

Dunedin walks



Natural history

The walks give access to diverse natural features, including ancient forests, young plantations, tussock-clad summits, developed farmland, spectacular coastal scenery, and rare wildlife. Dunedin’s geology is equally varied, with igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks, and volcanic hills following eruptions around Port Chalmers 10–13 million years ago. Erosion has sculpted Otago Harbour, with old lava flows on the peninsula’s coastal cliffs and at Aramoana. Rock columns typical of jointed basalt formations are spectacularly exposed at the Organ Pipes on the flanks of Mount Cargill, and the Pyramids in Okia Reserve.

Otago Peninsula was an island that became part of the mainland, thanks to the sand isthmus that is now South Dunedin. The creamy sands of the adjacent beaches come from quartz-rich sediments washed up the coast from the mouth of the Clutha River/Mata-Au.



The Organ Pipes on the flanks of Mount Cargill. Photo: John Barkla

Dunedin had a substantial forest in pre-European times, with tall bush surrounding the harbour and Otago Peninsula down to the water’s edge. Only a few small forest remnants remain. West of the harbour, native forest still covers the flanks of Mount Cargill, Flagstaff, Swampy Summit and neighbouring areas. Much of it is protected.

Above the treeline a diverse scrubland dominates all but the highest or wettest areas. Snow tussock and speargrass are prominent in the subalpine grassland areas of Swampy Summit and Silver Peaks.

There is a rich mixture of native and introduced birds. In North Dunedin the kererū/wood pigeon is common. These large colourful birds fly with whooshing wingbeats and eat berries, flowers and leaves in both the bush and domestic gardens. The smaller native birds are bellbird/korimako, grey warbler/riroriro, tomtit/miromiro and fantail/pīwakawaka. Higher up, flocks of brown creeper/pipipi, busy little birds with a warbling song, can be seen. The silveryeye/tauhou is common in winter, and there’s a small population of the rarer native robin/toutouwai in the Flagstaff area.

New Zealand has two raptors, the Australasian harrier/kāhu and New Zealand falcon/kārearea, which can both be seen in open areas around Dunedin. Common exotic birds include the blackbird, song thrush, starling, chaffinch and other finches. A colourful recent settler in forests round Mount Cargill is the eastern rosella, an Australian parakeet. In pre-European times Dunedin’s forests hosted yellow-crowned parakeet/kākāriki, kākā and laughing owl. The nocturnal Australian brush-tailed possum has had a major impact on native plants and birdlife throughout the Dunedin area. Extensive control programmes are in place to manage these, and other, pests.

Invertebrates include the red admiral and tussock butterflies. Skinks and geckos can be seen by keen observers in the wild places that surround Dunedin City.



Community involvement

Dunedin’s many tracks and trails are developed and maintained by Mountain Biking Otago, the Green Hut Track Group, Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club, Task Force Green, Dunedin City Council, Department of Conservation, the Otago Regional Council, and others.

Tracks Near Me (mtbtracksnearme.co.nz), a free web app developed by Mountain Biking Otago, provides live, up-to-date maps and track information. More information on local tracks and events can be found at mountainbikingotago.co.nz

Several streams are home to some of our reclusive native kōkopu, introduced fish such the common brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), and a huge variety of freshwater invertebrates such as mayflies, stoneflies and freshwater crayfish. Brown trout and salmon are common and even spawn in the Water of Leith.



Banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*) in Opoho Creek, beside the Big Easy MTB. Photo: Chris Arbuckle



Ross Creek Reservoir. Photo: MoveMe Dunedin

Short walk – easy walking for up to an hour

Walking track – gentle, well-formed walk

Tramping track – mostly unformed but with track directional markers, poles or cairns. Backcountry skills and experience required.

Wheelchair accessible

Mountain biking

Dogs allowed

Dogs allowed on a leash

Managed by Department of Conservation

Managed by Dunedin City Council

Managed by Clutha District Council

Managed by Otago Regional Council

Managed by Mountain Biking Otago

Managed by Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust

Welcome to Dunedin

Dunedin’s beaches, shrublands, forested valleys and tussocked hilltops offer a fascinating variety of walks close to the city, and the surrounding skyline ridges have spectacular views. Whether your interests are scientific, historic, or you simply want to enjoy the scenery, wildlife and the exercise, these tracks will give you pleasure. Many tracks are suitable for dog walking, and there are beginner and intermediate mountain bike tracks.

