13th February 2026

The Honourable Minister Scott Simpson - Scott.Simpson@parliament.govt.nz
Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

MICROMOBILITY BATTERY STANDARDS

Drive Electric is New Zealand's leading electric mobility industry organisation, representing micro-mobility through to heavy transport. We work with government, businesses, and communities to accelerate the country's transition to electric transport. A substantial part of our role is ensuring sustainable transport is safe, responsible, and builds public confidence.

We are writing to alert you to a significant issue with poor quality e-bike and e-scooter lithium ion batteries which are currently imported into NZ. These present a significant risk of fire.

THE DISTINCTION:COMPLIANT vs NON-COMPLIANT TECHNOLOGY

It is crucial to emphasise that compliant, high-quality lithium-ion batteries—used by reputable manufacturers—are overwhelmingly safe and reliable. The current safety issues are not inherent to electric mobility itself, but are driven by a specific influx of substandard, uncertified battery units often sold through online marketplaces or "grey import" channels.

Data from Australia highlights the consequences of allowing unregulated products into the market. In New South Wales (NSW), authorities have linked a rise in fire incidents directly to the proliferation of non-compliant devices. In 2023 alone, NSW recorded a total of 272 battery-related fires of which 61 were from e-bikes or e-scooters.

Investigations into tragic fatalities in Guildford (NSW) and Lawnton (QLD) in 2024 have pointed to the use of incompatible chargers or low-quality battery units in e-mobility devices—risks that are mitigated by international safety certifications. These have attracted significant media attention with the spotlight on government officials and ministers.

As a result Australia is moving to EU certified batteries for electric micro-mobility products.

To prevent New Zealand from becoming a dumping ground for unsafe inventory that is banned in Australia, we recommend adopting a similar regulatory framework:

1. Mandatory Certification: Require that all e-mobility batteries sold in NZ meet recognised international safety standards. Below is an example of the standards required by New South Wales:
    - E-bikes (≤500W) can comply with: AS 15194:2016 or EN 15194:2017+A1:2023 (limited to specific electrical safety clauses) UL 2849:2022. (E-bikes (>500W) must use UL 2849:2022 only)
    - E-scooters/E-skateboards/Hoverboards can use: AS/NZS 60335.2.114:2023, EN 17128:2020, UL 2272:2016 or UL 2272:2014 (valid until 1 February 2027)
2. Point-of-Sale Assurance: Ensure consumers can easily identify compliant, safe products through clear labelling or information standards.
3. Heavy Penalties: Companies found selling non-compliant "grey import" devices face significant fines.

CONCLUSION

By barring the entry of "cheap, non-compliant" batteries, we can reduce the risk of home and workplace fires. We have already heard reports of fires in social housing complexes caused by e-scooter lithium batteries and businesses looking to ban e-scooters and potentially e-bikes from the workplaces. Fortunately the fires in NZ have not resulted in any deaths yet.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss how Drive Electric can support the Government in implementing these safeguards.

Sincerely,

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