



10.5 **E-SCOOTER TRIAL**

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Council on the Victorian Government timeline for the evaluation of the trial of e-scooters, and to recommend extension of Council's participation in the trial with the Victorian Government and other local government partners, until this evaluation is completed and there is clarity on the recommended regulatory framework.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 At the Ordinary Council Meeting on 19 May 2021, Council resolved to support the submission of an Expression of Interest to the Victorian Government to participate in the dockless electric scooters (e-scooters) trial for a period of up to twelve-months.
- 2.2 The cities of Port Phillip, Melbourne and Yarra agreed on a collaborative approach to the trial and following an extensive tender process, two operators (Lime and Neuron) were chosen to work with the metro councils and the Department of Transport (DoT) for the 12-month trial, which commenced on 1 February 2022.
- 2.3 The Victorian Government has committed to complete an evaluation of the trial to inform future regulatory frameworks that meet transport and safety objectives and ensure clarity for all stakeholders around the use of e-scooters in Victoria.
- 2.4 The Department of Transport (DoT) has established an evaluation Steering Committee reporting to the Oversight Panel established by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.
- 2.5 The Department of Transport is in the process of collating the various data to inform the evaluation of the trial. It is unlikely there will be sufficient time for the incoming Government to properly consider the findings of the evaluation and its recommendations prior to the trial expiring on 1 February 2023.
- 2.6 Officers recommend remaining in the trial until the Victorian Government evaluation is complete to ensure local issues, experience and knowledge are fed directly into the evaluation to ensure the best outcome for the City of Port Phillip.
- 2.7 Not extending Council's involvement in the trial means operators will need to cease operating in Port Phillip from 1 February 2023. This will be disruptive for the community, risks reputational damage to Council and reduces Council's ability to influence the regulation recommendations captured in the evaluation and next steps following the conclusion of trial.
- 2.8 If Council resolves to continue to be involved in the e-scooter trial, Council officers intend to present the findings of the evaluation and its recommendations for Council's consideration as soon as possible in 2023.



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Extend Council's participation in the e-scooter trial with the Victorian Government and other local government partners until the Victorian Government evaluation is completed and there is clarity on the recommended regulatory framework.
- 3.2 Authorises the Chief Executive Officer (or their delegate) to undertake any administrative procedures required to allow continued participation in the e-scooter trial.
- 3.3 Notes that findings from the Victorian Government evaluation and recommendations for regulatory change will be presented to Council when available.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 In May 2021 the National Transport and Infrastructure Council ratified amendments to the Australian Road Rules (ARRs) to include references to Personal Mobility Devices including e-scooters. Each state and territory agreed to adopt the model in their own local version of the road rules with some items subject to local decision (for example footpath riding, speeds and age limits).
- 4.2 In 2021 amendments to the Victorian Road Rules meant that the e-scooters that are part of the trial can be ridden on public roads. Private e-scooters remain illegal in public space if they have a power output of greater than 200 watts or a speed capability of greater than 10km/h.
- 4.3 The Victorian Government trial of e-scooters in metropolitan Melbourne commenced on 1 February 2022 and has had significantly higher than expected uptake achieving over 2 million trips in nine months.
- 4.4 At the conclusion of the trial the Victorian Government will complete an evaluation to inform future regulatory frameworks to meet transport and safety objectives and ensure clarity for all stakeholders around the use of e-scooters in Victoria.
- 4.5 The Minister for Roads and Road Safety established an Oversight Panel to provide guidance and make recommendations at the conclusion of the e-scooter trial.
- 4.6 The Department of Transport (DoT) established a Steering Committee, including representatives from DoT, participating councils, Victoria Police and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), to evaluate trial outcomes and report on the trial to the Panel.
- 4.7 The current Commercially Operated Share Scheme (COSS) agreement between the three metro councils and the two e-scooter operators allows for the terms and conditions to be varied by agreement in writing. Council can, at any time, withdraw from the trial or choose to extend the agreement with operators during the trial.
- 4.8 Officers continue to consult with other local and state government representatives, in addition to micro-mobility experts to apply a best practice approach to Council's framework for the trialling of e-scooters.
- 4.9 DoT will be collating the various data to inform the evaluation of the trial. It is unlikely there will be sufficient time for the incoming Government to properly consider the findings of the evaluation and its recommendations prior to the trial expiring on 1 February 2023.