For more detailed information on tracks around Dunedin see the guidebook ‘Dunedin Tracks and Trails’ by Antony Hamel, or other brochures produced by Dunedin City Council and the Department of Conservation.



Aramoana beach. Photo: Laura Honey

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL

kaunhera
te rohe o
ōtēpoti

• Plan ahead and prepare

• Travel and camp on durable ground

• Dispose of waste properly

• Leave what you find

• Minimise the effects of fire

• Respect wildlife and farm animals

• Be considerate of others

Keep safe

New Zealand
POLICE

• Lock unattended vehicles and don't leave valuables in view

• Keep valuables with you, and don't leave property unattended

• Report suspicious activity promptly

• The emergency telephone number for Police, Fire and Ambulance is 111. This can be dialled free from any phone. In non-emergency situations contact the nearest police station. Information can also be provided anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

29

Botanic Garden

There are multiple paths through New Zealand's oldest botanic garden, with international gardens, duck ponds, children's playgrounds, and the Water of Leith river. The information centre provides path maps, advice and duck food.

30

Signal Hill Reserve MTB

A purpose-built network of tracks for all skill levels. A main feature is the Big Easy, a gentle climbing track that allows easy access to the network of advanced downhill tracks.

31

Harbourside path

1 hr 15 min, 6 km (one way)

The sealed harbourside path runs for 6 km from the mouth of the Water of Leith through to St Leonards. Built as a cycle and walking path, this flat ride is excellent for families, especially young or new cyclists.

32

Harbour Cone

Start at Bacon St: 2 hr, 6 km (return)
Start at Highcliff Rd: 1 hr, 3 km (return)

From Bacon St, follow a steep walk among trees, then alongside a stand of native bush leading to Highcliff Road. From here, cross the road and climb directly up the ridge to the summit of Harbour Cone. For a shorter walk, start 500 m back along Highcliff Road towards Dunedin, where parking is easier and a poled route leads up the south-west slope to the summit.

Harbour Cone. Photo: John Barkla

33

Frasers Gully/Brockville

2 hr, 7 km (round trip)

From the end of Frasers Rd, follow Frasers Stream up to Dalziel Rd. Either return the way you came for a 1 hr return trip or turn left along Dalziel Rd until you reach the southern end of Brockville Park. Take the track along the edge of the park, behind the houses on Travis St to Sanda Road Recreation Reserve. Follow the mown area behind the houses climbing onto Cockerell St, then down the gravel path to Brockville Rd and Glenross St, down through the reserve to Frasers Stream and back to the start.

34

Greenacres St

40 min, 1.2 km (return)

Start at either Greenacres St in Macandrew Bay, or Highcliff Rd. This walk takes in expansive views of Otago Harbour and links with many other walking tracks via roads. It is also used by mountain bikers to link to other circuits.

35

Allans Beach

5 min to the beach

Access from the car park at the end of Allans Beach Rd. Sea lions and penguins frequent this wild ocean beach. Keep at least 10 m from sea lions. Dogs are not permitted on the eastern end of the beach, but are allowed on a leash at the western end.

36

Mosgiel floodbank, Silver Stream

2 hr, 9 km (one way)

There are several access points for this flat walk. On the eastern side of Silver Stream, start where Wingatui Rd crosses the stream and head west through Mosgiel township. Or, from Mosgiel township, head west or east. Suitable for buggies.

37

Tomahawk Lagoon/41-Peg Track

2 hr, 6.5 km (round trip)

The track is signposted at the picnic area at the top of Tomahawk Lagoon. The track climbs to Soldiers' Monument, commemorating 49 soldiers from the peninsula who were killed in WW1. After taking in the commanding coastal views, descend to Highcliff Rd, turn right and right again onto Centre Rd and return to the start. For a longer walk, continue past Centre Rd and turn right onto Karetai Rd. Watch and listen for cars and mountain bikers.

38

Buskin Rd, Highcliff and Paradise Rd tracks

1 hr 30 min, 5 km (round trip)

From Highcliff Rd head down Buskin Rd, an unformed legal road over farmland. Turn left onto Highcliff Track and follow to Paradise Track. Ascend to Highcliff Rd and back to the start. Please respect other track users.
Side track to Boulder Beach is closed for yellow-eyed penguin breeding 1 Nov – 28 Feb.

