

Kia Ora (hello) and Haere Mai (welcome).

My name is Dean (Karlyn) Connolly, and on the 18th of November 2018, I began to hike the 3000km Te Araroa Trail, from Cape Reinga to Bluff. The original plan was to hike the entire length of New Zealand, from one end to the other in a single attempt. But, plans change.

I managed to complete 2492km of my original goal before I had spent a week waist deep in snow, unable to follow the trail markers any longer. The hardest part of my biggest adventure, was making the decision to pause the entire thing until it was safe to complete.

After waiting out winter, my next plan was to complete the 3000km from Cape Reinga to Bluff, but not being able to do that as I originally intended, because of the weather (the tracks I was doing were covered in snow), money (I didnt have any left), and my health (I limped most of the way, my feet were so swollen I was unable to get big enough shoes etc. etc. etc.), annoyed me.

It annoyed me so much that I came up with a new plan, and instead of just completing the final 508km to Bluff, I will continue. I will do the entire trail again, from the bottom of the South Island, all the way to the top of the North Island. Effectively doing the 3000km Te Araroa Trail twice. There and back again. A total of 6000km. Something few people have ever attempted.

The almost funny part is that this is my first time hiking. And I do not really like the walking part. The first day of my 'walk 4 life', on the 18th of November 2018, when I left Cape Reinga, was the first day I wore hiking boots and a backpack. Ever.

I learned a lot as I went. I learnt that I didnt enjoy the walking part of my adventure very much because the boots I was given were not the correct boots I should have been wearing. I learned this the hard way by tearing the tendon that connects my heel to my toes after only a few weeks, but I continued anyway. Limping most of the way.

I learned that because I was a lot slower than anyone else, I had to carry way more stuff than everyone else, which made me even slower than I already was. But I was mostly okay, and had everything that I thought I needed, until I reached the snow.

Some days were harder than others, but I learned to to walk in pain. I genuinely did not enjoy the walking part, but this adventure was never just about me. I live in one of the most beautiful countries in the world and I wanted to share that. The scenery was beautiful.

I also wanted to inspire people. to let people know that it is okay to not be okay, and so I wanted to raise awareness for mental health and depression this time, whilst still supporting my friends at CanTeen.

All of this began in 2009, when I saw a 60 year old lady on TV run 60km, to celebrate her 60th birthday, and I decided that I should be able to ride a bicycle as far as she had run.

I could not stop thinking about it, but more interestingly I decided to do something about it. So in 2010 I rode a homemade bicycle 6237km, towing a trailer with everything I thought I needed in it to sleep and eat on the side of the road for 3 months, the entire coast of New Zealand.

give a little

# walk 4 life

## #nzwalk4life



raising awareness for  
mental health and  
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supporting my friends  
at CanTeen.

I raised awareness for all New Zealand childrens charities, intentionally not collecting any money, but encouraging people to help organisations directly that had helped them, and I enjoyed my first bike ride so much that I did it again in 2013, cycling 6482km in 96 days.

I had taken a few photos, and was told I should do more with them, so I moved to Queenstown with the intention of going to a local market and setting up my own photography business, something that helped New Zealand children, but after spending the first two years living in the back of my van, outside a local campground, I realised I needed a home, and purchased a caravan that I have spent the last few years renovating.

I had spent the previous 10 years driving a variety of tour buses around New Zealand, so when I moved to Queenstown it was only natural to work for companies within the tourism industry, enjoying all of the jobs that I did there.

One night after work, I walked past the local fish and chip shop, and an english couple were sitting out the front. The fella was reading a news paper, and on the frontpage was a photo of an 80 year old man walking the entire length of New Zealand. He was doing this thing called the Te Araroa Trail, and I got exactly the same feeling as when I saw the 60 year old lady on TV.

I knew straight away that I had to do it. I would be crazy not to after my original bike ride achieved so much. And so on the 18th of November 2018 I started hiking, with the simple desire to complete what I had started, and do something good whilst doing it.

It took me 7 months to complete 2492km. Most people finish the entire trail in 5 months, but I struggled almost the entire way with a variety of injuries. Limping from one end of New Zealand to the other. Apart from the torn tendon, I also hurt my lower back falling down a flight of stairs, wrecked a shoulder, a knee, and put a tent peg through my other foot. I put an axe into my hand cutting wood, and the left side of my face went numb for a few weeks, something I am still unable to explain.

I met people who had spent years training to do it. I just showed up and started hiking. I figured out everything as I went, and not being able to complete the 3000km trail before winter, was the hardest part of the entire thing. I felt like I had failed.

