

## 2024 Cleft Camp

Date range: 13-21 April 2024

### Peter Snell Youth Camp, Whangaparaoa, Auckland

<https://www.onebigadventure.org.nz/peter-snell/>



#### Pros:

- Beautiful location with stunning views out over the sea, very tranquil – the ambience is very welcoming, and was in full sun during my visit at 9am – seemed very warm!
- Cater for smaller groups – their main camp caters for 120 people, and they also have a smaller venue on-site (Dearsley Cottage) which caters for 32 people. Dearsley Cottage does not have access to all the same facilities as the main camp (e.g. the hall), but is still well equipped (and standard of accommodation is probably actually a little higher than that of the main hall)
- Easy access for people who live in North Auckland and Northland, only approx. 1 hour from Auckland Airport for those from out of town
- Meal catering and cleaning costs are included in the nightly rate
- Have good availability over our time period
- Have a good array of activities to choose from, including those facilitated by venue staff, and activities we can run ourselves
- Has a private walking track down to the beach where we can organise kayaking activities etc.

**Cons:**

- Minimum hire cost is based on 50 people per night which equates to \$3,600 per night.
- There are no longer any climbing wall/high ropes facilities due to these no longer meeting health and safety requirements.
- The toilets for Dearsley Cottage are outside meaning that if someone needed to use the ablution block in the night, they would have to go outdoors – these toilets are also very old and need some TLC. The toilet facilities within the main camp are all within the accommodation building and are much more modern. The camp manager explained they are hoping to refurb the Dearsley toilets this year.
- Potentially there'd also be a second group there using whichever facilities we're not using, but the camp manager explained they ensure we're all kept separate and don't crossover.

**Cost:**

- Venue hire, accommodation and catering - \$3,600 per night = \$7,200
- Activities: \$25 per person (includes 3 venue run activities)

**My thoughts:**

I really liked this venue and loved meeting the camp manager – he was incredibly friendly, interested in what we were doing and I got the sense that they'd be very flexible and do what they can to accommodate any specific requirements. The views are amazing and although it's only 2km from Whangaparaoa township, you feel like you're miles from anywhere. The facilities are well maintained even if a little dated in some places. There's also a lot of scope for us to run our own activities here too. They currently have availability to support our dates, and are one of the more affordable options leaving us with more of the grant money to subsidise transport/run additional activities. I found this to be my favourite venue.

**Houghton's Bush Camp, Muriwai Beach, Auckland**

**Pros:**

- Very spacious facility, only cater for one group at a time so we'd have the entire venue to ourselves.
- Great, secluded venue with lots of outdoor spaces for activities and to spend free time.
- Huge kitchen and hall facility
- Easy access from Auckland, within 90 mins from Auckland Airport
- Very affordable, good value for money

**Cons:**

- Can only accommodate us from 4.30pm on 19 April 2024 to midday on 21 April 2024 – this would reduce the duration of the camp
- Buildings are old and lack insulation, it was a warm day when I visited and it still felt cold inside the dorms
- To move between buildings, need to do so outdoors (albeit under a covered walkway) – could be a security risk at night
- Infrastructure nearby to the venue is badly damaged, feels a little bit like an oasis in a war zone!
- Fully self-catered camp, this would require significant extra planning to facilitate (and likely would put some food safety requirements onto us which I'd rather delegate to the venue)

**Cost:**

- \$60 per person for the duration of the camp – minimum hire cost - \$2,400 – bargain!
- We'll have to pay for catering separately and organise this ourselves
- Activities additional and we'd need to source providers for these ourselves

