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# It's no sweat on an electric bike

ROB KERR - South Canterbury | Thursday, 05 February 2009

**ELECTRIC bikes, which have a small motor to help get up hills and in headwinds, are now on sale in Timaru.**

The Cyclery has just started stocking them and is yet to sell one.

They are primarily a bicycle, not an electric scooter, so they need no licence, registration or warrant of fitness.

The Cyclery owner Grant Hannam said the battery-powered 250-watt motor was to provide assistance and helped do away with the need for lower gears.

Taking a bike for a ride was easy. At the traffic lights, I got moving quickly and stuck to using the higher gears. The hill on Timaru's The Terrace required me to do some pedalling but the little motor pushed my 110-kilogram load up the Loop Rd at a fast jogging pace without any pedalling.

After climbing the Loop Rd and riding around town for 10 minutes, I had to pedal up all the uphill stretches, but the effort required was far less than required on a conventional bike.

Returning to work after a 30-minute ride, this unfit reporter had not started to sweat.

Mr Hannam hoped electric bikes would encouraged a wider range of people to try cycling.

"If people didn't pedal, they would be buying scooters and we are a bike shop."

The bikes, made by an American company in China, sell for about \$3000.

The manufacturers say that with normal pedalling, the power assist will last for 40 kilometres. With pedalling, the top speed is listed at 30kmh.

The electricity used is minimal, but the battery needs to be replaced, at a cost of about \$100. Nelson-based importer Steve Cartwright said with regular use, the battery would last about two years.

He said electric bikes were new to New Zealanders and yet to be picked up in big numbers but some businesses and government agencies were using them for inner-city transport.

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JOHN BISSET/Timaru Herald

Dual power: The Cyclery owner Grant Hannam tries out an electric-assisted bicycle.

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