



Pelorus River Track



Walking



Dog Friendly

Difficulty

Hard

Length

44.6 km

Journey Time

3-4 days

Region

[Marlborough](#)

Sub-Region

[Marlborough](#)

Part of Collections

[Te Araroa - New Zealand's Trail](#) , [Te Araroa highlights](#) , [Te Araroa - South Island](#)

Te Araroa trail section: After a long road walk, follow the emerald green waters of the Pelorus River, then head up, along and over the scenic Bryant Range.

From Pelorus Bridge, there is a 14km road walk along Maungatapu Road (also known as Mt Richmond Road) to the Pelorus River Track trailhead. Initially the road is sealed and passes through farm land. Later it is unsealed and has exotic and indigenous forest sections.

Note: There are no budget accommodation options along this road - the Pelorus Bridge campground should be used.

Pelorus River Track - 14km

Starting from the end of Maungatapu / Mt Richmond Road, the Pelorus River Track is a long-established DOC tramping track with a good hut system. The track joins directly with Te Araroa's next section, the Richmond Range Alpine Track, at Hacket Junction. Both these tracks are within the 165,946 hectare Mt Richmond Forest Park and for logistical reasons many trampers will prefer to walk them consecutively as a single 9 (or more) day tramp. This is a major undertaking for which fit trampers should come well prepared. The larger rivers are bridged but the tramp involves many stream crossings that may be impassable after rain. Mt Richmond Forest Park contains a mixed variety of beech and podocarp forest, including the finest rimu along Te Araroa.

Road End to Captains Creek Hut - 8.5km / 4 hour

The track follows the Pelorus River for about a 1 hour to the Emerald Pool picnic area. From here the track climbs upwards. It leaves the river, sidles, and then returns to the river. The 6 bunk Captain Creek Hut is still about 30 minutes further upstream from here.

Captains Creek Hut to Middy Hut - 5km / 2 hour

This undulating section crosses Captain Creek by swing bridge after leaving the hut near its confluence with the Pelorus River. Beyond Captain Creek, swing bridges take trampers across the Pelorus River, and later Fishtail Stream.

Beyond Fishtail Stream the track leaves the Pelorus River then returns to it for the final stretch to Middy Hut (6 bunks).

Middy Hut to Rocks Hut - 5km / 3 hour

From Middy Creek Hut (6 bunks) cross a swing bridge and then climb for 20 minutes to a junction where the Pelorus Track branches to the left. The Rocks Hut (to the right) climbs steadily from the junction for about 600m up a broad ridge. It then enters an area with many hummocks and rock outcrops, turning northwards and meeting the Bryant Range near the 16-bunk Rocks Hut.

Note for NZTopo map users. The NZTopo50-BQ26 Nelson map for this region correctly shows Te Araroa leaving the Pelorus Track after Middy Hut and climbing to Rocks Hut. If you are using a phone Topo app or DOC web page to follow Te Araroa and you zoom out far enough the base map will switch to NZTopo250-13 Nelson which incorrectly show the older route, continuing along Pelorus Track via Roebuck Hut to rejoin Te Araroa at Totara Saddle. This route is viable but less frequently used.

Rocks Hut to Browning Hut - 10.5km / 4½ hour

From Rocks Hut, this track wanders through a landscape of rock outcrop and hillocks. It then climbs over several high points before beginning its descent towards Tōtara Saddle.

The trail emerges onto an open patch of tussock land associated with the mineral belt, an interesting ultramafic rock zone where you notice the vegetation changes drastically, for 15 minutes or so before re-entering the forest and descending - steeply in places - to Tōtara Saddle. From the saddle, the track descends steeply to Browning Hut (8 bunks).

Browning Hut to Hacket Junction - 2.3km / ¾ hour

(Plus another 5.7 km or 2 hours out to the Hacket Picnic Area Carpark on Aniseed Valley Road for those finishing this section there).

This is a straightforward section with all intersections well signposted. There is a high/low water track option at one point but this is a bit meaningless as you'll get wet boots in subsequent stream crossings whichever route you take.