39

Sandfly Bay

1 hr 30 min, 3 km (return)

The track begins at the Sandfly Bay car park at the end of Seal Point Rd. A path crosses farmland to the top of the sand dunes. Go down the sandhill – which can be rather testing on the return. Enjoy sea lions and yellow-eyed penguins/hoiho from a distance – stay at least 20 m away.

40

Sandymount

1 hr, 2.5 km (round trip)

The loop track begins at the car park at the end of Sandymount Road. After 1 km you arrive at a lookout with views to the north-east over Allans Beach, Hoopers Inlet, Mt Charles/Poatiri and inland to Harbour Cone. You can continue around the coastline, and take the track to Sandymount summit, which gives spectacular views of Otago Peninsula's coastline and clifftops. Another marked route leads to Sandfly Bay.
Closed for lambing 1 Sept – 23 Oct.

41

St Clair Esplanade to St Kilda Beach

1 hr, 3.5 km (one way)

From St Clair Esplanade there is 3.5 km of uninterrupted beach-walking to St Kilda Beach. Either walk back along the beach or climb one of the numerous tracks to access John Wilson Ocean Drive and the inland route. The inland route goes through children's playgrounds and sports fields behind the ice stadium back to the Esplanade. Dogs are welcome, with some restrictions – see the signs for details.

42

Tunnel Beach

1 hr, 2 km (return)

Start at the car park on Tunnel Beach Rd, signposted off Blackhead Rd. Follow the fenced track downhill to the spectacular rocky coastline. At the end of the track a short tunnel with steps leads down to the beach. Beach accessible 2 hours either side of low tide – check the tide table.

43

Government Track

4 hr 30 min, 17 km (return)

The track entrance is 5 km down Waipori Falls Rd on the right; parking is 100 m further on the left. Traversing the slopes of the beech- and mānuka-forested Waipori Valley south of Dunedin, the Government Track was built in the 1860s to provide access to the central goldfields. The track starts with a short push up a steep section of switchback track. The old pack track begins to slide along the flank of the Waipori Valley and then climbs steadily to the top. There are a few creek crossings and large trees blocking the track which you will have to climb over. Be prepared to carry your bike if riding. The track can be muddy at times and stinging nettles (ongaonga) are present. This is a shared use track, please respect other users

44

Titri Creek Track

10 min, 745 m

From the car park on Titri Rd go over Titri Creek into the Titri wetlands to see hundreds of wading birds, including marsh crake/kotoreke, fernbird/mātātā, scaup/pāpako and grey teal/tētē.

45

Taieri River and Millennium tracks

John Bull Gully picnic area: 1 hr 30 min, 4 km (one way)
Taieri Ferry Rd: 2 hr 30 min, 8 km (one way)

Start from the Riverside Rd at Taieri Mouth. The track passes through forest then open shrubland to cut downhill to finish at John Bull Gully picnic area. Return the same way for great views of Taieri Mouth and Taieri Island/Moturata. Alternatively, carry on along the Millennium Track, which links with Taieri Ferry Rd to come out on SH1.

46

Picnic Gully

40 min, 1.5 km (return)

This easy track starts a short distance up Hanning Place, 400 m south of the bridge at Taieri Mouth. Halfway up the gully the track crosses onto private land. From here a route leads up out of the gully and onto Finlayson Rd. Either return via the track or follow the road back.

Plan and prepare

Dunedin’s weather is changeable all year round – be prepared!

Your safety is your responsibility. Before you go, know the Outdoor Safety Code – **5 simple rules** to help you stay safe:

1. Plan your trip
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies

Leave your trip details – even for a day trip – with a trusted contact, and use www.adventuresmart.org.nz

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Ross Creek

Network of easy walking tracks, see inset map.

1 Hawksbury lagoon and beach

1 hr 30 min, 4 km (round trip)

From the beach end of Beach St, head left along the beach, then upriver to the lagoon. Follow the causeway around the lagoon and then across it, back onto Beach St. Dogs allowed on the beach only.

2 Huriawa Pa

45 min, 2.4 km (round trip)

Starting at the car park at the Domain on Barvas St, follow the track around the peninsula to Karitane beach. Follow the track through the cemetery back to the Domain. For a longer return walk, continue along the beach.

3 Seacliff

1 hr, 2 km (round trip)

The entrance gates to Truby King Reserve are on Russell Road. There are numerous paths and vehicle tracks through the ruined buildings, parks and forests of the Seacliff Medical Hospital, built in the 1880s.

