

Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails' E-bike Policy

Updated 11 June 2024

Background

Sales of e-bikes and the use of e-bikes on Great Rides has increased exponentially over the last couple of years. For some Great Rides, e-bike users are becoming the predominant riders of their Trail.

A national policy is needed to establish expectations on the type of e-bikes allowed on Great Rides, to improve safety for all Trail users and to provide guidance for Great Ride members and their operators. In particular, to inform Trails' marketing and communications messaging in the areas of health and safety and e-bike trail etiquette and to guide future e-bike purchases by Trail operators for their hire fleets.

Considerations

- E-bike technology is developing rapidly and continually changing with more powerful bikes coming onto the market.
- It may be difficult to tell what wattage an e-bike is and whether it is under 300 watts maximum power output as more powerful bikes may still have power/pedal assist componentry that makes them look like they are under 300 watts.
- E-bikes have potential to enable less experienced riders to go faster and venture further afield into remote areas with a lack of access to support emergency assistance.
- Conflict of Trail users – e-bike users versus other Trail users is generally overstated in most cases. E-bike users to be subject to standard mountain bike code of conduct and e-bike etiquette.
- E-bikes are heavier and generally have a different weight distribution compared to standard bikes. E-bikes tend to be ridden slightly faster with the potential for more accidents. New e-bike users should be encouraged to have training in handling their e-bike, and be made aware of the differences in power, speed and handling.

Benefits

E-bikes enable people with less riding experience and fitness to explore the Great Rides and other Trails that fall under Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails.

E-bikes allow existing cyclists to continue cycling despite age, health impacts etc and allow groups of friends to continue to ride together no matter what type of bike they are riding, their cycling ability or fitness.

Policy

In this policy power assisted cycles are defined as a cycle that has an auxiliary electric motor with a maximum power **not exceeding 300W** and is designed to be primarily propelled by the muscular energy of the rider.

Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails Inc. allows power-assisted cycles on **all** Great Rides and any other Trails and cycle ways (off-road sections) under Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails.

The following examples are not power assisted cycles but are mopeds and therefore not allowed on Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails:

- Cycles fitted and operated by a throttle
- Cycles fitted with petrol motors
- Low powered scooters/mopeds
- Cycles designed primarily to be propelled by an engine not the muscular energy of the rider.

When in doubt, the two questions to consider are:

1. Do the bikes have pedals that are and can be primarily used to propel them?
2. Is the motor power >300W?

Power Assisted Cycles that exceed 300W

A power assisted cycle that exceeds 300W maximum power output is too powerful to be used on the Great Rides and is considered a motorbike. Any cycles with motors (electric or combustion) over 300 watts maximum power output are classified as motorised vehicles and therefore are only allowed where a motor vehicle is allowed.

Policy Enforcement

This policy provides guidance to Great Ride Trail Managers on e-bike use on their Trails. This policy can not be legally enforced, rather provides a clear direction and expectations that Great Ride members can communicate to Trail users and Trail operators.

Policy Exclusions

This policy does not apply to e-adapt bikes or the use of e-bikes on the trails for management purposes.

Definitions

This policy uses the Waka Kotahi definition of a cycle and an e-bike.

Cycle means:

- (a) A vehicle that has at least two wheels, and that is designed primarily to be propelled by the muscular energy of the rider; and
- (b) Includes a power-assisted cycle.
Power-assisted cycle means a cycle to which is attached one or more auxiliary propulsion motors that have a combined maximum power output not exceeding 300W.

References

Power-assisted Cycles (Declaration Not to be Motor Vehicles) Notice 2013 - 2013-au4618 - New Zealand Gazette

Electric Assist Bicycles (eBikes), Cycling Action Network, 2015

Electric bikes on public conservation land, Department of Conservation, 2015