4.10 When considering its further involvement in the e-scooter trial, Council has two options:

Option 1: Extend its involvement in the trial beyond 1 February 2023 to align with the evaluation of the trial and recommendations

Option 2: Withdraw from the trial by allowing its involvement in the trial to lapse from 1 February 2023.

Benefits of Council being part of the Trial

4.11 Council's involvement in the e-scooter trial ensures our continued opportunity to inform future changes to the Road Rules in Victoria, ensure compliance is suitably managed and that this new transport mode is appropriately integrated into our transport network.

4.12 By remaining in the trial until the Victorian Government evaluation is complete Council will be able to ensure local issues reported to us by the community and operational staff are fed directly into the evaluation to pursue the best outcome for the City of Port Phillip.

4.13 The technology involved in this new transport option is continuing to improve and provide opportunities for enhanced management of e-scooters. Council continues to work closely with operators to test and refine these functions to inform the evaluation and improve safety and amenity for our community.

Risks to Council of withdrawing from the trial

4.14 There are risks to Council should it decide to withdraw from the trial prior to the completion of the evaluation, including:

4.14.1 **Reputational risk to Council:** Council's reputation with the community, and government as a trusted partner could be diminished if it ends the trial earlier than other partners. Community members who use the e-scooter service would be impacted and may express dissatisfaction with Council. This may be counter-balanced by some members of our community who may be happy to see the trial conclude.

4.14.2 **Influencing regulation risk to Council:** Council will have significantly reduced influence on the recommended regulation changes for e-scooters by not being a partner within the trial. It would also have far less influence on the operations of scooter providers and in particular unsafe riding or parking practices of some users which are raised as issues by some members of our community.

Interim feedback on trial

4.15 There have been over 2.2 million e-scooter trips across the metro area since the trial began on 1 February 2022. This includes over 340,000 trips starting in Port Phillip. Uptake by riders of shared e-scooters has resulted in high utilisation of the devices and has seen the City of Melbourne increase its total capped number from 500 to 1500 e-scooters. Port Phillip currently has a cap of 500 e-scooters.

4.16 Over 800,000 kilometres have been travelled on shared e-scooters in Port Phillip since the trial commenced with over 70 percent of rides being under three (3) kilometres.

4.17 As part of their data reporting obligations, operators provide information on safety incidents that are reported to them. Operators report that over 99 percent of rides are incident free.