**My thoughts:** This is another venue that is well suited to catering for smaller groups (max 86 pax). The accommodation units and ablution blocks etc. are all connected externally by a covered walkway. It's in a lovely, secluded location (currently within a closed cordon due to the recent cyclone) but is in an area with a lot of severely damaged infrastructure – this probably wouldn't impact on the camp, and will be improved in a year's time, but feels a little dystopian to drive through immediately before arriving at the venue. It was a lovely day in Auckland when I visited today, but somehow the venue still felt a bit cold and dark. It has some really good onsite facilities (e.g. playground, low-ropes course), but doesn't have a huge array of activities, and given its location, we can't easily travel nearby to access additional activities. It is however the cheapest option, although availability for the venue isn't great – they could only accommodate us from 4.30pm on the 19<sup>th</sup>, until lunchtime on the 21<sup>st</sup>, whereas I'd prefer to be able to make the most of the first day if possible. As worthwhile as it was to visit this venue, I think there are better options out there, and I feel we ought to rule this one out.

## Carey Park Christian Camp, Henderson, Auckland

<https://www.onebigadventure.org.nz/carey-park/>

### Pros:

- Amazing venue – fully equipped and has dozens of activities to choose from, no shortage of things to do here.
- Run by the same people as Peter Snell Youth Village in Whangaparaoa
- Very modern facilities, huge spaces to use – however, much larger than we need (cater for 170 people, although actually had over 200 people on the day I visited and were using additional spaces to accommodate people)

### Cons:

- Much larger than we need, and would feel very large for a small group – the team were not keen to offer us use of this venue for a relatively small group
- Some activities are currently out of action due to cyclone damage

### Cost

- Same as Peter Snell Youth Village

### My thoughts:

- Incredible venue, very friendly team – there was a very large school group here when I visited and great to see all the activities in use – about 12 concurrent groups were running and it was all running smoothly – very impressive. However, it is too large for our group, they don't have provision to only hire a part of the venue, I can definitely see if Cleft NZ builds momentum with camp in years to come this would be a fantastic venue (and very reasonably priced for what you get), but currently it's not really suited to our group.

## YMCA Camp Adair, Hunua, Auckland

### Pros

- Very well-established venue with lots of choice of activities including a good balance of high-ropes type activities, water activities and collaborative problem-solving style activities.
- Large venue, but can cater for 3 separate groups at any one time with separate accommodation and activity areas for each
- Minimum hire of 30 people instead of 50 at other venues
- Fully catered
- Activities are run by venue instructors
- Easily accessible from Auckland Airport
- Currently available for our dates

### Cons

- Pricing is subject to change until 01/03/2024 making quoting difficult (will mean we need to reasonably factor in a 10% price increase)
- Some facilities not available to those of us using the smaller accommodation (e.g. the large camp fire and field)
- Activity groups are capped at 12 people meaning we need to hire multiple instructors
- Ablution block, accommodation and dining hall are separated by uncovered outdoor walkways meaning people would get wet if it was raining, some paths were degraded and slippery underfoot which could cause an accident if walking on them when dark without a good torch
- Quite a long way from North Auckland and Northland
- Participants need to provide all of their own linen

### Cost (Tentative):

- Accommodation/facility hire: \$27 per person, per day (would try and negotiate the school rate of \$22 pp per day)
- Instructor hire: \$240 per instructor for 3 hours, \$405 per instructor for 6 hours
- Activity equipment (e.g. harnesses etc.) - \$5 per person, per activity (min charge \$80 per activity)
- Catering - \$42 per person, per day

**My thoughts:** I liked this venue, and feel it would be able to cater well for our smaller group. There's a real buzz about the place, and the camp instructors seem to have a great attitude and would be a lot of fun. There's a huge variety of activities, although we'd have to pick these carefully as they're quite expensive, and also many of them involve significant heights which may put some participants off – I'd suggest only doing 1-2 of the high activities, and mixing this with other activity types so that we can get people out of their comfort zone without making them feel terrified of each activity! The lack of certainty around pricing is unfortunate and makes it a little harder to budget, we'd have to cost it out assuming it costs 10% more than the quoted rates. It would not be great in bad weather as I can see it becoming muddy very quickly, and the lack of indoor connections between buildings will mean people traipse mud into their living quarters – having to bring linen from home could be difficult for those coming from out of town. This would be my second favourite venue.