4 Silver Peaks circuit

8–11 hr, 19 km (round trip)

Two-day tramping loop for experienced, well equipped backcountry trampers with a good weather forecast. Not to be taken lightly. See www.doc.govt.nz or DOC's *Silver Peaks Tracks* brochure for details.

5 Black Gully Dam/Careys Creek

Black Gully Dam: 30 min, 1 km (return)
Careys Creek: 3 hr 30 min, 9 km (one way)

Black Gully Dam Track is accessed from Semple Rd. From here you can descend to the Careys Creek Reserve at Evansdale Glen. For a longer tramp, return to Semple Rd via Jones Rd.

6 Mapoutahi

45 min, 3 km (return)

From the gravelled end of Osborne Rd walk 1.2 km on the sandy and unformed road to the beach. Head left to the steps that lead up Mapoutahi for good coastal views from the 18th century Māori pā site.

7 Long Beach

1 hr 30 min, 7 km (round trip)

This family- and dog-friendly walk starts and ends at the car park on Beach Rd. It provides access to the beach, caves, Bridge Walk, Drivers Creek, conservation area, and large grassed reserve suitable for picnics and play.

8 Orokonui lagoon

1 hr, 3 km (round trip)

This wide-track, pleasant walk around the tidal Orokonui lagoon has several start points, including a parking area on Orokonui Rd.

9 Pūrākaunui Inlet and Potato Point

1 hr 30 min, 7 km (return)

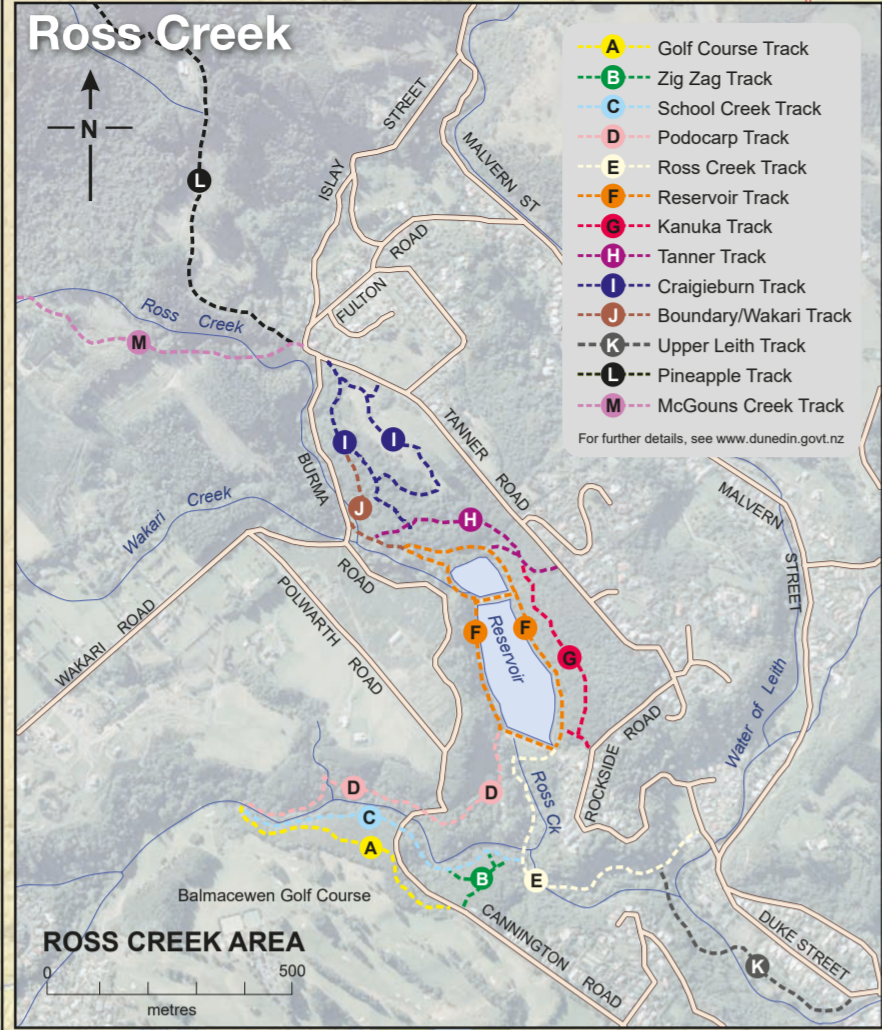
Starting in Osborne at the corner of Purakaunui School Rd and Osborne Rd, follow what looks like a driveway uphill until you see the track sign. Follow Bay Rd when it splits with Crescent St, climb past a red letterbox (No.55) then walk down to the left behind the private boat sheds. Follow the track around the bay to the car park at the boat ramp on Bay Rd. Climb again and follow the track sign on the left to Potato Point.

