



**BATTERY POWERED:** Burtram Newcombe, of Tahunanui, with his battery-powered bike that helps him get to work in Nelson. *Photo: Andrew Board.*

## Battery bike gives riders a boost

When Burtram Newcombe's doctor took his drivers license off him for health reasons, the 23 year-old epileptic suddenly had to find a new way to work.

He caught the bus, but a ride from Tahunanui to work in Nelson and back five times a week cost him as much as it did to fill his old scooter.

He urged friends to give him a lift, but that only goes so far.

And cycling could be taxing and timely.

Then Burt found an electric bike and it has changed his life, he says. The bikes are gaining in popularity around the world and here in Nelson, says New Zealand importer Jace Hobbs.

He says there are several dozen bikes currently in Nelson and while the concept isn't new, the design and battery power is.

Electric bikes is like riding a tandem with Lance Armstrong. As you cycle along, the battery kicks

in and riders control the speed with a throttle like a motorcycle. The bikes are not classed as mopeds and can be charged overnight. Which means Burt can ride his bike to work and hardly get a sweat up. "It's really cool, I get a lot of questions about it because it goes pretty quick."

But it isn't just Burt that is finding favour with the electric bikes. Jace says a fair chunk of the bikes owners are older people who like riding their bikes but just don't have the strength they used to, or people who live up steep hills. "I know of several people who want to ride to work and will go the whole way without using the battery but just to get up the steep hills on the way home let it kick in and away it goes."

Jace says the bikes will only get more popular as the designs and longevity of the batteries improve.

For more information visit [electricbikehub.co.nz](http://electricbikehub.co.nz).