



“What to doand see in Auckland”



By
Helen Wenley

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Introduction

This report is to encourage you to get out and explore Auckland – and to discover the uniqueness and diversity of the walks you can do.

Whether you are a visitor to Auckland or you have lived here for many years, I hope that we can show you how you can use our walking self-guides for fitness, health and fun.

I did a lot of walking when I was growing up in Sydney Australia. I would walk to school, walk to the shops, walk to my friends' homes and walk to the bushland. Our family excursions were mainly to the beach which I loved. My parents did not own a car until I was a teenager. So for me, walking was part of life.

It has been very different for my children growing up in Auckland. My daughter has been mostly been able to walk to school whereas my son's school was a bus ride or car ride away. And even though we live close to the famous 'One Tree Hill', they do not walk around it as often as I do.

When I was 20 I travelled to England by ship. After a few years working in country pubs and spending my spare time walking through the country lanes, I headed up to London.

While working in London and I was intrigued that people in the offices in London would want to spend their holidays walking around Wales or the Lake District. At the time, I didn't make the

connection as to why people walked and tramped for fun; instead I joined a Cycle Touring Club.

My enjoyment of walking was rediscovered when I met a New Zealand boy who had spent his University leisure time tramping in the South Island, and together we explored England, Wales and Scotland both on foot and on bicycle.

Through this experience I got a whole new perspective on walking holidays, and I liked the experience so I married the New Zealand boy.

Together with our toddler we settled in Auckland and grew our family. As soon as our children were capable enough we took them out on adventures on foot.

Neither of us had grown up in Auckland, all we had to rely on were books to point out walkways. We did find it difficult using those books because there wasn't enough detail provided for us to choose a walk that would be suitable for the family.

We did not know what there was to see or how long the walk took and how suitable it would be for the children and if there were distractions like play grounds for them along the way.

Most books did not provide maps; they provided a starting point and left you to your own devices sometimes with unpredictable outcomes and a long walk back to the car taking the shine off the adventure.

Often the maps were of poor quality or out of date. We did not know what sort of state the walking track was in. We walked in the Waitakere Ranges because there was nothing to indicate to

us that there were suitable family walks closer to home, those which were long enough for us but not overly long for the children.

Needless to say our walks in the Waitakere's came to an end after taking a wrong turning and becoming hopelessly displaced.

My walking was reduced to daily walks around One Tree Hill/Cornwall Park where I met a fellow park walker and we formed a friendship.

After a few years walking around the same circuit together, Grace suggested that we try something different. And that's when Short Walks in Auckland was 'born'.

It has been interesting to observe that the more walks that we discover in Auckland, the more I love living here. And I have also discovered a lot more children's playgrounds that I wish I had known about when my children were young.

We want to make it easy for you to get out and discover Auckland for yourself so our aim for Short Walks in Auckland is to provide well documented circular 60-90 minute walks with a nearby cafe.

The walks are:

- graded,
- we provide a list of what to see,
- a map,
- public toilets location,
- note children's playgrounds
- note picnic facilities

And there is a little bit of history if there is anything of note.

And we want to make it fun too, so that you get a mini adventure for maximum enjoyment.

In the following pages we will give you some highlights of Auckland and some ideas as to where to go depending on the weather, if you have children, if you want to take your dog and if you want to take a push-chair or wheelchair.

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1 About Auckland

New Zealand comprises of two main islands with unimaginative names - the North Island and the South Island. Auckland sits on an isthmus in the North Island between two harbours - Waitemata Harbour to the north and Manukau Harbour to the south.

The population of Auckland is higher than any other New Zealand City - just over 1.4 million currently. It's still a small city on a global basis.

There have been many tourists who have thought that New Zealand was connected to Australia by a bridge and yet others like a relative of mine who admired the view from the Sky Tower over lunch and confused the Waitemata Harbour with Cook Strait.

Auckland is a city with lots of green spaces and native bush. There are many walks in Auckland away from the hustle and bustle of city life. There are some areas that are so close to residential houses or city streets and yet, you could feel very isolated because of the surrounding native bush.

Short walks in Auckland aims to get you closer to Auckland, to learn about the history, the people, the geography, the geology, the fauna, the flora, historic places and many other surprises which even well seasoned locals will be surprised to find.