- 4.18 Council officers meet regularly with the operators to address issues raised by the community and adjust the service. Footpath riding, riding without a helmet and poor parking are among the most common issues raised by the community. Throughout the trial, operators have held safety education events, provided in-app education on the rules for the use of e-scooters, and utilise their roaming safety ambassadors to identify bad riding behaviour and sanction riders.
- 4.19 The cities of Melbourne and Yarra have indicated that they will remain in the trial pending the evaluation and recommendations from the Victorian Government.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Before the commencement, internal consultation was completed with Council staff, including ASSIST, City Permits, Communications and Engagement, Local Laws, Risk and Assurance, Safety and Amenity and Strategic Partnerships to ensure integrated management of the trial.
- 5.2 All community feedback on the trial of shared e-scooters is monitored and adjustments to the services are made where appropriate.
- 5.3 Council officers provide input directly to the DoT (including all community feedback received over the course of the trial) to ensure the impacts on Port Phillip are duly considered in the evaluation.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are risks to Council should it decide to withdraw from the trial prior to the completion of the evaluation. These risks are:
 - 6.1.1 **Reputational risk to Council:** Council's reputation with the community, and government as a trusted partner could be diminished if it ends the trial earlier than other partners. Community members who use the e-scooter service would be impacted and may express dissatisfaction with Council. This may be counter-balanced by some members of our community who may be happy to see the trial conclude.
 - 6.1.2 **Influencing regulation risk to Council:** Council will have significantly reduced influence on the recommended regulation changes for e-scooters by not being a partner within the trial. It would also have far less influence on the operations of scooter providers and in particular unsafe riding or parking practices of some users which are raised as issues by some members of our community.
- 6.2 Council officers continue to review risks to Council throughout the trial. The agreement to continue the trial in Port Phillip to align with the Victorian Government evaluation process does not introduce additional risks.
- 6.3 Council's Move, Connect Live Strategy commits to partnering with the Victorian Government to regulate and promote shared transport services and manage disruptive shared transport technologies.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 Continued participation in the trial of e-scooters can be delivered within Council's approved budget and existing resources.
- 7.2 While the trial continues, Operators contribute to costs incurred by the councils in the management and oversight of the trial and shared e-scooter service including administration, compliance and data platforms used for monitoring and evaluation.



8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 A shared transport scheme such as e-scooters has the potential to reduce the need for car travel particularly for “first and last mile” travel, reducing congestion on our roads and the negative environmental impacts associated with vehicle emissions.
- 8.2 Over 70 percent of all e-scooter trips in Port Phillip have been less than three kilometres in distance.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Over 340,000 trips have commenced in Port Phillip since the trial began and ending the trial prior to a Victorian Government decision would be disruptive to the community members who are regularly utilising this transport mode.
- 9.2 A well-regulated, readily available, inexpensive, and easy to use shared transport service such as e-scooters offers the community a convenient and flexible travel choice.
- 9.3 Surveys with e-scooter users have found that e-scooter trips usually result in spend at local businesses contributing to economic activity in our city.
- 9.4 During the trial the e-scooter operators have contributed to events in our city and run pop ups to promote safe riding at St Kilda Festival, South Beach St Kilda and the Esplanade.
- 9.5 E-scooters offer an affordable transport option for residents and visitors to access business, work and events across our city.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The trialling of e-scooters within our municipality aligns with the following strategic documents:
 - 10.1.1 Strategic Direction 2 of the Council Plan 2021-31, Liveable: Port Phillip is a great place to live, where our community has access to high quality public spaces, development and growth are well-managed, and it is safer and easy to connect and travel within.
 - 10.1.2 Council’s Move Connect Live: Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-28 – Outcome 5: Our community benefits from new transport options and technology, particularly and Action 38: Partner with the Victorian Government and other councils to regulate and promote shared transport services and manage disruptive shared transport technologies.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 Council officers to communicate Council’s decision to the Department of Transport and other local government partners in the e-scooter trial – December 2022.
- 11.1.2 Council officers to provide direct input (including all community feedback received over the course of the trial) to the Department of Transport to ensure the impacts on Port Phillip are duly considered in the evaluation. This will assist in influencing the development of recommendations that are better suited to the City of Port Phillip and its community.



11.1.3 Present the Department of Transport evaluation findings and recommendations of the e-scooter trial to Council for its consideration as soon as possible.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 Updates will be made to the Council website “E-scooter” page to indicate any changes in the duration of the e-scooter trial.

11.2.2 Key messages include:

A well-regulated shared transport service including e-scooters may offer an alternative, sustainable and affordable transport option for our community, particularly for first/last mile trips.

Council will continue to monitor the trial, including community feedback and request adjustments to operational elements of the shared schemes throughout the trial to seek the best possible outcomes for our community.

Council’s continued involvement as a partner in the trial provides it with the strongest position to influence the recommended regulation changes for e-scooters, provide continuity of service to users within our City and pursue continuous improvement by operators in the management of e-scooters.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil