



# STUMP THE HUMP

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24 HOUR ENDURANCE RACE FROM MIDNIGHT TO MIDNIGHT

Ten years ago the Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track was opened. The idea was conceived by the local community and a charitable trust was formed, money was raised, red tape passed and consents gained. Around 25,000 volunteer hours went into construction and another 20,000 hours for maintenance. The boardwalk alone was built in a local wool shed over 12 months before being air lifted into place. Every piece of the 10 kilometre boardwalk has netting on it, stapled by volunteers, a huge credit to the Tuatapere community, an amazingly proud and friendly people. Five thousand people are permitted to walk the Hump Ridge Track per year and at present there are around 2000 trampers annually. This is a great alternative to more famous tramps (and cheaper) with amazing views and accommodation with packages to suit a range of budgets. To celebrate their 10 year anniversary, Kate Hebblethwaite (operations manager) came up with the idea of a 24 hour endurance walk. Instead of a 3 day tramp, participants are challenged to walk the entire 55 kms in a single day, starting at midnight.

Four weeks before the event I was invited to participate. I regularly walk 5 and 10 kms but never 55 kms. I naively agreed and launched

myself and buddy Deryn Northcott into training around our home ground of Taranaki. Unfortunately I went out too hard and fast and on hard ground with the wrong footwear and developed shin splints. At this stage I went to the local running shop for expert advice. \$\$\$\$ later with new shoes, socks, drink bottles, back packs etc we were back on track and in our build up we discovered Taranaki. We climbed the Kaitake Ranges, Pouakai Ranges, White Cliff Walkway, our local coastal walkway, Paritutu Rock and a did a couple of half marathons. We were ready, or so we thought.

On the day we flew to Invercargill, arriving after 3 flights to a beautiful sunny day. We were greeted by Kerry Smith from Venture Southland Tourism who was our host for the next few days. She was absolutely fabulous taking us for lunch and then to the airport for a scenic flight. We cruised over the track, which only made us more nervous as it looked very long and steep. We also saw the incredible views of Stewart Island, the surf spots along the coast, the flat farmland and of course the beautiful Fiordland. We drove to Colac Bay for dinner and then to register at Tuatapere. At this stage we were worried about lack of sleep