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Submission to Future Melbourne Committee

City of Melbourne, Melbourne Town Hall,
15 August 2023, 5.30pm – Meeting No.61
Agenda Item FMC 6.5: The future of commercial e-scooter operations

The Southbank Residents Association supports this agenda item. We believe this plan addresses the issues raised by SRA in our June 23 support for the Lord Mayors e-scooter motion.

It is also promising to note that all operators insurance now covers third parties regardless whether the rider was operating the scooter illegally. This has always been a key concern for SRA.

It is pleasing that the report acknowledges privately owned e-scooters, but it only refers to their parking. Of more concern to local residents is that these e-scooters are not subject to the same speed controls as the commercial e-scooter schemes and the options for geo-fencing on footpaths. They also don't have the same identification potential when an offence occurs. The City of Melbourne is encouraged to propose to the State Government that there needs to be tighter regulation of the private e-scooters.

The officer's mention stakeholder engagement within their report, but there is no mention of any stakeholder engagement with residents' associations and if so, what came from that. We feel it imperative resident's associations are part any stakeholder engagement processes.

One area which SRA holds some concern around is the reporting of incidents by members of the community. While the CoM has links on their website to the respective operators for reporting any complaints or incidents, we are doubtful whether this reporting is being considered by council and state government with the assessment of the success of the scheme.

The council officers refer to the issues with the e-scooters. How were these issues ultimately determined, were they quantifiable? Or merely hearsay from stakeholder feedback? Did the officers have statistics of compliance rates? Has there been any effort by the officers to ascertain and record compliance – random surveys?



Without such data, we ask, how would the scheme be considered a success? Are we relying on the reporting by the operators? Are the operators required to report the complaints to anyone? How can we trust this reporting? Is it audited by an independent body? It may not be in their interest to report all incidents if that may be detrimental to the success of the scheme.

We have seen reports of the economic value of the e-scooters based on spending riders have made while utilizing the e-scooters. But it seems these figures don't consider that if the e-scooters were not a transport option that a good portion of that economic activity might still have occurred anyway.

Southbank Residents Association continues to believe e-scooters will make an important contribution to the transport mix within the City and we are still hopeful Melbourne can be a global leader with the management of e-scooters.

This report shows we are on the right track.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Penna", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tony Penna
President
Southbank Residents Association