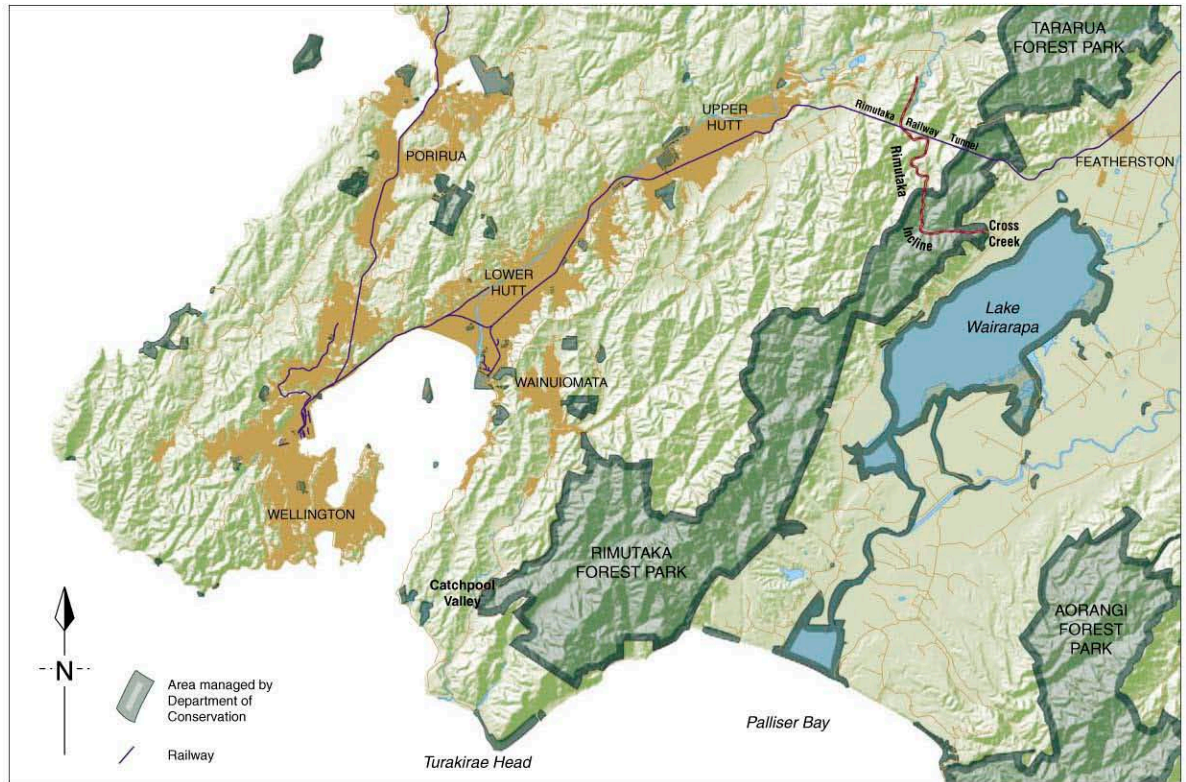


1. From Wellington to Wairarapa

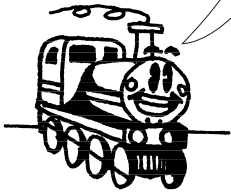


1. From Wellington to Wairarapa

Before the Rimutaka Incline railway track was built people travelled from Wellington to Wairarapa by walking around the coast or over the track where the highway is now.

- What route would you have chosen—around the coast or over the hill? Explain why to someone in your group.

The journey was slow, as the trains travelled up the incline at a speed of 6 miles (just under 10 km) per hour—you could probably walk faster. In fact, sometimes people did jump off the train and run or walk along beside it for awhile.



People wanted easier access to the fertile plains of the Wairarapa but the incline was steep for a railway. No other railway in New Zealand was this steep. A unique little engine was found that could be used on a steep slope because of its special braking system. The huge task of building the Rimutaka Incline was completed in 1878. The introduction of the fell engines opened the way to Wairarapa for the people of Wellington and the Hutt Valley.

- Imagine you lived in Wellington or the Hutt Valley in the late 1800s. In your group, or in pairs, share at least 3 reasons why you might you have wanted to travel to the Wairarapa.