

Walk of the Month

Welcome to 10,000 Steps Northland's 'Walk of the Month'. Each month a stunning walk somewhere in Northland will be highlighted. If you have a favourite track or walk in your community contact us on email at 10000steps@sportnorth.co.nz.

February's Walk of the Month – **MOUNT AUBREY, WHANGAREI HEADS**

Endless blue skies and gorgeous temperatures are the perfect combination for climbing some of Northlands beautiful mountains.

Mount Aubrey (Mount Manaia's sister mountain) is situated 30 km from Whangarei on the Whangarei Heads Road. Driving towards Ocean Beach on the Whangarei Heads Road, turn right into Reotahi Road and stop at Tiller Park. There is a sign for the walkway at Tiller Park – be aware that it does not tell you how far and how long the track is. Depending on your walking speed and ability, this track could be accomplished in 2 - 4 hours. For those more accustomed to walking hills, you may be able to walk this track faster. Be prepared and wear good footwear, cover up from the elements and remember to bring water and a snack.

The track is very well formed from Tiller Park and has you quickly climbing. The stone steps and handrails are a welcome addition as well as the surrounding bush that keep you in the shade. There are plenty of rest spots with seats and opportunities to stand and admire the views over McLeod's Bay and Mount Manaia. Looking up at the craggy rock formations of Mount Aubrey conjures up many different images in your mind. It is calling you to carry on and make the summit.



Above – Beginning of the Mount Aubrey walk



Above – views of Mount Manaia throughout the bush walk



Above – Stunning harbour views

The volcanic rock formations in the area provide quite a unique sky line - the crags and rock statues are natural anthropomorphic outcrops that creep out of a variety of native climbing bush and trees. If you are a quiet walker you will be serenaded by birds and bugs of all sorts.

When you descend down through the cooling bush, you will steal glimpses of the New Zealand Refinery which seems only a stone's throw away. There is a bit of loose gravel on the way down which can be slippery to the unstable walker, take care and use the natural hand holds provided by the close trees. You will soon emerge out of the bush and heading left will take you down to Little Munroe Bay where you can sneak in a much deserved swim if desired.

The easy way back to Tiller Park is via the coast on a wide and gorgeous track that takes you past the ruins of the nearly 100 year old Reotahi meat works (this is where frozen meat was shipped to England). You will also pass the Motukarara marine reserve with its markers and signage. The track ends at Reotahi Bay where you will have to walk back up the road to Tiller Park carpark.

This is a truly spectacular walk with plenty to look at and admire. Stepping it out was difficult to measure but in approximation this walk will have you achieving well over 7,000 steps. Add some huff and puff and you are achieving great gains to better health, body and mind.

Enjoy!

Active Lifestyles – Christine Fraser from Sport Northland, www.10000stepsnorthland.co.nz