements of EN15194.

Since 2021, a compliant e-bike in South Australia has been defined as one that meets the requirements of either a PAPC or an EPAC.

Non-compliant devices

In recent years, more devices described as “e bikes” have appeared in the community that do not meet the legal requirements of a PAPC or EPAC. These devices are non-compliant and are not permitted to be used on public roads or paths, even if they are marketed or sold as e bikes.

Reinstatement of EN15194 in 2025

In December 2025, the Commonwealth Government reinstated the reference to EN15194 for e-bikes that can be imported and used as bicycles. This change helps clarify which e-bikes can be imported as bicycles and are considered safe. It may also make it easier for customers, retailers, and police to identify compliant e-bikes.

Although EN15194 is again referenced at the national level for importation, South Australia currently continues to define a legal e-bike as one that meets the requirements of either a PAPC or an EPAC.

What is a compliant e-bike in South Australia?

An e-bike, or a power assisted bicycle, is a pedal cycle with an electric motor attached to assist the rider. The attached electric motor may aid the rider, but the bike must be powered mainly by pedalling.

In South Australia, there are two categories of e-bikes that may be legally used on public roads and paths:

Power-Assisted Pedal Cycle (PAPC)



- Must be primarily powered by pedalling.
- Can have a motor to assist pedalling with a combined maximum output of up to 200 watts.
- Must have a tare weight of less than 50kg including any batteries.
- The motor cannot operate along without pedalling.

Electrically Power-Assisted Pedal Cycle (EPAC)

- Have an electric motor with a maximum continuous power output of 250 watts.
- Primarily pedal powered with motor assistance up to 25km/h.
- The motor must stop providing assistance after 25kmh.
- The motor can operate without pedalling to start movement, but only up to 6km/h.

A compliant e-bike is classified as a bicycle, not a Personal Mobility Device (PMD).

Examples of compliant e-bikes

Commuter bike	
E-cargo bike	

Non-compliant devices (illegal e-bikes)

Devices with motors exceeding the above legal limits, or motors that can operate without pedalling that do not meet the EPAC requirements, are not legal for use on South Australian public roads and paths.

If the device looks like a compliant e-bike but:

- does not have or need pedals.
- has a petrol or other type of internal combustion engine, or
- has a motor that exceeds the 250 watts continuous power rating.

then it is illegal to be ridden on public roads and paths in South Australia and penalties apply, including riding unlicensed or riding an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle.

Some examples of non-compliant devices include:

- 1000-watt pedal devices that can exceed 25km/h with the motor.
- High-powered throttle-controlled devices that do not have pedals.
- Bicycles that have been modified to include an electric motor that do not comply with legal e-bike requirements.

These devices can only be used on private property.

Examples of non-compliant devices

<p>Petrol powered engine</p>	
<p>1000 watts 50km/h</p>	
<p>750 watts 45km/h</p>	

Electric motorcycles




Some electric vehicles may look like e-bikes but are in fact electric motorcycles. These vehicles:

- don't have pedals
- can travel at high speeds
- often look similar to mopeds or dirt bikes

To be legally used on South Australian roads, these vehicles must be registered. Riders must also hold the appropriate class of licence. They are not permitted on paths.

Not all electric motorcycles can be registered. If a device doesn't meet the required safety standards for general or conditional registration, it cannot be used on roads, paths, or any public place.

Examples of electric vehicles that may be confused with e-bikes

Motorcycle	
Dirt bike	
Moped	

Regulatory framework in South Australia

Although many road rules apply to both compliant e-bikes and PMDs, compliant e-bikes are regulated separately because they are treated as bicycles. Compliant e-bikes have been included in the bicycle regulatory framework in South Australia since 2014.

The framework includes:

- A definition for a compliant e-bike (power assisted bicycles).
- Their legal use on roads.
- What road rules apply.
- Differences between a compliant e-bike and a motorbike, with examples.

The framework is available at [SA.GOV.AU - Riding a power-assisted bicycle](https://www.sa.gov.au/riding-a-power-assisted-bicycle).