Flooding after heavy rain in September 2022 has deposited silt and rubble into the stream, raising the stream bed. This in turn makes the low water track subject to flooding so the high water track is the better option.

At Hacket Junction trampers have the option of continuing on the next Te Araroa section to Hacket Hut, Starveall Hut and beyond or finishing their tramp at the Hacket Picnic Area Carpark. Private transport arrangements are best made in advance if you wish to end your tramp here. Failing which it is a 12km road walk down Aniseed Valley Road to Hope village where a bus can be caught into Nelson.

Conditions

Potential hazards

- Vehicles on road or track on Maungatapu Road
- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers

[Mt Richmond weather - NIWA](#) [↗](#)

How to get here

Northern Start: Junction of Maungatapu Road and SH6, Pelorus Bridge

Southern End: Hacket Hut Junction

Transport

Pelorus - Getting there/away

- [Private Driver Hire](#) [↗](#) - P: 0272 565 643 (Paul) - can transport to/from all locations Picton-Anakiwa-Pelorus Bridge-Nelson-St Arnaud, priced on enquiry. We can take you from Anakiwa to the start of the trail head for the Pelorus track at the end of Maungatapu road, including stopping to re-supply in Havelock en-route. Travel time just under 2 hours including time to re-supply. This saves almost 3 days of road walking


Hope to Nelson - Getting there/away

- [InterCity](#) [↗](#) - P: 03 365 1113
- [Private Driver Hire](#) [↗](#) - P: 0272 565 643 (Paul) - can transport to/from all locations Picton-Anakiwa-Pelorus Bridge-Nelson-St Arnaud, priced on enquiry.

Accommodation

Trail Pass


 Pelorus Bridge - km 1,851.8 - 20% discount on serviced campsites (Bookings required)

 Totara Flats at Pelorus Bridge on the other side of the road from the family campground - Included in the Trail pass (Bookings Required - online or at Pelorus Bridge Campground office on arrival).


An on-site notice states there is a \$10 fee, and you cannot use your Hut Pass. This is referring to the DOC Backcountry Hut Pass. The Totara Flats campsite is included in the Te Araroa Trail Pass. Bookings at Totara Flats are essential and can be made on the DOC booking website or on arrival at the Pelorus Bridge Campground Office. To get to Totara Flats from the office, cross the road and follow the short path (10 minutes)

 Captains Creek Hut - km 1,874 - Included in The Trail Pass

 Middy Creek Hut - km 1,879 - Included in The Trail Pass


 Rocks Hut - km 1,883.8 - Included in The Trail Pass

 Browning Hut - km 1,894.3 - Included in The Trail Pass

 Hackett Hut - km 1,897.9 - Included in The Trail Pass

Other Accommodation



Pelorus

- [DOC Pelorus Bridge Campground](#)  - 5949 State Highway 6, Main Rd, RD2 - P: 03 571 6019 - E: sarah.huntley@ngatikuia.iwi.nz - Serviced campground.
 - Campground office is open with limited hours as follows - 8:00am-8:30am and 1:30pm - 6:00pm during weekdays, and 11:00am - 4:00pm on Saturday and Sunday. You can register for a campsite on the DOC website and a green tag will be waiting for you at the office. Fees: \$20-22 per night. The Campground is not covered by the backcountry hut pass, so you must pay on arrival or when you book online. Bounce boxes are welcome for a fee of \$10. Trail Pass discount
 - Te Hoiere/Pelorus River runs alongside the campground and is a beautiful spot for a swim. Please do not use any soap/shampoo if bathing in the river (or any rivers along the trail) as this contaminates the water and can harm aquatic life.
 - Pelorus Bridge Cafe is currently closed.
 - There is a food truck offering cabinet food and a food menu
- [Pelorus Bridge Campground Bounce Box Instructions](#)

