



Australian Government
Director of National Parks

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW SUMMER OPENING HOURS FOR ULURU CLIMB

Visitors wanting to climb Uluru this summer will have more certain opening hours and a better opportunity to explore the full range of the park's attractions.

During January and February the climb will be open from half an hour before sunrise until 8:00am each day (weather permitting). It will be closed for the rest of the day when the heat, wind and rain usually make the climb unsafe. The rest of the park will remain open as usual.

Director of National Parks, Peter Cochrane, said the change will provide greater certainty to visitors and tour operators, helping them plan their days better.

"It's very rare for the climb to be safe after 8:00am over summer – it's usually too hot, windy or wet for people to climb," Mr Cochrane said.

"In the past, people have wasted a lot of time waiting at the bottom of the climb, hoping in vain for conditions to improve. The new opening hours make it clear to visitors when they can climb - in the coolest, safest hours of the day - and free them up to explore the park's great cultural activities and guided walks after that.

"Since 2003, the climb has been closed because of weather conditions for more than 80 per cent of summer daylight hours – last year it was only open after 8:00am for two days in December, four days in January, and not at all in February.

"Climbing Uluru can be dangerous, and visitor safety is our highest priority. Every year we have to rescue climbers who get into trouble - ranging from dizziness and hypothermia through to leg and head injuries."

The new summer opening hours come into effect on 1 January 2008, after consultation with the tourism industry. The tourism industry's representative on the Uluru Board of Management, Bob Kennedy, has welcomed the new arrangements.

"This change is great for the tourism industry," Mr Kennedy said. "We consulted widely with tour operators, and the overwhelming majority have said 'this is fine with us'.

"It gives people a really clear idea of when they can safely climb Uluru, and that certainty is good for tour operators and visitors alike."

Uluru's traditional owners, Anangu, ask visitors not to climb Uluru because of its spiritual significance as the ancestral route of the ancestral Mala. They prefer that visitors explore Uluru and its cultural significance through the wide range of guided walks and interpretive attractions on offer in the park.

For more information visit www.environment.gov.au/parks/uluru/

Media Contact: Mali Stanton, 0439 582 686