Compliant e-bikes, when used responsibly, play an important role in any jurisdiction's transport system. They provide convenient and affordable short and longer trip opportunities, reduce car dependence and support environmental outcomes.

Further benefits provide riders with assistance in managing gradients, distance, and traffic situations, making cycling less physically demanding while still providing physical activity. This can make cycling more accessible to a wider range of people, including those who may not be able to ride a conventional bike due to mobility or health issues, and can support greater independence.

Like conventional bicycles, compliant e-bikes are allowed to be ridden on footpaths and shared paths, helping to reduce traffic congestion on the road network. As their use continues to increase, it is important to consider how safety can be maintained, particularly in shared infrastructure environments.

Rules for compliant e-bikes

Riders are bound by the same rules as when riding a conventional bicycle, such as (this list is not exhaustive):

- There is no minimum age limit required to ride a compliant e-bike.
- The rider to wear a helmet.
- Effective brakes.
- A bell, or another audible warning device within easy reach.
- A rear-facing red reflector when riding at night or in hazardous weather.
- A white light to the front and a red light to the rear when riding at night or in hazardous weather (both may flash), clearly visible from at least 200 metres.

Riders can ride a compliant e-bike on most roads and paths in South Australia unless signs say bikes are not allowed. You must follow the bicycle rules, including the speed limit, when riding a compliant e-bike.

Insurance and liability

Riders of compliant e-bikes do not require a driver's licence, vehicle registration or Compulsory Third-Party insurance.

If, while using a compliant e-bike, a rider injures a third party or damages property they could be liable. Bicycle SA has made an insurance product available.

Road crash data reporting

Road crash data provided by South Australia Police indicates that in the five-year period from 2020 to 2024, there were 57 reported casualty crashes in South Australia involving an e-bike. These crashes comprised of:

- 27 minor injury crashes.
- 26 serious injury crashes.
- 4 lives lost crashes.

Over the same period there were 1,922 reported casualty crashes involving pedal cycles.

While the reported numbers on e-bike crashes are low, the number has increased from 2020 to 2024.

Road crash data reports that no lives were lost among cyclists using e-bikes on South Australian roads in 2025.

Note: this data does not differentiate between compliant e-bikes and non-compliant devices.

International research has shown that police crash data under-captures e-mobility device injuries when compared with hospital and trauma data, as many incidents involve single-vehicle falls, occur on footpaths or shared paths, or do not result in police attendance.

Crashes involving e-mobility devices have been identified as an emerging priority at the National Road Safety Data Working group, where Commonwealth, state and territory agencies are working together to better understand these crashes.

Offences and Penalties

In South Australia, riders using compliant e-bikes must follow the same road rules that apply to all bicycle riders. Riders of non-compliant devices can face the same offences that apply to motor vehicles.

Penalties apply for riders who breach the rules, and offences may result in fines, demerit points and, in rare cases, imprisonment. Riders may also receive multiple fines if several offences are committed at the same time.

South Australia Police are responsible for enforcing the rules relating to e-bike use.

While an expiation notice or fine cannot be issued to a person under the age of 16 years, there are diversionary processes available that would allow for appropriate sanctions for offending in such circumstances.

In South Australia, these processes aim to divert young offenders from the formal court system, particularly for minor offences, and to address the underlying issues contributing to their behaviour.

These processes include informal and formal police cautions and Family Conferences.

The table below summarises the main offences and associated penalties for bicycle or e-bike misuse. This list is not exhaustive.

Penalty amounts are as at 1 July 2026.

Offence	Maximum court imposed penalty	Fine amount
Fail to ride in bicycle lane	\$2,500	\$72
Fail to give way to pedestrian when riding bike on shared path	\$2,500	\$72
Hold onto moving vehicle while riding bicycle	\$2,500	\$133
Fail to wear appropriate bicycle helmet	\$2,500	\$133

Offence	Maximum court imposed penalty	Fine amount
Passenger on bicycle failing to wear bicycle helmet	\$2,500	\$133
Ride bicycle without a brake or working warning device	\$2,500	\$72
Ride bicycle at night without front white light	\$2,500	\$72
Ride bicycle at night without rear red light	\$2,500	\$72
Ride bicycle on separated footpath designated for pedestrians	\$2,500	\$72
Driving light vehicle to which section 161A of the <i>Road Traffic Act 1961</i> applies without Ministerial approval (riding an illegal e-bike)		
a. Where the vehicle being driven is a bicycle that has an auxiliary motor comprised (in whole or in part) of an internal combustion engine	\$2,500	\$478
b. In any other case	\$2,500	\$384
Cyclist use mobile phone while riding	\$2,500	\$72
Riding a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs	\$500	-

Important – a Victims of Crime levy also applies to the fines listed above.

