

# EZzoomers

a zine for NZ ebike enthusiasts

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## **Take the Long Way Home** Jace Hobbs

People tell me all the time that they are not candidates for electric bike use because they can still ride a push bike. I tell them, paradoxically, that they need to be able to ride a push bike, at least a little, to ride an electric bike. The safety concern for any bike rider is pushing off from the start and alighting when coming to a standstill. Both are similarly difficult and this is the critical function that finds many marginal bike riders in jeopardy. Terrain and cargo loading are also considerations, but all of these issues can be resolved by practice and slow introduction.



My advice is to look at an e-bike as extending your range and opening up bike routes formerly too long or difficult for you at present. Typically, we can ride about three times further on a quality electric bike than we would care to ride unassisted. This is a key question you can ask yourself: Do I miss the benefits of the bicycle lifestyle because there is a hill or distance to my primary destination that puts me off the task? Many people will answer "Yes"! These are the riders that stand to benefit with an electric bike lifestyle. They get the benefits of exercise, balance, and social availability, but can still navigate the hills and distance that was putting them off.

Cycling can be not only practical for the distances that you really need to travel, but enjoyable. Many of my customers report that they take routes that are much longer getting home than the direct route, and they do it for enjoyment. You can glide along on a silent, efficient e-bike assist and the world opens up to you in many ways. Need to carry that heavy package to the post? Need to bring home an entire week of groceries in the panniers? Want to go all the way over to Auntie's house? You can again, and you can do it with all the benefits and economies that get lost when you use the car.

You can disengage yourself from petrol prices as well. The electricity you use to charge the batteries costs you next to nothing, so you are living in a new economy. Commuting does not cost you much at all, so you can go further without expense and with a great deal of pleasure. Take a tour of your country, take Rail Trail ride out and back. Take a bit of control back into your life. The electric bike can offer you this.

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### **Did you know?**

Diane Emerson (60) is touring NZ on her eZee sprint. She pulls a small trailer, and charges the battery in homes that she meets along the way. She reports great satisfaction in the ride. She reports not even a broken spoke, after a tour of the North island.

### **Did you know?**

A Dutch study reports on cycling dangers verses he life extending benefits to cycling. They show that the life lengthening benefits of cycling exceed the dangers by 80 times. NZ may be somewhat more dangerous to cycle in, but I think the verdict is in on the relative dangers of biking. Getting on your bike is a very healthful thing to do and will help you beat the odds of what really kills us.

## **Thirty NZ e-bike brands gone under and counting**

The oldest brand of e-bike in NZ today, besides eZee (at eleven years) has been here for just over 1 year. Wisper, which had a longer run, is no longer being imported. I get calls each week from people trying to keep their out of production e-bike alive. The importer and the brand dreamed up around these cheap Chinese generic e-bikes have long since gone out of business. "What can they do?" the consumers ask. The short answer is next to nothing.

By my count, there have been around 30 self branded e-bikes models offered from would-be importers. Each is sold as the best thing since sliced bread, and discontinued as the warranty and parts issues flooded in. The customer support function showed them how unprepared they were to handle the real work of supporting com-



muters on their electric bikes.

I can always tell that these poor customers are in trouble when the names of the brand they own is unknown to me. It was probably sold on TradeMe for a short time. The truth is there are dozens of little shops in China that will make any product at prices that are unrealistically low. How do they do this? The e-bikes are often converted discontinued push bikes and parts that are bought at fire-sales and repackaged to the unsuspecting buyer. To the untrained eye, the pictures look similar to the quality brands in Europe and elsewhere, because this is what the copies are trying to represent, but they are very disappointing in their design and manufacture. The Chinese companies know that this little NZ importer will never order again, and they don't need any warranty process in place to support the product. They will make some other product next month with the same strategy, and the end result is unhappy brand 'X' owners calling me on the phone.

The e-bike industry suffers from all these failed enterprises. The buying public needs to beware. . If it is a good brand, it will surely be sold by a reputable bike-shop. The reputation and the dealer support for an e-bike are as important for any purchase; this is no different for electric bikes. Buy quality and get quality.