Natural gems on our doorstep a delight to discover

On a world scale Auckland must be truly unique, not only do we have a slice of rural countryside so close to the CBD but we have one with a volcano right in the middle of it.

Like many Aucklanders, as I walk round the mountain I marvel at the vista as it changes from Rangitoto to the Waitemata Harbour, to the Waitakere Ranges and the Manukau Heads and Harbour. No matter what time of the year Cornwall Park has something to offer ranging from lambs, daffodils, cherry blossoms in spring followed by the red blooms of the Pohutukawa trees before autumn brings a spectrum of colour and masses of falling leaves. It is truly a magical place but familiarity can make one complacent and eventually I became blasé to the beauty of Maungakieke.

One day, Grace, my walking companion suggested that we spice up our walks by turning them into adventures. We left the park and explored the areas which we had seen in the distance. Once we embarked on this we were captivated, we found pockets of native bush, coastal walkways, wetlands, streams, and of course more volcanoes. We discovered places and things which we didn't even know existed.

Grace and I walk for fun and recreation, and as a result of our adventures have become fitter and healthier. Surprises happen frequently and unexpectedly, such as finding a giant kauri tree hidden in the bush of Bayview, hearing native birds in the peace of St Johns Bush, finding the grave of the first man to go over the Niagra Falls in a barrel in Hillsborough Cemetery, coming across a wood carving in progress out in Botany, or discovering Shelly Park Beach along the Mangemangeroa Walkway .

Because of the hilly nature of Auckland, there is always a view of the CBD. Go to Mt Eden to see it up close or go to Flaunty Reserve in the west or Point View Reserve in the south and catch it on the horizon.

We are truly blessed to have so many walkways and cycle ways in our “back yard”. The Twin Streams project in Henderson along Henderson Creek and Opanaku Stream provides both for recreation and commuting. Te Atatu Peninsula can be reached by bicycle from the city now that the link at Grafton has been completed, these areas are off road and suitable for all ages.

With many of these gems on our doorstep there is no need to drive for miles, they are just a few kilometres from the CBD yet when you get there you cannot hear cars, and you see no other person and the sounds of the forest give you the illusion of remoteness.

We decided that we would share our discoveries with others and so Short Walks in Auckland was born. Not only do we tell you where these gems are located, we also give you detailed directions so that when you embark on your new adventures you are not worried about losing your way.

Like us, you will find that once you begin to explore, your appetite for adventure and discovery grows, a half day break out of the routine leaves you refreshed and looking forward to discovering another spot either by foot or by bicycle. There are plenty to choose from.

I still return to Cornwall Park, its views now provide me with glimpses of the other places which we have discovered and enjoyed, and as we walk we look for spots we have missed (they are few and far between now). Even after all

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these years we are still finding Auckland's wonderful gems, and I now appreciate them more than ever and delight in sharing them with you.

2 Volcanoes and Craters

New Zealand is famous for the All Blacks and Rugby, winning the America's Cup, skiing in Queenstown, Sir Edmund Hillary, excellent wines and the flightless Kiwi. But did you know that the Auckland region contains 50 volcanoes? (Don't worry, they are mostly extinct.)

Two well-known volcanoes are **Mt Eden** and **One Tree Hill**. Both have great views from the summits and walking paths around the volcano's crater, and through fields that feed cattle and sheep (and there aren't many cities with sheep farms handy to the city centre).

[Mangere Mountain](#) is a volcano with two craters and is more rugged and natural.

Rangitoto is an island that can be viewed from many parts of Auckland - you can catch a ferry and then walk to the top of Rangitoto from where you can get great views of the Gulf.

[Panmure Basin](#) is a water-filled crater, and beside the Basin a miniature train provides fun for children on weekends.

You can download brochures from our current volcano walks collection here: ['Short Walks in Auckland'](#).

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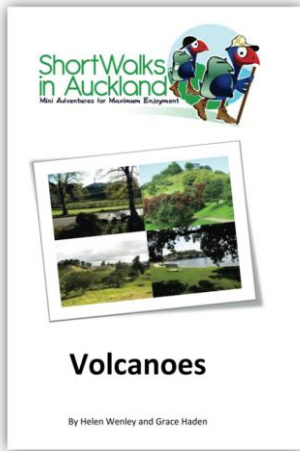
Panmure Basin



View from Mangere Mountain to Manukau Harbour

Our book of 12 circular walks - “Volcanoes”, is available from Amazon or your local library.

