

EASTERN  
WALKWAY

# EXPLORE WELLINGTON

Discover Wellington's Town Belt, reserves and walkways

EASTERN WALKWAY

A PROJECT OF THE EASTERN  
SUBURBS LIONS CLUB AND THE  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL PARKS  
& RECREATION DEPARTMENT

EASTERN WALKWAY VIA MIRAMAR PENINSULA,  
THE PASS OF BRANDA, TARAKENA BAY  
AND ALSO POINT DORSET

**Absolutely  
Positively**

ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL **Wellington**

[www.feelinggreat.co.nz](http://www.feelinggreat.co.nz)

From the Pass of Branda, the track ascends steeply by steps and zigzags for about 300m, partly in a pine plantation. A track to Beacon Hill Road is signposted. At the top a resting place overlooks Point Dorset, Chaffers Passage, Barrett Reef and vessels entering and leaving Wellington Harbour.

## 1 | Barrett Reef Tangihanga-a-Kupe

If you follow the line of rocks from Point Dorset southwest you will see Barrett Reef. The row of jagged rocks at the entrance to Wellington Harbour was named Te Tangihanga-a-Kupe.

There are two stories behind the name; the first is because of the fancied resemblance of the rocks to a row of mourners at a Maori tangi (the wailing party of Kupe). The second story is about the place that Kupe stopped to cry for those whom he left behind in the area, including his daughter Matiu and niece Makaro (after whom Somes and Ward islands are named after), while he continued his voyage of discovery of Aotearoa.

This is the site of many shipwrecks in the past century including:

## a | Wanganella, 1947

The Wanganella, nearing the completion of a voyage from Sydney to Wellington, ran onto the rocks at the southern end of Barrett Reef on January 19. She remained in this perilous position for 18 days and after a remarkable spell of fine weather she floated clear. The ship was on her first post-war civilian voyage across the Tasman Sea and had 400 passengers on board. No loss of life occurred and the Wanganella was repaired and back in service after two years.

## b | Hunter, 1876

On April 8 the schooner became stranded on the southernmost rock of Barrett Reef. No lives were lost but the vessel was completed damaged.

## c | Earl of Southesk, 1874

On May 28 the barque struck heavily on the southern end of Barrett Reef. Rough sea conditions caused the master and 12-member crew to abandon the wreck five minutes before she slipped off the rocks and sank in 12 fathoms of water.

Continue along the undulating track which leads around Beacon Hill. A track to Signallers Grove is signposted. Further along a sign points to Beacon Hill Road.



## EXPLORE

The Eastern Walkway extends along the southern end of Miramar Peninsula from the Pass of Branda to Tarakena Bay. The track is 2.5 km long and takes about one and a half hours to complete. The track surface is mainly gravel and much of the track is exposed.

The route is described here from the Pass of Branda to Tarakena Bay, but marker posts mean it can be walked in either direction or in the recommended circular route back along Breaker Bay Road (see map).

There is also an extra walk which can be done out to Point Dorset, allow one hour to discover World War II gun batteries and observation posts. Please don't climb or enter the observation posts as they are unsafe and near collapse. The track is steep in places and very exposed.

Along the way you will see many Maori historical sites and spectacular views of Wellington Harbour. You will also learn about some of the fascinating history behind the geological formation and diverse local history of Miramar Peninsula.

From the city, take the No.11 Seatoun bus to the Seatoun terminal. Refer to the map for the Pass of Branda start (the walkway entrance is signposted).

All along the route are numerous seats and picnic spots. Dogs are permitted but must be on a leash. The walkway is closed to mountain bikers.



Turn right here and a short way up the track is the Beacon Hill Lookout.

Contrasting views can be enjoyed – Baring and Pencarrow heads and the Cook Strait are in one direction with the eastern suburbs, the Wellington International Airport, Evans and Lyall bays in the other.



## 2 | Beacon Hill Signal Station

The Beacon Hill Signal Station has been in

operation since 1864. Parts of the original building remain today although much of it has been rebuilt and equipment upgraded over the years. The station maintains a 24-hour all year round "harbour control" service, much like airport traffic control.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council Harbourmaster's Office operates the station. Public access to the station is restricted by the Maritime Security Act 2004.

Visit the Beacon Hill webcam web site [www.wrc.govt.nz/beaconhill](http://www.wrc.govt.nz/beaconhill) or Greater Wellington Regional Council's web site at [www.wrc.govt.nz/em/manhar.htm](http://www.wrc.govt.nz/em/manhar.htm) to see more.



## 3 | Atatürk Memorial

The Memorial commemorates Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, defender of Gallipoli and first president of modern Turkey. The memorial, funded by the Turkish government, was dedicated in 1990. The site was chosen because of its physical resemblance to Anzac Cove in Gallipoli. Beneath the memorial is a container of soil from Anzac Cove.