Compliant e-bikes in other Australian states and territories

The definition of a compliant e-bike varies across Australia, although most jurisdictions have the same rules as South Australia and recognise Power-Assisted Pedal Cycles and Electrically Power-Assisted Pedal Cycles as the two categories of a compliant e-bike.

While these categories form the foundation of e-bike regulation nationally, each state and territory applies them through different regulatory frameworks.

Western Australia is currently the only jurisdiction with a legislated minimum age requirement, requiring riders to be at least 16 years old to ride a compliant e-bike.

All other states and territories, including South Australia, currently have **no minimum age requirement** to ride a compliant e-bike.

Discussion

Review of the South Australian e-bike regulatory framework

The South Australian Government is consulting with e-bike users and the broader community on whether the current regulatory framework is suitable and whether changes or improvements are needed. This consultation is also seeking views on the use of non-compliant devices in the community and safety considerations.

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport (the Department) is interested in receiving e-bike user, community and public feedback on the following topics relating to compliant e-bikes:

- Key considerations to improve safety in South Australia.
- Use of compliant e-bikes and incidents.
- Whether European standard 15194 should be adopted.
- Should a minimum age for compliant e-bike riders be applied.
- Should a speed limit be applied for compliant e-bikes on footpaths and shared paths.

In addition, the Department is interested in receiving community and public feedback on key considerations relating to the use of non-compliant devices, including whether they remain prohibited for road use or whether they be regulated as mopeds, motorcycles or another appropriate vehicle class.

Compliant e-bikes

Key considerations to improve safety in South Australia

Compliant e-bikes are allowed to be ridden on footpaths, shared paths and roads in South Australia. It is important to consider how safety can be maintained, particularly in shared infrastructure environments.

This consultation seeks views on the key considerations that may improve safety within the South Australian community, such as regulatory amendments (including the adoption of European standard 15194, minimum age requirements and speed limits), improved community education, infrastructure investment, strengthened enforcement, and improved penalties for offences.

Use of compliant e-bikes and incidents

As the uptake of compliant e-bike use increases in South Australia, it is important to understand how these devices are being used within the community to ensure that the regulatory framework remains fit for purpose.

This consultation seeks community feedback on personal or observed e-bike use (including use by family members), any accidents experienced, and any observations of rule-breaking behaviour.

European standard EN15194

In South Australia, an e-bike is considered compliant if it:

- meets the definition of either a PAPC or EPAC; and
- does not have an internal combustion engine.

Although the Commonwealth Government has reinstated reference to EN15194 for e-bikes that are bicycles, the definition of a compliant e-bike in South Australia remains as either a PAPC or EPAC noting the definition of an EPAC mirrors EN15194.

Western Australia is currently the only Australian jurisdiction that has adopted EN15194 in its e-bike regulatory framework since it was reintroduced by the Commonwealth Government in December 2025.

This consultation seeks community views on whether South Australia should adopt EN15194 as the only standard for a compliant e-bikes, which would remove the existing PAPC category.

If EN15194 were adopted, compliant e-bikes may also be required to display a label confirming compliance with the standard.

The minimum age of a rider

In South Australia, there is currently no minimum age requirement for riding a compliant e-bike. In contrast, a minimum age of 16 years applies to riders of PMDs under the PMD regulatory framework.

As compliant e-bikes and PMDs are types of electric mobility devices, introducing a minimum age requirement for the use of compliant e-bikes would align the regulatory approach for these devices. However, this could also limit children's access to e-bikes, including those who rely on them for independent mobility.