10 Heyward Point

2 hr, 5 km (return)

There are two start points for this track: the end of Heyward Point Rd or off Aramoana Rd, 50 m before Pari St. There are great coastal views along the cliff-tops, before descending through regenerating bush to the more exposed Heyward Point.

Closed for lambing: Aramoana Rd from 29 Aug – 4 Nov, Heyward Point Rd from 29 Aug – 4 Nov.



11 Aramoana

Saltmarsh walk and boardwalk: 20 min, 1 km (return)

The track begins at the back of the Domain on Moana St and winds through native dune and saltmarsh vegetation. No dogs allowed on the saltmarsh.

Moana St – Aramoana Spit: 45 min, 3 km (return)
Moana St – sea wall: 15 min, 900 m (return)
Moana St – Aramoana mole: 30 min, 2.5 km (return)

These short walks all begin at the end of Moana St.

12 Leith Saddle

3 hr 30 min, 6 km (return)

From the car park by SH1 at the crest of the Leith Saddle, the track starts 50 m along Waitati Valley Road and is well formed for the first section. It climbs steeply through the thick native cloud forest. The gradient eases before coming out onto open tussock on Swampy Spur for panoramic views of the city and beyond. After that the track is rougher – more typical of a tramping track – for another steady climb to the vehicle track that traverses Swampy Summit.

13 Racemans Track

1 hr 30 min, 6.5 km (round trip)

From the Silverstream car park on Flagstaff-Whare Flat Rd, follow Racemans Track up to the disused water race (a channel cut across the hillside), and turn right at the sign. Follow the track down to the tunnels and continue out to Flagstaff-Whare Flat Rd. When you reach the road, turn right onto it and follow it back to the car park.

14 Burns to Rustlers Ridge

2 hr 30 min, 6.5 km (round trip)

Four separate tracks make up a figure-8 circuit, which is a great day walk. The Pipeline Track tracks begin from Waitati Valley Rd (signposted Leith Saddle). Take either Burns Track or Rustlers Ridge Track to climb to higher ground, and then branch across to Swampy Ridge Track or up Burns Saddle Track to the Swampy Ridge Track. There are impressive views of Waitati and Silverstream valleys, Blueskin Bay, Mount Cargill and Silver Peaks.

15 Rain Gauge Spur and Racemans tracks

6 hr 30 min, 21 km (round trip)

From the junction of Silverstream Valley Rd and Whare Flat Rd, head up Racemans Track following an abandoned water race (a channel cut across the hillside) past several weirs across side streams. Rain Gauge Spur is at the top weir. The track climbs steeply through mānuka and low scrub to meet the hairpin bend on Swampy Access Rd. You can reconnect to Racemans Track by following Swampy Access Rd south and turning right onto Steve Amies Track. To drop back down to the water race, continue on either Steve Amies Track or Little Coal Creek Track.

16 Sullivans Dam to cloud forest

1 hr 45 min, 4 km (return)

The cloud forest is reached from the Sullivans Dam loop track, which starts near the top of Leith Valley Rd. Follow the track to the right and head east. It's a steady climb through broadleaf forest to where it meets a junction with Sullivans Bridle Track and Escarpment Track. As an extension you can follow the Escarpment Track, which is rough in places, up to Cowan Rd. Alternatively, the shorter 20-min circuit of the dam is suitable for families and is dog-friendly.

17 Grahams Bush and Organ Pipes tracks

Hall Rd to Mount Cargill Rd: 2 hr 30 min, 4 km (return)
Mount Cargill Rd to Organ Pipes: 45 min, 1 km (return)

From Hall Rd in Sawyers Bay, Grahams Bush Track climbs steadily through native bush. The top section is steep with a staircase that brings you out onto Mount Cargill Rd. On the right, further along Mount Cargill Rd, is the start of the Organ Pipes Track, which heads steeply up to the Organ Pipe rocks. Return the way you came or, for a longer walk, continue to follow the track onto the summit of Mount Cargill. There is parking at both Hall Rd and Mount Cargill Rd. Watch for cars.