Click [here](#) for details.



3 The harbours and beaches

Because Auckland is on an isthmus that goes between two harbours, the shores have many inlets and beaches, making it great for sailing and swimming. However, do take care when swimming in the harbours - the tidal flow can be strong.

Auckland is known as the City of Sails and when the sailors head out to the Waitemata Harbour on their yachts, it looks very spectacular.

The most famous beach in Auckland is on the west coast – Piha. It is famous because of the rips that are very dangerous. So much so that there is a TV series called ‘Piha Rescue’.

It is strongly recommended that if you go swimming at surf beaches that you do stay in the patrolled areas. I enjoy the surf and I love to catch waves on my boogie board (I never had the fearlessness to attempt surfboard riding!).

Other great west coast beaches are [Muriwai](#) and [Karekare](#) (Karekare was made famous by the Oscar winning movie 'The Piano'). At Piha there is an excellent track that takes you to [Fairy Falls](#) – a favourite place of mine to take overseas visitors, followed by a walk or swim at Piha Beach (and a coffee at the Piha Cafe).

Closer to Auckland you can walk along the foreshores of the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours, and enjoy the sparkling views and see the shore birds.

You can download brochures from our current coastal walks collection here: [‘Short Walks in Auckland’](#) .

What do and see in Auckland

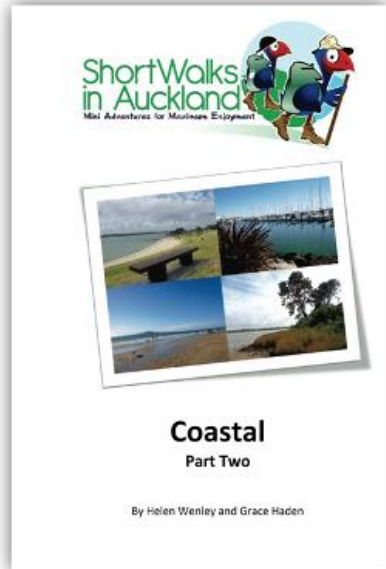
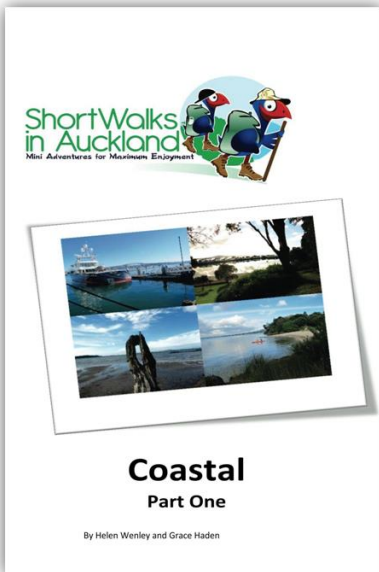


Cheltenham Beach



Tahuna Torea, Glendowie

Our books of 12 circular walks - “Coastal Part one” and “Coastal Part two”, are available from Amazon and your local library. Click [here](#) for details.



4 First settlers

The Maori people were the first to settle in Auckland and their traces can be found in and around the volcanoes (where the Maori people built their fortifications (called a 'pa')) and craters. More information about the Maori people and their way of life before white man came can be viewed at the [Auckland Museum](#). When the Europeans arrived they built their fences for their fields from the volcanic rock.

For more information on the Maori Auckland history visit: [Maori history in Auckland](#).

In our current '[Short Walks in Auckland](#)' collection we have circular walks listed (and coming soon) for the following Maori settlement areas:

- [North Head, Devonport](#)
- [Mount Eden](#)
- [Cornwall Park \(One Tree Hill\)](#) (Wheel-friendly)
- [Mangere Mountain](#)
- [Three Kings](#)
- Otutau Stonefields (information [here](#))



5 European History

New Zealand is a young country compared to America and Europe. Man-made structures are fairly recent. The cemetery in Symonds Street under the Grafton Bridge was established in 1848. Part of it has not been maintained which is quite sad because it is a fascinating place to wander around.

[North Head](#) looks across the harbour to Auckland City. The strategic position made it one of a number of defence forts that were rapidly set up in the late 1800s to defend Auckland from a feared Russian attack. During World Wars I and II the fort was expanded as part of Auckland's coastal defence system.

[Pah Homestead](#) in Hillsborough was built between 1877 and 1879. It has recently been restored and now houses an art collection.

[Howick Historical Village](#) is a very interesting place to wander around and to learn about the first settlers and the history of the fencibles.

In our current '[Short Walks in Auckland](#)' collection we have circular walks listed for the following early European settlement areas:

- [North Head, Devonport](#)
- Auckland City
- Symonds Street Cemetery



6 Birdlife

There are several places for bird lovers to go to enjoy seeing New Zealand's native birdlife. There is a large wetland that has been established out east near [Pigeon Mountain](#) - a great habitat for the Pukeko flightless birds, and there are breeding places on the edge of the Manukau Harbour for rare species like the Dotterel's.

As you walk along the bush tracks in Auckland, you will hear many birds singing. Listen out for the white throated [Tui birds singing](#) in the trees.

In our current '[Short Walks in Auckland](#)' collection we have circular walks listed for the following birdlife areas:

- [Mangere Foreshore](#)
- [Pigeon Mountain](#)
- [Tahuna Torea](#) ([more info here](#))
- [Western Springs-Meola](#)



7 Native bush

The planners in Auckland have been thoughtful enough to leave areas of native bush. The bush provides cool shelter on hot days. You will get to see native Kauri and Pohutukawa trees, and the Nikau and Silver ferns amongst the many other varieties.

You do not have to look out for snakes and spiders - the spiders are harmless and there are no snakes (tigers, lions, bears, dinosaurs...).

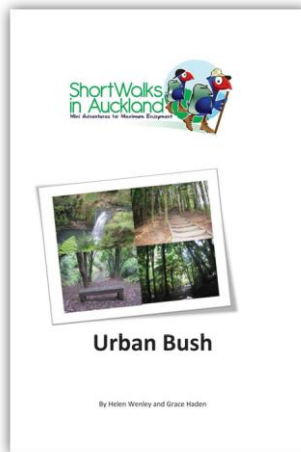
You can download brochures from our current collection here: ['Short Walks in Auckland'](#) .





Our book of 12 circular walks - “Urban Bush”, is available from Amazon and your local library.

Click [here](#) for details.



8 The Sheep

When I first arrived in New Zealand the big joke was that more sheep than people lived here (and they still outnumber the human population of just over 4 million). Quite a bit of sheep farming is changing over to dairy farming, and lamb meat is becoming more expensive. Auckland is a rare city (and it may be the only one) where you can visit a farm and see animals just minutes from the Central Business District.

The most famous place to see a farm in central Auckland is Cornwall Park. It is very much a working farm, with sheep and cattle. Children also delight in feeding the birdlife here.

In our current '[Short Walks in Auckland](#)' collection we have circular walks listed for the following farm areas:

- [Cornwall Park \(One Tree Hill\)](#) (Wheel-friendly)
- [Ambury Park Farm](#)
- [Puhinui Reserve](#)



9 Walks with Children in Mind

What age do you start taking children on **short walks in Auckland**? My general advice is from ages 5 or 6. But it does depend on your child, their attention span and how much energy they have.

Think carefully when choosing the walk. Here is a list of questions to ask yourself before you make your plans:

- Does it have something that will interest your child and keep them motivated?
- Are they happy to wait until the end for a playground? Or would they like a playground at mid-point?
- Would they like to play in the sand at the beach so that they can have a rest?
- Are they adventurous and would enjoy exploring tunnels with torches?
- Would they like a ride on a mini-train at the end of the walk?
- Would like to go with a friend or they are happy to keep company with your pet dog?
- Do they have the stamina to walk up hills and steps?
- Would a visit to a museum be an enticement to a walk?

When you start off with short walks do your best to pack a picnic or carry healthy snacks (such as nuts, fresh and dried fruit, and low GI health bars) and water with you to keep the "hungries" away and to keep up energy levels.

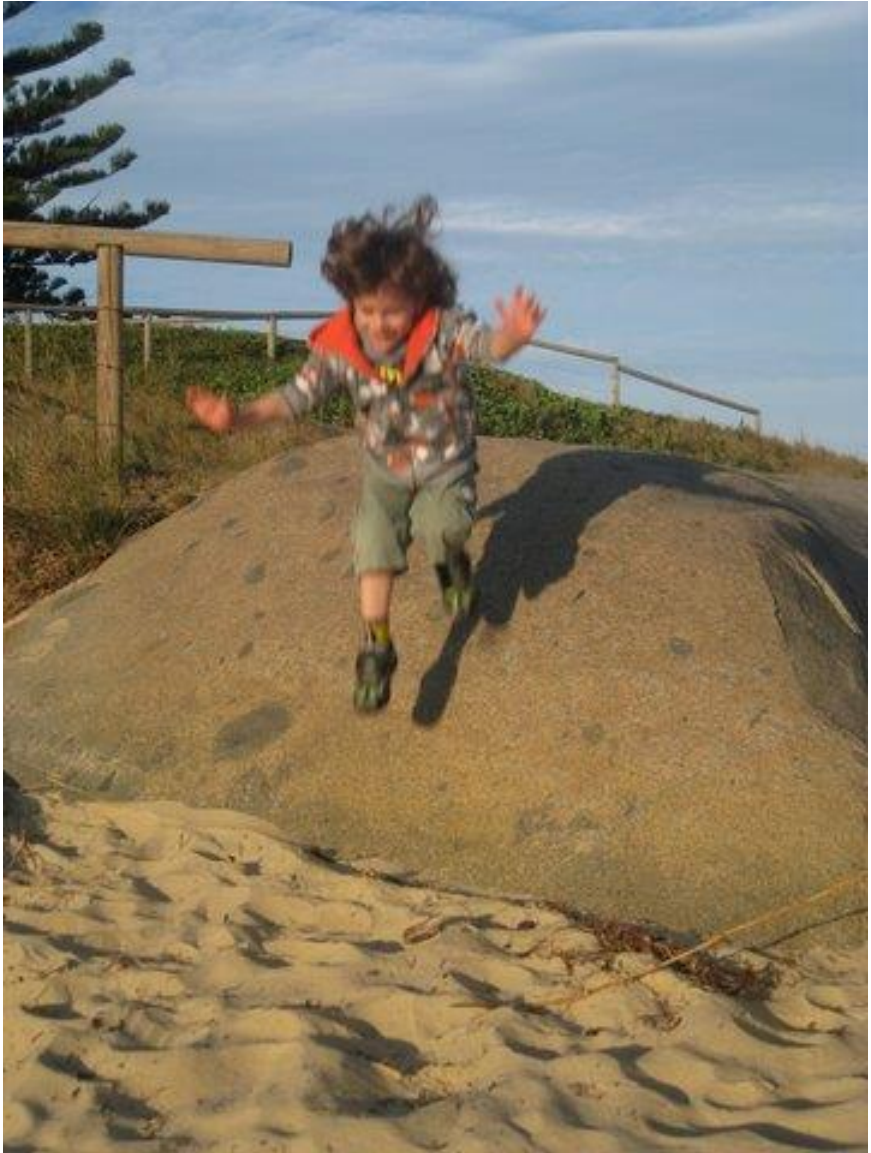
Be sure to have hats and sun block handy on sunny days. Pack raincoats for those cloudy days and wool hats for colder days. And of course, make sure the walking shoes are comfortable (and be prepared for blisters).

The book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen is fun to read and to play along with when out walking.

In Auckland there are many walking options and as they get older they will enjoy longer walks and new places to visit. You could do weekend hikes up in the hills of the Waitakere Ranges, or go further afield and camp out.

Giving your children a taste of the outdoors at an early age gives them an appreciation of their own capabilities and a love of nature.

Make the walk a fun adventure and your children (and you) will treasure many happy memories.