If you are able to arrive at Pelorus Bridge before 3.00pm you may pay by cash or eftpos on pick up and let the office staff know you have a parcel to be picked up when you arrive. If you cannot arrive during office hours please follow instructions below:
Please prepay the \$10 fee into: Account Name: Titi i Te Rangi LP. Account Number: 12-3193-0031121-00
Send me a screen shot of your payment and details of your approximate arrival date, and I will reply with a locker number and code to retrieve your parcel. Lockers are located at the Pelorus Campground office. Send your screenshots to 027 376 9045 or sarah.huntley@ngatikuia.iwi.nz.
- Totara Flats campsite at Pelorus Bridge - suitable for Te Araroa walkers camping one night. On the river bank across the road from the main DOC campsite. Toilet but no other facilities. More information in the Trail Pass Huts and Campsites list above.

Hope

From Hope it is 29km to Nelson via Richmond. Nelson and Richmond are full-service towns.

- [The Pear Orchard Lodge](#)  - (BBH) self-catering lodge - max. 20 people - 569 Hill Street South, Hope - P: 03 544 5361 - E: stay@thepearorchard.co.nz - Rooms range from dorm to private rooms with ensuite - pickups from Hacket picnic area with prior arrangement
- [Aniseed Valley Cottages](#)  - Aniseed Valley Rd (near Hacket picnic area) - P: 03 544 3144 - pickup available from Hacket Picnic Area and (for a fee) guests can be transported to Richmond/Nelson for resupply

Food And Supply

Nelson

- Here at **MD Outdoors**, we love TA walkers! Based in central Nelson, we have a huge range of all the gear and food supplies you need. We deliver locally, directly to St Arnaud or can send boxes onwards for you. We are all familiar with the Richmond Ranges so happy to help you with your journey.
 - Key brands we stock: Altra, Topo, La Sportiva, Leki, Black Diamond, Nemo, Rab, Patagonia, Osprey, Injinji toe socks, Jetboil, Tailwind, Gu & Pure
 - Contact us: www.mdoutdoors.co.nz ↗, +64 27 606 7778, Wakatu Carpark, Unit 4/126 Trafalgar Street, Nelson 7010
 - Discount code for TA walkers to order online or in store: [TEARAROA10](#) ↗
- **Outpost Supplies**, 53 Quarantine Road Nelson, is a small owner-operated business at the top of the south island. Andrew & Wendy Neame are the owners and have a wide range of New Zealand and international brands.
 - They hire PLBs on behalf of the Nelson Area Locator Beacon trust from as little as \$20 and will happily hire them for long periods.
 - A wide range of dehydrated/freeze dried foods and other small single serve condiments.
 - A good range of tents, sleeping bags and other outdoor gear.
 - They hire out a range of outdoor gear if required and can also offer repairs of tents, poles and other repairs.
 - They have a wide range of repair products such as tenacious tape.

They will happily send your order anywhere that is required and do free shipping NZ wide (rural delivery is additional) if the order is over \$150. They use NZ post overnight where possible. Phone 021 063 4450, E: outpostsupplies@yahoo.co.nz, W: <http://www.outpostsupplies.co.nz> ↗

Hope

- [Hope Store and Takeaways](#) - 205 Main Rd, Hope - P: 03 544 9803 - Takeaway meals and light resupply available.

Track Elevation and Map

More information

Before starting Te Araroa either as a through-walker of the whole country or a section walker, [please register on Te Araroa website](#) [↗](#). Please also [visit the website](#) [↗](#) or [download the app](#) [↗](#) for detailed maps, trail alerts and other relevant information.

This track is part of the Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa track database. Herenga ā Nuku has [maps and advice about public access to the outdoors](#) [↗](#).

We encourage you to continue gaining the skills and knowledge required for a safe trip. The NZ Mountain Safety Council has lots of free resources and information you can use. These can be accessed via www.mountainsafety.org.nz [↗](#).

We recommend trying these online learning tools:

- [Trip Planning](#) [↗](#)
- [Tramping/field Skills](#) [↗](#)
- [Basic Navigation](#) [↗](#)
- [River Safety](#) [↗](#)

Additionally, check out the range of helpful videos available from the NZ Mountain Safety Council [YouTube channel](#) [↗](#).



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