Atatürk's mathematics teacher gave him the second name of Kemal (which means perfection), in recognition of his very clever abilities. At that time very few Turkish people had a second name or surname.



Fort Dorset  
Walk overleaf

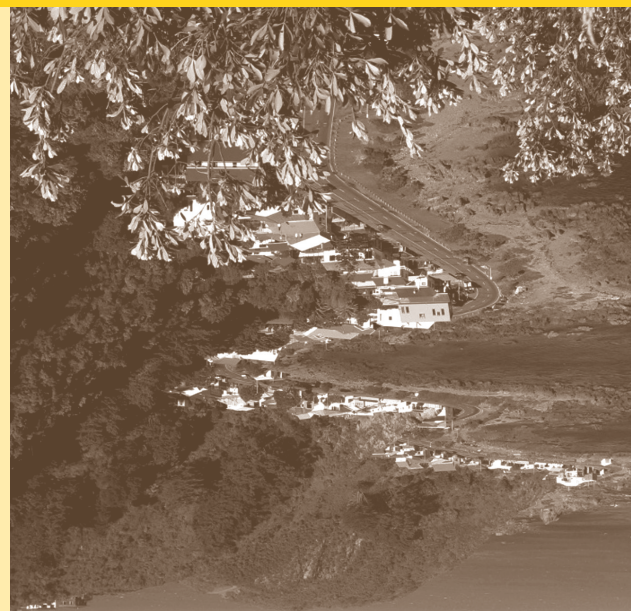
Point Dorset

## Wahine Disaster, 1968

Though there have been worse shipping disasters in New Zealand with greater loss, the sinking of the Wahine on April 10 is by far the most well known. The tragedy can be attributed to one major cause – the weather. The storm which exploded upon Wellington was one of the worst ever recorded in New Zealand. Its ferocity was due to a combination of two storms which happened to merge directly over Wellington.

At 6.41am the Wahine struck on the southernmost rocks of Barrett Reef where the vessel grounded and suffered severe damage to her hull whereby seawater entered parts of the ship. She was then driven northward by the storm towards Point Dorset, slowly dragging her anchors along the western shoreline until she reached a position where her stern was close to Steeple Rock. Here her anchors gripped and held.

At about 1.20pm Captain Hector Robertson gave the fateful 'abandon ship' order. Between 2.15 and 2.30pm with her stability completely lost, she heeled over and crashed heavily to the seabed where she rested on the sandy bottom. Fifty-one lives were lost. Remnants of the Wahine are present at both Wahine and Churchill Parks (both on the map and mentioned further on).



The Eastern Walkway guides you from the Pass of Branda,

past many historical Maori sites to spectacular views of

and some early history of the area.

discover picturesque views, stunning flora and fauna,

Walk through some of Wellington's beautiful parks and



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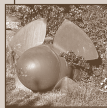
EASTERN WALKWAY VIA MIRAMAR PENINSULA,  
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CITY

MIRAMAR PENINSULA

PASS OF BRANDA

POINT DORSET

TARAKENA BAY

From the Ataturk Memorial,  
look west over the  
Rangitatau Historic  
Reserve.Before descending to Tarakena Bay and  
Moa Point Road, enjoy the views of  
Wellington Harbour heads and on a  
fine day the South Island and the  
Kaikoura Ranges. From the road, it is  
a very scenic 40 minute walk along  
Breaker Bay Road back to the Pass of  
Branda or a one hour walk to the  
Seatoun bus terminal.4 | Wahine  
Memorial ParkOn April 4, 1975 the Council  
resolved at a meeting that  
the foreshore area at Palmer Head  
would be known as the Wahine  
Memorial Park. The park faces onto  
Barrett Reef, which the Interisland  
Ferry Wahine struck on the day of its  
tragic capsiz on April 10, 1968. There  
is a plaque bearing the inscription  
"Wahine Memorial Park" on a large  
boulder, near to the manoeuvring  
propeller from the Wahine.The propeller was not  
erected until 1978, when  
the Town Clerk wrote to the  
Director of Parks  
suggesting the propeller  
be mounted in the park with a plaque.  
This was confirmed by the Cultural,  
Libraries and Civil Defence Committee  
April 3, 1978.Notice the "Slow down!  
Penguins crossing – Kia  
Tupato, He Korora e  
whiti ana" signs.

## 5 | Churchill Park

The park was named after ex-Councillor  
J G Churchill (OBE, Councillor 1950–1964)  
to recognise his efforts on behalf of the  
people of Wellington and in particular  
the residents of Seatoun. As chairman  
of the Reserves Committee he provided  
citizens with all types of areas and had  
provided open spaces where previously  
there had been none. In the early  
1990s, a Wahine Memorial was erected  
and designed by Peter Kundycki.