### **eZee gets rated from German Institute**

Extraenergy, a German product-testing institute, tested 45 brands of electric bikes recently and included the eZee Torq and Mundo in those tests. These eZee models were rated as “good” and “very good”, respectively. This is a very exhaustive review and a quiet confirmation of the eZee product. This is also good news for my rollout of eZee products in New Zealand, as I can truly compare them favorably to the best German designs out there. Of course, the price we pay here is much less than the German brands so, for value, it is really hard to beat the eZee e-bikes. They compare head to head with the best German brands at much lower cost. It's called value.

### **Baldwin Street climb makes a splash**

We did a stunt for the Press, pure and simple. Baldwin Street is known worldwide for its steepness. eZee electric bikes are known for their grunt. Let's put the two together and see the public interest. Well, here we are on the other side of that stunt, and the public reaction has been great. The Otago Daily Times did a feature article that was attached to websites and forums about electric bikes all around the world. E-bike interest in the event has been gratifying and there has been a watershed acceptance of the technology as being ready for mainstream use. I think what it means is ‘if eZee can climb Baldwin Street, they can surely climb your street’.



## **The eZee in NZ page**



**The newest eZee Forza is redefining electric bikes in New Zealand.** This bike, while too powerful for on-road usage, is ideal for forest and trail riding. Recently a Forza was ridden 4400 kilometers around Aussie off-roads without incident or support. We anticipate usage in commerce as well. The Forza shares the remarkable wheel and component strength of our other bikes, with the addition of a long travel fork, a 7000 series alloy frame and gearing suited for grunting up serious inclines. eZee has not left out full mudguards, lights, disc brakes and puncture resistant off-road tyres.

The Forza has earned accolades from the new owners here and will no doubt be popular with hunters, older trail riders, and forestry contractors. Look for updates.

### **Expedir cargobike launch**

eZee has launched the newest cargo bike in the world market recently - the culmination of five years of development. The design builds on their production of cargo bikes for Yuba and Xtracycle, and has given eZee engineers a heap of experience put all that experience into the new Expedir. There are several key advantages to the new model. The primary differences are the shorter wheelbase, step-thru frame and ideal battery position. eZee is aiming to be a world leader in electric cargo bikes, and has sunk huge resources into launching this model. I think they may meet that world-leader goal, judging from the result. See the website for full details.



EZOOMERS NZ  
NEWS AND VIEWS  
ON ELECTRIC BIKES

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who would like to get it.

*Your next bike could  
be an e-bike*

*We encourage submissions about E-  
bikes and issues surrounding Ebikes  
for publication in subsequent issues of  
EZoomers. Simply drop an email to  
Jace Hobbs at the return address and  
your ideas or article may well find its  
way to the NZ e-bike community.*



## NZ Councils are taking up Electric Bikes.

**Councils are leading the way to sustainable transport.**

We are testing the bikes with new Councils now to add to the five that are already using our bikes. The two articles in Local Government Magazine that I had published have put the idea of replacing cars front and centre in the minds of Council fleet operators. We have developed information that specifically addresses the needs of Council Fleet operators and inform them on the benefits and appropriate choices. The Councils are listening. The Mayor of Wellington uses her eZee Torq daily. Celia Wade-Brown continues to save Wellingtonians thousands of dollars with her eZee Torq. She is continuously on her bike for her duties and personal life. We salute her for being exemplary of sustainable and thrifty transport, and we love that she is cutting a figure on an eZee daily.

eZee has specifically designed its bikes for New Zealand conditions. The

### Mayor tests battery-powered bike

left

PALOMA MIGONE

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2 comments

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MAARTEEN HOLL/Dominion Post

PEDAL POWER: Wellington mayor Celia Wade-Brown tests a eZee cargo electric bike.

hand throttle, 300 watt average Limere-designed motor and the water-proofing of eZee products has tailored the product to NZ riding conditions. The tyres, puncture-resistant and sized for the varied road surfaces here; the power and speed are greater than the EU allows; the little things add up to an enjoyable experience and we are doing those little things.

**lithium Battery offer.** Until June 15th, we will be offering new bike buyers a deal on a 10 amp hour eZee battery. Buy any eZee bike and get the second 10 amp hr. battery for only 350 dollars. That gives you 20 amp hours or more of reserve power! For existing eZee customers, another 10 amp hour battery will cost them only 575 dollars. These are first class, fresh new hi-capacity lithium batteries with a full 2 year performance guarantee.