



WALK CLOSE BY

Te Ngahere Rāhui Tirohanga o Gray Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve



**Grade
Flat**



**Distance
1-2km**



**Walking
60mins**



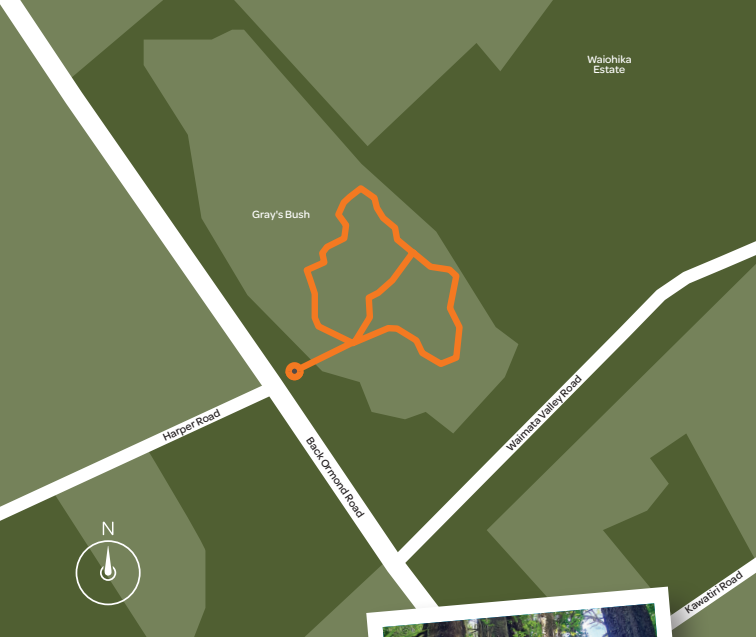
*Scan
for more
details*



One of Gisborne's most popular short-walk destinations, this reserve is a unique remnant of tall kahikatea (podocarp) and puriri – almost all that remains of the tall forest that once covered much of the Gisborne plains until cleared and drained for farming and agriculture. The reserve includes broadleaved trees such as pukatea, mahoe and tawa, with occasional kohekohe and rare matai. Most of the taller kahikatea are between 400 and 500 years old. The forest is well-preserved with individual trees reaching heights of up to 40m and, thanks to 50 years of stock-proof fencing, a dense understorey of regenerating native trees. Possums are kept to low numbers by the Department of Conservation with Forest and Bird volunteers maintaining pest traps. Accessible to all, with a designated wheelchair track, it's perfect for those interested in birdlife and/or vegetation.

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Charles Gray bought this land as part of his farm, Waiohika, in 1877. In 1926, eight years after his death, the trustees of his estate offered the bush area to the Crown as a reserve. This was managed by various domain boards until 1979 when it was vested in the Department of Lands and Survey and reclassified as a scenic reserve.

It is currently managed by the Department of Conservation.

The name Waiohika, part of the original Whataūpoko block, means the place where Māori chief Hika drew his water. After Gray's death in 1918, his widow Emily gave a free hand to architect J Louis Hay to design a house suitable for her, two adult children, maids, a cook and a gardener. Built in 1926, the two-storeyed Waiohika is notable for its 550 sq m (5900 sq ft) size and Hay's Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired design. The farm and vineyard have been home to the nationally successful Rhythm & Vines festival since 2003. The reserve provides habitat for native and introduced bird species, including bellbird, fantail, goldfinch, harrier hawk, kingfisher, silver eye, skylark, tūī, grey warbler, shining cuckoo and blackbird. Kererū (native wood pigeon) and the rare North Island kākā are seasonal visitors.



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