## MAORI HISTORICAL SITES

## A | Paewhenua

Above Eve Bay is a Maori kainga (village) site. Signs of occupation have been  
noted in the form of shell heaps and human remains. At one time a considerable  
number of karaka trees grew along the coast, but by the 1950s many had  
disappeared or were dying.

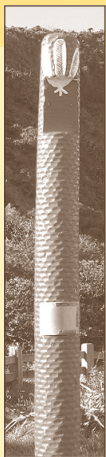
## B | Poito Pa

A heavily terraced, palisaded and stockaded village under Ngati Ira Chief Takatua,  
was attacked and destroyed, along with Rangitatau Pa, by raiders from the north  
under Nga Puhi's Tuwhare in 1819–20. Large numbers were killed.

## C | Rangitatau Pa

One of the earliest fortresses constructed in Te Whanganui a Tara (the great  
harbour of Tara) was an ancient site thought to have been occupied in Tara's  
time. The fortified pa protected the approach to Whetu Kairangi from the sea,  
with its clear view of Cook Strait and the approaches to the Harbour. The nearby  
village of Poito often used this pa as a citadel in times of stress or as a retreat  
when invaders were threatening. Tuteremoana is the chief associated with this  
site. He was the last principal chief of Ngai Tara in the 17th century. Terraces and  
ditches can still be seen.

## D | Rangitatau/Palmer Head

The eastern ridge was home to another pa site of Tara, which is still recognisable  
today. On the eastern side is a ditch-like depression that may be an old entrance  
way from the beach below. Hut sites are also found further along. Out to sea,  
the rock site Te Kaiwhatawhata at the end  
of Palmer Head, was a favourable fishing  
spot where hapuka (groper) were caught.

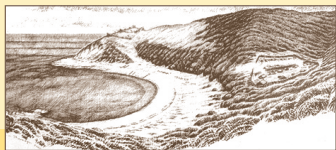
## E | Oruaiti Pa

Fort Dorset now occupies the site of Oruaiti Pa, one of the  
old Rangitane stockaded villages of past centuries. Prior to  
being interfered with, the ridges showed many levelled hut  
sites, sufficient to accommodate about 50 huts. A number  
of water worn boulders scattered about were probably used  
as blocks on which to pound fern root and for other purposes.Oruaiti means "place of the small pit" where kumara and  
potatoes were stored. The Rua potato possibly got its name  
from this site.

## F | Te Turanga-o-Kupe

The place where Kupe stood after landing at Seatoun and  
the stretch of water between it and Steeple Rock where he  
went swimming. In Kupe's time Miramar was an island,  
entirely hilly and without any fringing flat land or broad  
beaches at Seatoun or elsewhere.

## G | Te Aroaro-o-Kupe (Steeple Rock)

While bathing at Steeple Rock, Kupe injured himself on this  
rock while swimming there, hence the name "the front of  
Kupe" and its variant, Te Ure-o-Kupe, which indicates the  
place of his injury.

## POINT DORSET

Opposite the entrance to the Eastern  
Walkway at the Pass of Branda is the  
track which leads to Point Dorset.  
The start of the track is steep and  
exposed so take care. Follow the track  
up the ridge and enjoy stunning views  
south across the Harbour along Breaker  
Bay Road to the southwest, and  
Pencarrow Head and the Pencarrow  
Lighthouse to the southeast.

## PENCARROW LIGHTHOUSE

The cast iron Pencarrow  
Lighthouse was the first  
permanent lighthouse to be  
built in New Zealand and  
was run by New Zealand'sonly woman lighthouse-keeper, Mrs  
Bennett. The cast iron tower was made  
in England and then erected on Pencarrow  
Head, at the entrance to Wellington  
Harbour in 1859. It remained operational  
until 18 June, 1935 when it was replaced  
by an automated light erected at Baring  
Head east of Pencarrow. The Pencarrow  
Lighthouse was offered to the New Zealand  
Historic Places Trust in 1966, and the Trust  
has maintained the building ever since.  
It is now a popular destination for hikers  
and bikers, and is surrounded by a  
recreational reserve.Along the track take time to explore  
and discover Fort Dorset and the now  
long abandoned gun batteries and  
observation posts.

## FORT DORSET

In 1908 work began on  
constructing a two-gun  
battery on the top of the  
ridge at Point Dorset. From 1911 this battery  
became Wellington's main coast defence.  
Five years on, a 12-pounder (12pdr)  
examination battery was added.It was not however until 1929 that Fort  
Dorset was officially declared a military  
establishment. However, this was just a  
legal change of status as it had been  
formally used for military exercises before  
World War I, and proposed as a battery  
site since the 1870s. Fort Dorset and the  
new 6" battery built at Palmer Head  
above Strathmore were at the outbreak  
of World War II the only large coastal  
guns in place to defend Wellington.

