



**CYCLING
ACTION
NETWORK**
PAI TE HAERE PAHIKAR

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CAN submission on the Tongariro National Park Management Plan Partial Review 2017

Cycling Action Network (CAN) is broadly in support of the new biking tracks and the proposal to allow e-Bikes on these and existing biking tracks. We wish to make the following points:

1. In preparation for this submission, we surveyed members on their views (113 responses). 59% agreed that “e-Bikes should be allowed on at least some tracks in National Parks”. In 2014, in a members survey 43% agreed that “e-Bikes should be allowed in natural areas, e.g. the Heaphy”. Although the questions and context are not exactly the same, the results indicate that there is an increasing acceptance of electric assist bikes in natural areas.
2. The proposed tracks could provide additional activities in the National Park that would relieve pressure on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing.
3. The Turoa-Ohakune route offers an opportunity for people to e-Bike up the mountain road to descend the track, rather than shuttling using a vehicle. This could reduce motor vehicle use.
4. However as the Review acknowledges (p.17), the Turoa-Ohakune route has some prolonged downhills that could result in excessive speed. This is a potential issue with all bikes, not specifically e-Bikes. It is important that this track is designed to limit downhill speed.
5. The Maungaturuturu track provides an alternative to using a narrow road bridge which would benefit cycletourists following the state highway.
6. With the exception of the top section of the Turoa-Ohakune route, all these tracks were previously roads, tramways or bridle paths. So the proposal is not greatly increasing access by bikes into true wilderness.
7. While there are concerns about track wear with e-Bikes, the indications are that they do not cause significantly more problems compared with standard bikes. Nelson Mountain Bike Club has allowed e-Bikes on their trails for a year without noticing ill

effects¹, and experiments carried out by IMBA found that e-Bikes and standard bikes caused similar trail wear².

8. e-Bikes have not caused problems on the Otago Rail Trail. Surveys of speed indicate that e-Bikes in general do not travel very much faster than standard bikes³, and may travel slower on shared paths⁴.
9. It will nonetheless be important to evaluate the impact of biking on the new and existing tracks, both on the environment and on visitor experience. This is particularly important in the case of the historic cobblestones on the Old Coach Road. A survey period of one year would be appropriate before making final decisions.
10. The commitment that "Independent mountain biking is to be provided for free of charge" (p.10) is important. Access to the tracks should not be restricted to concessions.
11. If it is decided not to proceed with the plan to allow e-Bikes on the tracks, DOC should carry out a trial in conservation land outside the National Parks. The Pureora Timber Trail would be a good candidate, having a variety of trail types and significant usage.

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¹ Walker, M (2017) A pedal too far? *Wilderness Magazine*

<https://www.wildernessmag.co.nz/a-pedal-too-far/>

² International Mountain Bicycling Association. *A Comparison of Environmental Impacts from Mountain Bicycles, Class 1 Electric Mountain Bicycles, and Motorcycles.*

http://b.3cdn.net/bikes/c3fe8a28f1a0f32317_g3m6bdt7g.pdf

³ Schleinitz, K. et al (2017) The German Naturalistic Cycling Study – Comparing cycling speed of riders of different e-bikes and conventional bicycles *Safety Science* 92:290-297

⁴ Langford, BC et al (2015) Risky riding: Naturalistic methods comparing safety behavior from conventional bicycle riders and electric bike riders *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 82:220-226