

Mt Isobel, Hanmer Forest Park

The combination of alpine terrain and the comforts of hot springs, cafés and comfortable accommodation at Hanmer Springs, make Mt Isobel a worthy tramping destination.

Though Hanmer Springs is nestled in an alpine basin at about 350m above sea level, surrounded by peaks sometimes soaring more than a vertical kilometre higher, as the name suggests, it's best known for its hot springs.

But, when conditions permit, within easy reach of the township, by car, bike or foot, is a fine selection of alpine trails. The most accessible option offering superb views of the Hanmer Basin is the network of trails leading to Mt Isobel, which in winter conditions can often be fully snow-clad.

In a day, it's feasible to do a return circuit on foot, following the Mt Isobel Track to the summit. However, this requires a 1000m height gain and for those with children or questionable fitness, an alternative option is to drive up to Jacks Pass car park, above 800m, which makes the walk to the summit of Mt Isobel much less arduous.

From the car park, the track heads east and then curves south onto a spur leading to Pt1195. The slope is benign at first, but once hedging south, it steepens and, though the route is on a well-marked trail, this and other steeper sections require care to avoid slipping.

Views are good almost immediately above the car park and they get progressively better as you climb.

Past the 1000m contour, the trail levels out and then rises gradually over the next 800m to the base of another steep section leading to Pt1195.

From here, the trail joins the Mt Isobel Track and turns eastwards for 1km undulating over gentle terrain to the 1319m summit of Mt Isobel.

In fine winter, this trip is a great way to give youngsters a taste of real alpine terrain. However, you'll need to be prepared to turn back if it's icy. In soft snow, the route is fine for children wearing appropriate clothing and footwear.

As the summit is approached, the entire Hanmer Basin spreads out to the south, with the township nestled directly below. There are fine views north to the Clarence River and Maukuratawhai (1615m) as well as numerous other peaks.

Wild file

Access From Jacks Pass on Clarence Valley Road

Grade Moderate

Time 1-2hr to summit

Distance 2.87km to summit

Total ascent 515m

topo50 map BU24

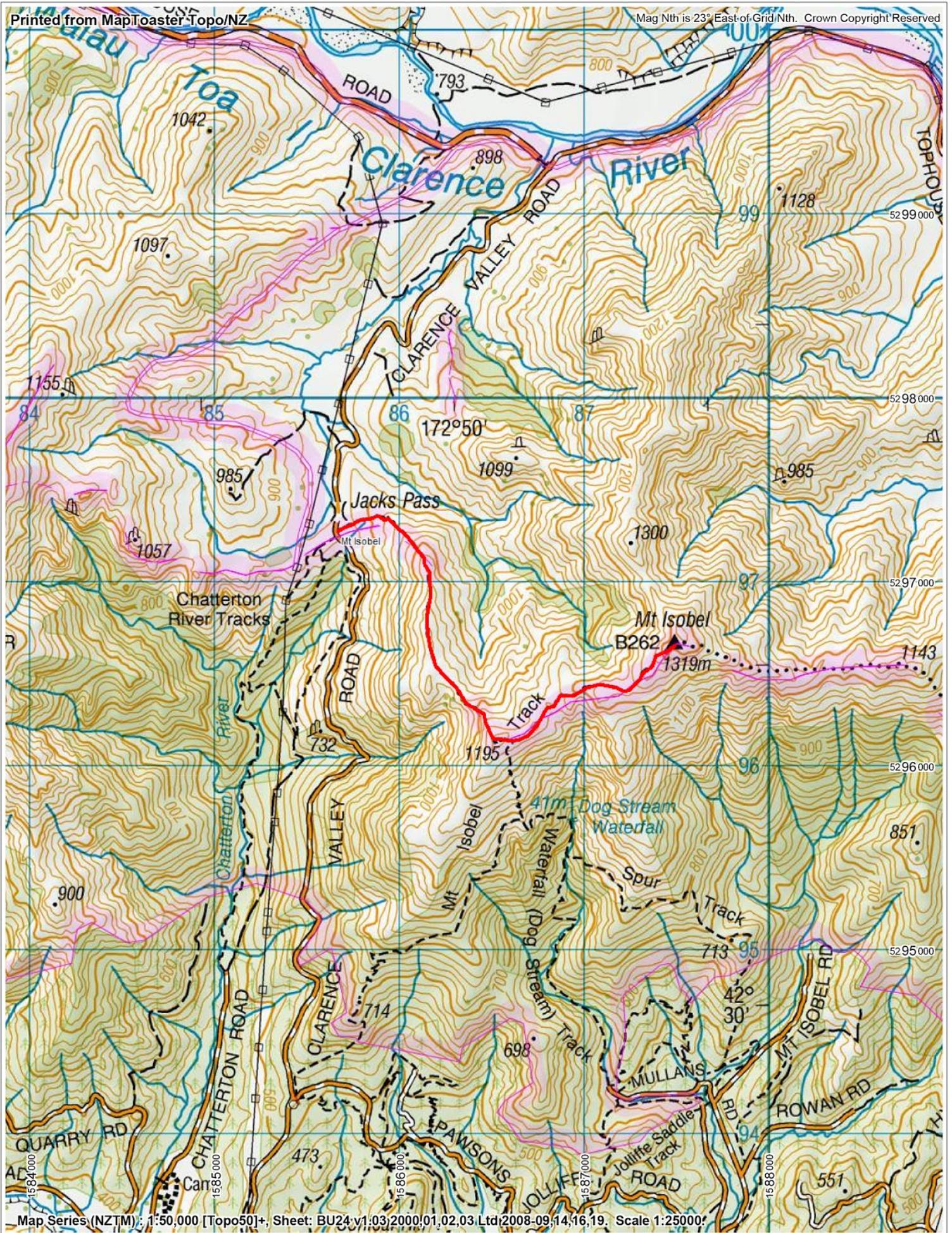
Elevation profile



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Map Series (NZTM): 1:50,000 [Topo50]+, Sheet: BU24.v1:03;2000/01,02,03.Ltd2008-09;14,16,19. Scale 1:25000