## GEOLOGY AND HISTORY

What now exists as a peninsula was once an island named Motu-kairangi (Miramar  
'island') by early Maori. The island was isolated from the main land mass by a shallow  
channel called Te Awa-a-Taia. In 1460 a severe earthquake raised the island to form  
the peninsula. Maori renamed this Whataitai. Another earthquake in 1855 caused  
a second uplift which created the peninsula we see today.The earthquake in 1460 was named Te Haowhenua by the early tangata whenua of  
the area and is referred to in a number of contemporary waiata (song) commemorating  
the long history of Te Whanganui a Tara.Early in World War II the  
area was used as a satellite  
camp with accommodation  
for mainly the heavy  
artillery regiment. Its headquarters were  
situated here at Fort Dorset. It provided  
accommodation for about 200 military  
personnel as well as messing facilities  
and personnel administration.Among the different batteries of guns  
were 6" and 4" guns, Q.F. 12pdr guns as  
well as search lights and radar. Along the  
southern ridgeline were two fire control  
posts and observation posts, as well as  
guns infantry pillboxes on the foreshore  
below. On November 1,  
1991, Fort Dorset was  
officially closed, and in  
1999 demolition work  
started.down to the beach and round to the tip  
of Point Dorset – a great site for a picnic  
if the wind is not too strong. From here  
you can follow the track back the way  
you came to the Pass of Branda or  
continue along and head north. Along  
the northern ridge you can look down  
on what was the town of Bree.

## THE LORD OF THE RINGS SET

The first scenes to be filmed in Peter  
Jackson's The Lord of the Rings trilogy  
were in and around Bree and The  
Prancing Pony Inn. The town was  
constructed on parts of Fort Dorset where  
filming took several nights and the use  
of "watermakers" gave the illusion of a  
rainy night in Bree. At the completion of  
filming the set of Bree was destroyed.

## FORT DORSET NOW

Seatoun School now occupies the  
southern sportfield as well as areas that  
the parade ground, the 22 (D) gunbays  
and offices occupied. The land both  
north and south of the new school  
contains all new subdivisions which  
occupy what was the sergeants mess,  
conference room and gym, guard house,  
Fort Dorset headquarters and barracks.After walking along the beach you  
can head up Boardwalk Lane and  
along to the Seatoun bus terminal,  
or continue the walk along the  
beach to Churchill Park.

## KEY

- PARKS /RESERVES
- DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
- EASTERN WALKWAY
- FORT DORSET TRACK
- OTHER TRACKS

\* Please do not climb on the gun  
batteries and observation posts as  
they are unstable and not safe.

## SAFETY AND REGULATIONS

Dogs must be kept on a leash



No Mountain Biking



No Litter

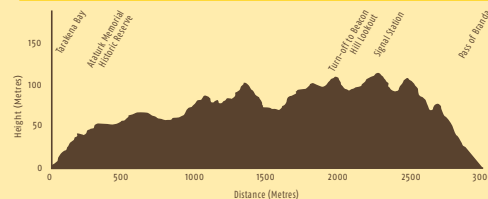


No Fires



No Camping

## TOPOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



## FLORA AND FAUNA

Introduced plants dominate the ridge  
along which the walkway runs.  
However native plants are common  
and their colonisation of the ridge  
is being encouraged by plantings of  
species such as flax, cabbage tree  
and broadleaf (kapuka).Native birds along the walkway  
and Breaker Bay Road include  
tauhou (waxeyes), kotare  
(kingfisher), karoro (black-backed  
gull), tarapunga (red-billed gull)  
and korora (little blue penguin).Other Explore Wellington Brochures featuring Wellington Town Belt,  
parks and reserves, and art and heritage walks in the city are available  
at stands at the Visitor Information Centre on Wakefield Street,  
Wellington International Airport and the Wellington Railway Station.  
Brochures are also available by phoning Wellington City Council 04  
499 4444, or visit our website [www.feelinggreat.co.nz](http://www.feelinggreat.co.nz) for details.The "Off Road Mountain Biking in Wellington City" brochures are also  
available at the Visitor Information Centre, Wakefield Street or check  
out [www.feelinggreat.co.nz](http://www.feelinggreat.co.nz) for information about mountain biking  
in Wellington.Planting a tree is a wonderful way to commemorate something  
special or to take an active part in creating a greener future.  
There's lots of ways you can help restore the city's reserves,  
bush and coastal areas – and some don't involve getting your  
hands dirty! Phone 499 4444 or visit [www.Wellington.govt.nz](http://www.Wellington.govt.nz)  
for more information.