



## **Australian Government**

Response to the  
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References  
Committee report on

The need for regulation of mobility scooters, also known as  
motorised wheelchairs

April 2019

## **Overview**

On 6 December 2017, the Senate referred a number of matters about ‘the need for regulation of mobility scooters, also known as motorised wheelchairs’, to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee (the committee) for inquiry and report by 20 September 2018.

The matters investigated included:

- a) the number of deaths and injuries attributed to accidents involving mobility scooters in Australia since their introduction;
- b) the causes of these accidents;
- c) any current regulations governing the use of mobility scooters throughout Australia;
- d) comparison of Australian regulations with international standards;
- e) what support structures are in place to ensure the safe operation of mobility scooters;
- f) the regulatory role of governments and non-government bodies; and
- g) any related matters.

The committee received 133 public submissions and held one public hearing in Melbourne on 23 July 2018. The resulting report was tabled in Parliament and publicly released on 20 September 2018. This is the Australian Government’s response to the inquiry report.

## **Response**

The Australian Government recognises that as Australia’s population ages, the ability for older people and people with disability to remain mobile and retain both their independence and connections with the community will become increasingly more important. Motorised mobility devices provide a way for older Australians and people with disability to maintain their quality of life, enhance their overall health and wellbeing, and increase their feeling of social inclusion.<sup>1</sup>

In recognising the benefits that motorised mobility devices can provide, the Government also recognises that the rules in relation to motorised mobility devices are inconsistent across jurisdictions and complex and that there is limited understanding of the extent to which motorised mobility devices are used, the nature of their use, or the safety implications of their use.<sup>2</sup>

In order to meet these challenges, the Government supports the development of a nationally consistent approach in the form of a national framework. In recognition of this need the Government acknowledges the valuable research previously undertaken concerning the use of

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report into the need for regulation of mobility scooters, also known as motorised wheelchairs, 20 September 2018, p.11

<sup>2</sup> Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report into the need for regulation of mobility scooters, also known as motorised wheelchairs, 20 September 2018, p.12

motorised mobility devices by many organisations including those that represent people with a disability and tertiary educational institutions.

In particular, the Government recognises the work previously undertaken by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Austroads Ltd, as the peak organisation of Australasian road transport and traffic agencies. The Government supports the recommendation that the report be taken into consideration by Austroads and the National Transport Commission as they work towards developing a nationally consistent set of regulations which govern the use of motorised mobility devices.<sup>3</sup>

## **Responses to the Committee's recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

**The committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that Austroads has adequate funding to undertake research and consultation activities to inform the establishment of a nationally consistent regulatory framework for motorised mobility devices.**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and notes that Austroads, the peak organisation of Australasian road transport and traffic agencies, is currently considering the inclusion of relevant research activities as part of its 2018-20 work program.

### **Recommendation 2**

**The committee recommends that Austroads take into account this report, and the evidence provided to the inquiry, for the purposes of establishing a nationally consistent regulatory framework for motorised mobility devices. As part of its deliberations, Austroads should consider simple and low-cost licencing and registration arrangements and third party insurance.**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and notes that Austroads has confirmed that it will take into account the report and evidence provided to the inquiry for the purposes of establishing a national consistent framework for motorised mobility devices.

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<sup>3</sup> Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee report into the need for regulation of mobility scooters, also known as motorised wheelchairs, 20 September 2018, p.13