

# Please don't climb Uluru

*We, the Anangu traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, have a responsibility to teach and safeguard visitors to our land. We feel great sadness when a person dies or is hurt on our land. We would like to educate people on the reasons we ask you not to climb and if you choose to climb, we ask that you do so safely.*

## Cultural reasons

We ask visitors not to climb Uluru because of its spiritual significance as the traditional route of the ancestral Mala men on their arrival at Uluru. We prefer that visitors explore Uluru through the wide range of guided walks and interpretive attractions on offer in the Park. At the Cultural Centre you will learn more about these and the significance of Uluru in Anangu culture.

## Safety reasons

The climb is physically demanding and can be dangerous. Some 35 people have died while attempting to climb Uluru and many others have been injured. At 346 metres, Uluru is higher than the Eiffel Tower or as high as a 95-storey building. The climb is very steep and can be very slippery. It can be very hot at any time of the year and wind gusts can hit the summit or slopes at any time. Every year people are rescued by park rangers, many suffering serious injuries such as broken bones, heat exhaustion and extreme dehydration.

For your safety the climb is closed every day:

- OVERNIGHT - from half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise
- SUMMER - from 8am during the Summer Seasonal Closure Period - December, January and February

The climb is also closed without notice:

- HEAT - from 8am if the forecast temperature is 36 degrees or above\*
- HEAT - if the actual temperature at Yulara reaches 36 degrees or above\*
- RAIN - when there is more than a 20 per cent chance of rain within three hours\*
- RAIN - when there is more than a five per cent chance of thunderstorms within three hours\*
- WIND - if the estimated wind speed at the summit reaches 25 knots or above\*
- WET - when more than 20 per cent of the rock surface is wet after rain
- CLOUD - when cloud descends below the summit
- RESCUE - during rock rescue operations

The climb has been temporarily closed four times for important cultural reasons such as the death of a senior traditional owner.

\* in consultation with the Bureau of Meteorology.

*"That's a really important sacred thing that you are climbing. You shouldn't climb. It's not the real thing about this place. The real thing is listening to everything."*

*Traditional Owner*

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## Environmental reasons

There are also significant environmental impacts of climbing Uluru. If you have a close look you can see the path is smooth from thousands of footsteps since the 1950s. This erosion is changing the face of Uluru.

Also, there are no toilet facilities on top of Uluru, and no soil to dig a hole. When it rains, everything gets washed off the rock and into the waterholes where precious reptiles, birds, animals and frogs live. A water quality study at Uluru has found significantly higher bacterial levels in the waterholes fed by runoff from the climb site, compared with those further away.

## Fewer people are climbing

The proportion of visitors who climb Uluru has dropped. It is estimated that around 38 per cent of visitors climb each year, down from 74 per cent in 1990. Visitors from some countries are much more likely to climb than others. At the last survey visitors who didn't climb generally mentioned the request from traditional owners and their desire to show respect for Anangu and their culture. Other reasons include lack of interest in climbing, safety concerns, lack of fitness and fear of heights.

## Risks and safety precautions

If you choose to climb, please be aware of the risks and safety precautions.

Do not attempt to climb Uluru if you have high or low blood pressure, heart problems, breathing problems, a fear of heights, or if you are elderly, a young child or not reasonably fit.

Safety precautions – don't risk your life:

- Carry and drink one litre of water per person for every hour (it takes roughly three hours to climb Uluru)
- wear sturdy, rubber-soled boots or shoes, a hat with a secure strap, a long sleeve shirt and maximum protection sunscreen
- do not try to retrieve items that have dropped or blown away from the climbing track
- do not drink alcohol or eat a large meal before climbing.



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Director of National Parks

