

Dome Forest Carpark to Lookout trail

Normally, I'm drawn to the coast, but this month I decided to head for the hills. This short but vigorous walk starts at the Dome cafe and goes for 1km to a fantastic viewing platform that floats above the valley below. Huge views east over Warkworth, Kawau Bay and Coromandel Peninsula are normally on offer, but it was showery when I visited so I was treated to a vivid rainbow instead. Steep but well-formed, this family-friendly trail winds through native forest and, of particular charm are native plant name plates along the way. If you feel more adventurous, it's only another 500m to the trig at the top of the Dome, but it is a very challenging bit of track – rough, steep and slippery, but fun. With the right footwear and supplies, you can also carry on for another 13km to Govan Wilson Road. On your return, the Dome cafe is a good opportunity to reward yourself.