18 Chalkies Track

3 hr 30 min, 6 km (round trip)

A loop tramping track traversing Powder Hill with a 400 m ascent. Start next to Leishmans Stream, about 4 km down Silverstream Valley Rd. From the DOC sign climb up past Leishmans Falls. The track is very steep to reach the trig on top of Powder Hill and is not for the faint-hearted. Either return the way you came or carry on north, down the hill to the end of Silverstream Valley Rd and back along the gravel road through the locked gate.

19 Nicols Falls and Nicols Creek Walks/MTB

1 hr, 1.5 km (return)

From the bridge on Leith Valley Rd that crosses Nicols Creek, the left-hand track leads up to the Nicols waterfall and Swampy Ridge. On the right is the Nicols Creek/ Switchback mountain bike track. The walking and bike tracks merge at times so look and listen for other users.

20 Mount Cargill

Bethunes Gully – Mount Cargill: 4 hr, 8.5 km (return)

From the car park in Bethunes Gully head up the slopes of Mount Cargill, through pine and native forest to the summit with panoramic views of the city and countryside.

AH Reed – Mount Cargill: 20 min, 1 km (return)

From Cowan Rd car park, the short AH Reed track follows a gravel path to the summit.

21 Pyramids, Victory Beach and Okia Reserve

45 min, 2.5 km (one way)

From the end of Dick Rd, follow Riddell Rd (a farm track) past the distinctively shaped Pyramids to Victory Beach and the Okia Reserve. This yellow-eyed penguin/hoiho breeding site is also home to fur seals and sea lions.

22 Flagstaff loop

1 hr, 2.5 km (round trip)

From the Bull Ring car park on Flagstaff-Whare Flat Rd follow the track to the right, up onto Flagstaff summit. Either return the way you came or continue on, taking all left-hand turns to return via the firebreak.

23 McGouns and Pineapple tracks

3 hr 30 min, 7.5 km (return)

To walk the Pineapple and McGouns Creek tracks you can either continue on from Flagstaff summit (see walk 22) or start at the locked gate on Booth Rd. From Booth Rd the McGouns Track is on the left, looking up the hill. This can be walked as a loop, returning past the water treatment plant to the car park. For a longer walk, follow the well-signposted Pineapple Track to wind through native forest. A long steep climb reaches a signposted junction with the Swampy Summit Track. Return the way you came, or continue to the Flagstaff summit and over to the Bull Ring car park (1 hr, one way).

24 Forrester Park and Bethunes Gully MTB

Head up North Rd, then Norwood St. Forrester Park is on the right. Further up the road, Bethunes Gully is on the left. Forrester Park has a great beginner/intermediate track suitable for children. Bethunes Gully has three intermediate tracks covering both sides of the gully.

25 Outram Glen to Lee Stream Walk

3 hr, 8.5 km (return)

Begin at the Outram Glen picnic area off Outram-Mosgiel Road. After 20–30 min the walking track becomes a tramping track. At this point a short track provides access to the river. The tramping track leads to a long traverse above the Taieri River. After about 1 hr the track returns to the river and soon reaches a junction at the river's confluence with Lee Stream. There are numerous swimming options.

26 Whare Flat MTB

From Flagstaff-Whare Flat Rd, turn into Laings Rd. The entrance to the mountain bike trails is 1 km along the road. This is a working forestry block operated by City Forests – access is available from 6 pm to dusk on weekdays, and all day on weekends and public holidays. Do not enter this area during times of strong wind. Do not enter forestry operational areas.

27 Wakari Creek MTB

A purpose-built network of beginner and intermediate tracks that traverse stands of redwood and fir trees, and side along streams. Do not enter this area during times of strong wind. Do not enter forestry operational areas.

28 Woodside Glen and Maungatua summit

Woodside Glen: 2 hr 30 min, 4 km (return)
Maungatua summit: a further 6 hr, 15 km (return)

Start at the Woodside Glen car park and picnic area, 2 km west of Outram along Woodside Rd. The walking track follows Lee Creek, then crosses it and climbs steeply. A rock outcrop just above the bush line is a natural stopping point before returning the way you came. For a longer and more challenging walk, follow the tramping track to the Maungatua summit (exposed in bad weather).