I have struggled with depression most of my life, but as I have grown up, I have learnt that I am better to try to do something I think I want to do, than just think about it. I have learnt that by doing something as crazy as getting on a bike and cycling around the entire coast of a country, walking from one end to the other, or just trying to do more than I have already done, gives my life purpose, and if I am lucky, one day I might inspire someone else to do even more than I can.

I have learnt that by doing something good, something good will happen, that we all have a story, and this is just a part of mine.

For more information, donations, social media links, or to contact me directly, please go to my website -

www.customvision.co.nz



# - walk 4 life - the Te Araroa Trail - there and back -

raising awareness for Mental Health and Depression whilst supporting my friends at CanTeen by hiking the length of New Zealand . . . Twice.

## NORTH ISLAND

### Northland

- #001 -  - #156 -  - CAPE REINGA to AHIPARA - 100.5 km - 4 days -
- #002 -  - #155 -  - THE NORTHERN FORESTS - 98 km - 4 to 5 days -
- #003 -  - #154 -  - MANGAKARETU to KERIKERI - 24 km - 8 hours -
- #004 -  - #153 -  - KERIKERI to WAITANGI - 21 km - 4 to 5 hours -
- #005 -  - #152 -  - PAIHIA to OPUA COASTAL WALKWAY - 8 km - 2 hours -
- #006 -  - #151 -  - WAIKARE CONNECTION - 13 km (water) or 21.5 km (road) - 1 day -
- #007 -  - #150 -  - RUSSELL FOREST to WHANGAREI HEADS - 137 km - 6 days -
- #008 -  - #149 -  - BREAM BAY WALK - 27 km - 7 hours -
- #009 -  - #148 -  - CULLEN BRYNDERWYN WALKWAY - 14 km - 5 to 6 hours -
- #010 -  - #147 -  - BREAM TAIL MANGAWHAI WALKWAY - 7 km - 4 hours -

### Auckland

- #011 -  - #146 -  - MANGAWHAI to PAKIRI - 30 km - 7 to 8 hours -
- #012 -  - #145 -  - MT TAMAHUNGA (TE HIKOI O TE KIRI) - 11 km - 4 to 6 hours -
- #013 -  - #144 -  - GOVAN WILSON to PUHOI VALLEY - 37.5 km - 1.5 days -
- #014 -  - #143 -  - PUHOI TRACK - 5 km - 2 hours -
- #015 -  - #142 -  - PUHOI to WENDERHOLM - 7 km - 2 hours -
- #016 -  - #141 -  - WENDERHOLM to STILLWATER - 24.5 km - 1 day -
- #017 -  - #140 -  - OKURA to LONG BAY - 8.5 km - 3 hours -
- #018 -  - #139 -  - NORTH SHORE COASTAL WALK - 23.5 km - 6 to 7 hours -
- #019 -  - #138 -  - COAST to COAST WALKWAY - 14 km - 4 to 5 hours -
- #020 -  - #137 -  - ONEHUNGA to PUHINUI - 25 km - 6 to 7 hours -
- #021 -  - #136 -  - PUHINUI STREAM TRACK - 9.5 km - 3 hours -
- #022 -  - #135 -  - TOTARA PARK to CLEVEDON - 26 km - 7 to 8 hours -
- #023 -  - #134 -  - MANGATAWHIRI to MERCER - 17 km - 5 to 6 hours -

### Waikato - King Country

- #024 -  - #133 -  - MERCER to RANGIRIRI - 25.5 km - 1 day -
- #025 -  - #132 -  - RANGIRIRI to HUNTLY - 21.5 km - 1 day -
- #026 -  - #131 -  - HAKARIMATA WALKWAY - 12 km - 6 to 7 hours -
- #027 -  - #130 -  - NGARUWAHIA to HAMILTON - TE AWA (THE RIVER) - 12 km - 3 hours -
- #028 -  - #129 -  - HAMILTON CITY - 18 km - 5 hours -
- #029 -  - #128 -  - WAIIPA WALK - 28 km - 1 day -
- #030 -  - #127 -  - PIRONGIA TRAVERSE - 16.5 km - 1 to 2 days -
- #031 -  - #126 -  - PIRONGIA to WAITOMO - 43.5 km - 2 days -
- #032 -  - #125 -  - PEHITAWA TRACK - 17.5 km - 6 hours -
- #033 -  - #124 -  - TE KUIITI to PUREORA - 56 km - 2 days -
- #034 -  - #123 -  - PUREORA FOREST - THE TIMBER TRAIL - 110 km - 5 days -
- #035 -  - #122 -  - 42 TRAVERSE - 71 km - 3 to 4 days -

