

Mt Heale Hut via Palmers track, Aotea Conservation Park

Lying 90km from Auckland as the kākā flies, [Great Barrier Island/Aotea](#) boasts excellent birdlife (the island has never had possums or stoats), some fascinating history, good tracks and also this modern, comfortable hut. Trampers can reach Mt Heale Hut on a variety of tracks, but Palmers Track provides the best approach because it has the advantage of beginning at 320m on Aotea Road. The well-graded track soon leads to a boot-cleaning station (used to avoid spreading kauri dieback disease), then through the volcanic defile known as Windy Canyon.

Steadily climbing, the track passes through regenerating kauri forest, healing after the depredations of early 20th-century logging, before reaching the island's only virgin kauri forest surrounding the summit of [Hirakimata/Mt Hobson](#). Boardwalks protect the nesting sites for black petrels, and a viewing platform at the summit trig offers panoramic views over the island and expanse of the Hauraki Gulf. At 627m, it's the island's highest summit.

More stairs and boardwalks lead to Mt Heale Hut, passing its namesake rhyolitic spire. Built in 2010, the 28-bunk hut offers sensational sunset views to Te Hauturu-o-Toi/Little Barrier Island.

The Peach Tree Track offers an excellent way to finish your tramp, perhaps with a soak in the Kaitoke Hot Springs along the way.

Wild File

Access From Aotea Road. Regular flights from Auckland land at Claris. Ferry services operate to Port Fitzroy and Tryphena

Grade Easy-moderate

Time Aotea Road to Mt Heale Hut, 3-3.5hr; to Whangaparapara Rd via Peach Tree and Kaitoke Hot Springs Tracks, 3.5-4hr

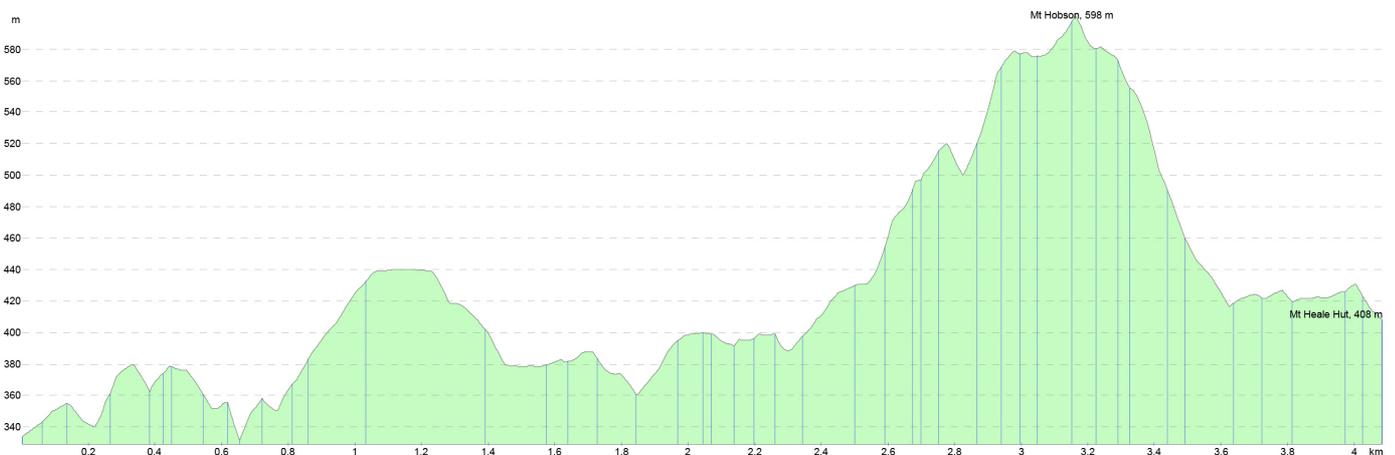
Distance 4.08km

Total ascent 486m

Accommodation Mt Heale Hut (20 bunk, \$15/\$7.50)

Map AY34

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, *Wilderness* does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. **The GPX file in these cases are a 'best guess' of the route only. Users should use a combination of GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find the best possible route.** Memory Map shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts. Red or blue routes are those drawn by Wilderness.

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