Some of the Walks we recommend for children (and there are many more listed on our website):

- [Panmure Basin](#) (mini train rides on weekends)
- [Cornwall Park \(One Tree Hill\)](#) (seeing the sheep and birds)
- [North Head, Devonport](#) (exploring tunnels with torches)
- [Mangere Mountain](#) (Walking up to the top of a high volcano)
- [Parnell Roses, Trains and Cranes](#) (seeing the working cranes and trucks on the container wharf)
- [Western Springs-Meola](#) (catch a tram, feeds the ducks, visit the Zoo, visit MOTAT)
- [Dingle Dell](#), St Heliers (go on a 'bear hunt')



10 Walks with Dogs

Our self-guides indicate if there are any dog off-leash areas and/or are suitable for dog friendly walks in Auckland. This is noted when we visit the area – it may change without any notice due to Council regulations. Check with this Auckland Council webpage: [Exercising your dog before you head out.](#)

To find some of the best places to walk a dog in Auckland, visit these dog friendly sites:

Doogle – [dog friendly exercise areas](#)

FetchMag – [Dog walks](#)

Plan my Play – [Dog Friendly Exercise areas/beaches](#)

Auckland Council – [Exercising Your Dog](#)

The Localist lists [10 great parks to walk the dog](#)

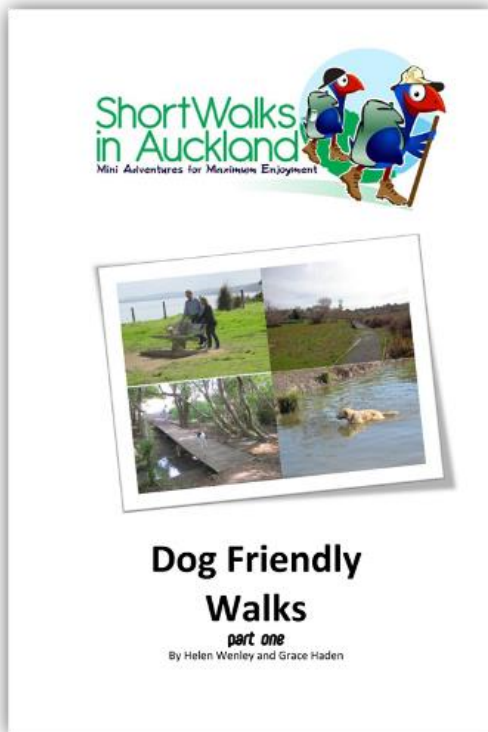
The Herald on Sunday Living section [Off-leash dog parks](#) and: Five of the best: [Off-leash dog parks](#)



To get an up-to-date list, visit Short Walks in Auckland:

[Dog walks in Auckland – dog off-leash areas](#)

We have written three books of 12 dog friendly walks in each – they are available from Amazon and your local library. Click [here](#) for details.



11 Cafes

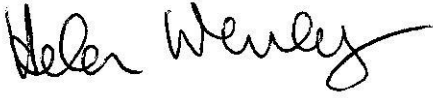
You are never far from a cafe in Auckland. They are famous for serving up some of the best coffee in the world and the food is pretty good too - just what you need after an energetic walk?

Most of the Short Walks that we have put together have a nearby cafe (although there a few that don't but the walk is so good we don't want to omit them because of this criteria).



Gather up your walking shoes, friends, family, pet dog and discover the pleasure of walking in Auckland - there is so much to see and you may be surprised. We are continually adding new walks to our collection – and you are assured that each walk we provide a guide for has been personally walked by me more than once.

Happy Walking!!



Helen Wenley Unleashed Ventures Limited



Please download your **FREE**
bonus walk [here](#).

Do you like what you have seen so far? Would you like to explore more of Auckland? We have many mini adventures which are guaranteed to get you out amongst nature and discover places that even the locals don't know about.

Visit our Walks Store (click [here](#)) to see the list of over 100 brochures with detailed easy routes that will keep you on track and deliver you right back to your starting point.

Get the alternative [Coast to Coast walk here](#).

You may wish to check out our latest list of our self-guide themed books - click [here](#) for the current list.

Current books in our series “Short Walks in Auckland”

Volcanoes
Coastal Walks (part one)
Coastal Walks (part two)
Urban Bush
Dog Friendly Walks (part one)
Dog Friendly Walks (part two)
Dog Friendly Walks (part three)
Best of the West
Best of the East
Best of the South
Best of the East
Best of Central

Available from Amazon.com and Auckland Libraries

<http://walksinauckland.com/store/books/>

