

Lou's Lookout, Te Urewera

Lou's Lookout is a blink-and-you'll-miss-it roadside gem about 9km from the Aniwanui Visitor Centre. Named after long-serving local policeman Lou Dolman, the track was constructed in the 1960s, yet remains largely under the radar.

If you're driving towards Onepoto Landing, you'll spot the unostentatious trailhead 500m past gorgeous Rosie Bay, with a small parking shoulder on the right. It doesn't look much from the road but trust me, it's the best short walk at Lake Waikaremoana.

The track quickly climbs around 120m through rugged native bush, punctuated by Punakaiki-esque limestone formations and caves. Steps provide welcome traction for much of the climb, which is short, steep and never uninteresting, but elsewhere it can be muddy, so decent shoes are recommended.

After 15-20min, the bush opens out to reveal a railed viewing platform, offering stunning views over Rosie Bay and the spine of Panekire Bluffs. As with the West Coast, prominent stacks of rock sprout from the bushline like tombstones, and I have no doubt the whole landscape is riddled with caves and secrets. For those who have walked Waikaremoana's Great Walk, the lookout provides a fresh take on the spectacular landscape, and the road, far below, provides an appreciation of the track's direct approach.

Best walked during the golden hour, the lookout is the perfect position to watch the sun sink behind Tūhoe's precious roto.

Wild File

Access SH38

Grade Easy

Time 45min

Distance 415m

Total ascent 90m

Topo50 map BG40

Elevation profile