### Whanganui

- #036 -  - #121 -  - TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING - 17.5 km - 6 to 8 hours -
- #037 -  - #120 -  - MANGATEPOPO to NATIONAL PARK - 30 km - 1 to 1.5 days -
- #038 -  - #119 -  - NATIONAL PARK to WHANGANUI RIVER - 89 km - 4 days -
- #039 -  - #118 -  - WHANGANUI RIVER - 119 km - 4 to 6 days -
- #040 -  - #117 -  - WHANGANUI to BULLS - 58.5 km - 2 to 3 days -

### Manawatu

- #041 -  - #116 -  - BULLS to FEILDING - 21 km - 5 to 6 hours -



- FEILDING to PALMERSTON NORTH - 17.5 km - 4 to 4.5 hours - #042 -  - #115  -
- PALMERSTON NORTH - 10 km - 2.5 hours - #043 -  - #114  -
- MASSEY to LEVIN - 60 km - 2 to 3 days - #044 -  - #113  -

### Wellington

- TARARUA RANGES - 45 km - 3 to 6 days - #045 -  - #112  -
- PUKEATUA - 25 km - 1 day - #046 -  - #111  -
- KAPITI COAST - 22 km - 6 to 7 hours - #047 -  - #110  -
- PAEKAKARIKI ESCARPMENT TRACK - 10 km - 3 to 4 hours - #048 -  - #109  -
- ARA HARAKEKE - 13.5 km - 3 to 3.5 hours - #049 -  - #108  -
- COLONIAL KNOB - 21 km - 6 hours - #050 -  - #107  -
- NGAIO - 10 km - 3.5 hours - #051 -  - #106  -
- WELLINGTON CITY - 6 km - 2 hours - #052 -  - #105  -
- WELLINGTON SOUTH - 11 km - 3 to 4 hours - #053 -  - #104  -

### SOUTH ISLAND

#### Nelson - Marlborough

- QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK - 66 km - 3 to 5 days - #054 -  - #103  -
- ANAKIWA to PELORUS BRIDGE - 38 km - 1 to 2 days - #055 -  - #102  -
- PELORUS RIVER TRACK - 46 km - 3 to 4 days - #056 -  - #101  -
- RICHMOND ALPINE TRACK - 94 km - 5 to 7 days - #057 -  - #100  -
- WAIU PASS TRACK - 5 to 8 days - #058 -  - #099  -

#### Canterbury

- BOYLE to ARTHURS PASS - 113 km - 6 to 8 days - #059 -  - #098  -
- ARTHURS PASS to RAKAIA RIVER - 72 km - 3 to 4 days - #060 -  - #097  -
- RAKAIA RIVER to RANGITATA RIVER - 70 km - 4 days - #061 -  - #096  -
- TWO THUMB TRACK - 72.5 km - 3 days - #062 -  - #095  -
- TEKAPO to LAKE OHAU - 87 km - 2 to 3 days - #063 -  - #094  -
- EAST AHURIRI TRACK - 26.5 km - 1 to 2 days - #064 -  - #093  -

#### Otago

- BREAST HILL TRACK - 51.5 km - 3 to 4 days - #065 -  - #092  -
- GLADSTONE to WANAKA - 30.5 km - 1 day - #066 -  - #091  -
- GLENDHU BAY TRACK - 15.5 km - 4 hours - #067 -  - #090  -
- MOTATAPU ALPINE TRACK - 48 km - 3 to 4 days - #068 -  - #089  -
- WAKATIPU TRACK - 28.5 km - 6 to 7 hours - #069 -  - #088  -
- MAVORA WALKWAY - 49 km - 3 days - #070 -  - #087  -

#### Southland

- MARAROA RIVER TRAIL - 45 km - 2 days - #071 -  - #086  -
- TIKITIMU TRACK - 68 km - 3 to 4 days - #072 -  - #085  -
- BIRCHWOOD to MERRIVALE - 27.5 km - 1 day - #073 -  - #084  -
- LONGWOOD FOREST TRACK - 52 km - 2 to 3 days - #074 -  - #083  -
- LONG HILLY TRACK - 6 km - 2 hours - #075 -  - #082  -
- TIHAKA BEACH TRACK - 13 km - 4 hours - #076 -  - #081  -
- ORETI BEACH TRACK - 32 km - 1 day - #077 -  - #080  -
- INVERCARGILL to BLUFF - 34 km - 1 day - #078 -  - #079  -

. . . please visit [www.customvision.co.nz](http://www.customvision.co.nz) for more information on my [#nzwalk4life](https://www.instagram.com/nzwalk4life) and follow me on social media . . .