This consultation seeks community feedback on whether a minimum age limit should be introduced for users of compliant e-bikes, similar to the minimum age requirement for PMD users, or whether e-bike riders should be required to hold a South Australian Class C learner's permit, which has a minimum age requirement of 16 years and involves completing the "myLs" course covering road rules, road safety, and safe driving behaviours.

Speed limits on footpaths and shared paths

Consistent with the rules for bicycle riders, riders using compliant e-bikes are permitted to ride on footpaths and shared paths.

Under the current regulatory framework, the speed limit that applies when riding a compliant e-bike on a footpath is the speed limit of the adjacent road. There is currently no specific speed limit on shared paths; however, riders must keep to the left where possible and give way to pedestrians.

Under the current South Australian PMD regulatory framework, a speed limit of 10km/h applies to riders using a PMD on a footpath or shared path.

Footpaths and shared paths are shared infrastructure environments used by pedestrians, PMD riders and other cyclists. As the use of e-bikes continues to increase, particularly in these environments, interactions between users with differing levels of vulnerability may also increase, along with the potential risk of collisions.

This consultation seeks community feedback on whether specific speed limits should apply to the use of compliant e-bikes when ridden on footpaths and shared paths, and, if so, what speed limits should apply.

Drug and alcohol testing for E-bike riders

South Australia Police do not currently have powers to conduct drug and alcohol testing for riders of compliant e-bikes, due to compliant e-bikes being classed as vehicles and not motor vehicles.

It is an offence for riders of compliant e-bikes to ride under the influence of any drugs or alcohol and South Australia Police currently rely on other factors to establish whether a rider may be under the influence, such as whether they are showing any impairments which make them incapable of exercising effective control of the e-bike.

Providing South Australia Police with the ability to conduct drug and alcohol testing for e-bike riders would assist in providing an accurate determination of whether an e-bike rider may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

This consultation seeks community views on whether powers should be provided to South Australia Police to conduct drug and alcohol testing for compliant e-bike riders.

It is important to note that if a person is riding a non-compliant device (or illegal e-bike), they are operating a motor vehicle and South Australia Police currently have powers to conduct drug and alcohol testing and can charge the rider with the same drug and alcohol offences that apply to motor vehicles.

Non-compliant devices (or illegal e-bikes)

Some non-compliant devices may look like compliant e-bikes but are electric motorcycles. They can be dangerous because they can go very fast. They may look like mopeds or dirt bikes and don't have pedals. As these non-compliant devices may be high powered their use on public roads and paths can pose significant risks to riders, pedestrians and other road users.

This consultation seeks views on key considerations relating to the use of non-compliant devices, including whether they should remain prohibited for road use or whether they should be regulated as mopeds, motorcycles or another appropriate vehicle class.

Key considerations include:

- Whether non-compliant devices should remain illegal and not permitted on public roads and paths.
- Provide South Australia Police with powers to seize and destroy non-compliant devices that are being used illegally.
- Whether non-compliant devices should be regulated and treated as a moped, motorcycle or another appropriate vehicle class.
- If non-compliant devices are regulated and treated as a moped, motorcycle or another appropriate vehicle class, should conditions apply, including:
 - An appropriate driver's licence (e.g. motorcycle licence).
 - Registration and Compulsory Third-Party insurance.
 - Riders wear a motorcycle helmet that complies with product safety standards.

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- Access be restricted to road use only and prohibited from footpaths and bicycle paths.
- Penalties for misuse.

- Strengthened enforcement of rules.
- Clear point-of-sale information from retailers about device specifications, safety standards and legal status.
- Improved community education to better communicate rules, risks and penalties.

Seizure and destruction of non-compliant devices

Currently, South Australia Police can seize and impound non-compliant devices involved in certain offences but cannot destroy them without a Court order.

In Western Australia, police have powers to immediately seize and later destroy non-compliant devices. These powers enable such devices to be removed from the community and support targeted action against dangerous and anti-social riding behaviour.

This consultation seeks community views on whether more powers should be provided to South Australia Police to destroy non-compliant devices and under what circumstances.