

Charged up and ready to roll

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An electric bike is the ideal way to get around Palmerston North, says Jace Hobbs, director of Electric Bike Hub.

Plenty of people gave electric bicycles a try at the weekend's A Greener Way 2011 Sustainable Living Field Day at the Ashhurst Domain.

Mr Hobbs is from Nelson, and brought the bikes to Ashhurst to show what is possible when bikes are fitted with electric batteries.

"The technology of lithium batteries is great," he said.

"They're widely used. The charging is safe and reliable – those things that were an issue have now been overcome."

Mr Hobbs said the electric bicycle was a safe and effective way of getting around, with the technology having been perfected in the past few years.

"The Cadence, which I have been using here, is a front-wheel-drive bicycle."

It has a 300-watt motor sealed in the front wheel, and "in the back is a seven-speed internal changer if you are going to pedal – so it is a hybrid."

It was the best of electric drive bicycles, he said, designed in Germany and manufactured in Shanghai, China. The cost is about \$2500.

A fully charged battery means the bike can do over 30kmh. The electric bicycle will go faster if it is pedal-assisted.

"You can go zooming over hills and into head winds, with no effort and your speed will only drop a bit."

It made cycling fun, and



changed people's attitudes to it, he said.

"Really, what happens is you overcome the mental obstacles."

People often say that one hill, or a head wind, or I have to go at night and I don't like pedalling. It changes all that."

Electric bicycles were already a major force in many European towns and cities, he said.

A bonus was that riders could

park them anywhere in town. The electric bikes are going to be carried in Palmerston North by the Green Hub.

Up and running:

Jace Hobbs, director of Electric Bike Hub, on his Ezee Cadence bike, which reaches speeds in excess of 30kmh.

Photo: MURRAY WILSON.