

Uluru climb closed permanently as hundreds scale sacred site on final day

By [Chelsea Heaney](#) and [Samantha Jonscher](#)

Updated October 25, 2019 19:51:33



PHOTO: The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of management has officially closed the climb up Uluru. (AAP: Dan Peled)

Almost 34 years to the day since the Anangu traditional owners were handed back the title to Uluru, their wishes that people not climb the rock will now be enforced by law.

Rangers officially closed the climb at 4:00pm (ACST) and stopped any more people making the trek.

Any remaining visitors on the rock will be allowed to stay there until sunset, they will be the last people to have legally scaled the culturally significant site.

Anyone else now caught climbing Uluru could face thousands of dollars in fines.

In the final hours of the Uluru climb, Parks Australia rangers had to escort a man in distress from the top of the ascent.

Rangers left the base about 2:00pm and arrived back with the traveller just after 5:00pm.

The man said he ran out of water but didn't regret making the climb.

Local Anangu ranger Tjiangu Thomas said it had been an important day for the community and the region.

"It's rather emotional, having elders who picked up this long journey before I was born, to close the climb, and now they are no longer here but we are carrying on their legacy," he said.

RELATED STORY: ['We thought, why not?': Why Australians are flocking to climb Uluru](#)

RELATED STORY: [Final hour before Uluru climb closes forever](#)

RELATED STORY: ['No, means no': Uluru climb closure gives voice to claims by other traditional owners](#)

MAP: [Alice Springs 0870](#)

Key Points:

- Parks Australia have said they would be running extra patrols over the weekend and would impose heavy fines on anyone caught climbing
- Traditional owners waited for over two years to officially close the climb, which came into effect this afternoon
- Hundreds of tourists hoping to be some of the last to climb had to wait for hours this morning after it was closed due to dangerous conditions

NEWS IN LANGUAGE

Listen to the news in Warlpiri, Yolngu Matha and Kriol

Environment News

[Breeding colony a no-show for the first time in living memory](#)

[Climbing Uluru is now a 'serious offence' as closure kicks in](#)

[Murray-Darling chief apologises for public release of dam satellite images](#)

Rural

- [Native timber processor accused of 'wasting' thousands of tonnes of jarrah logs](#)
- [Murray-Darling chief apologises for public release of dam satellite images](#)
- [Water traders without a connection to farming are 'failing the pub test', says Minister](#)
- [Farmers risk losing key markets because of controversial weedkiller, Minister says](#)
- [Truck driver was 'in the line of fire' when tarpaulin mechanism failed, report says](#)

[More](#)

TOP STORIES

- [Climbing Uluru is now a 'serious offence' as closure kicks in](#)
- [Visiting professor resigns from Murdoch university over Four Corners whistleblower case](#)
- [Angus Taylor to apologise to Sydney's Lord Mayor for 'not clarifying' figures](#)
- [Controversial cash-ban bill under review after MPs flooded with community objections](#)
- [Analysis: A ghost from Trump's past is lingering in the impeachment inquiry](#)
- [Melbourne all-boys school students filmed performing sexist chant encore](#)
- [Concerns for welfare of Thai royal consort swirl after demotion](#)
- [Breeding colony a no-show for the first time in living memory](#)
- [Woman charged with murder after head-on crash](#)
- [MP says sorry after mic catches him calling woman 'a f***wit'](#)
- [A 'cloud' in your backyard as 'the edge' brings the internet closer to home](#)
- [Boating tragedy survivor clung to](#)

"It's a rather big example of how Anangu are starting to speak up for their country — not only here but for other Indigenous people throughout the nation.



PHOTO: Tjiangu Thomas said Anangu felt both sadness and happiness following the climb closure, as elders had passed away before seeing their plan come to fruition. (ABC News: Samantha Jonscher)

"Hopefully we can use that momentum and keep moving forward to build a brighter future for this generation and the next generation."

Mr Thomas said he believed a lack of education was predominantly the reason people would still want to climb.

"I'd say to those people, come out with an open mind and heart and immerse yourself in the culture," he said.

"Once the focus is away from the climb, there is going to be more focus on the culture and the environment and that is what this park is world heritage-listed for."

But Mr Thomas said he was still disheartened by how many had come to scale the rock in recent weeks, knowing how the traditional owners felt.

"At the end of the day, respect is a choice. Obviously it is disappointing but, compared to the school holidays, today hasn't had very large numbers," he said.

'Today I'm really happy'

A media throng crowded around traditional owners who'd gathered to see the new sign marking the permanent closure.

Elder Nelly Patterson said she was relieved the climb had been closed.

"Really good, I'm really happy," she said to cheers from the crowd.



boat for five hours

- **SPORT** Live: Brisbane Roar host Melbourne Victory at Lang Park
- Is your postcode the reason you feel unwell? 🏠
- Woman famous as Angelina Jolie lookalike interviewed on Iranian TV
- Two arrested in relation to missing man cold case
- **SPORT** A 16-year-old has taken the WBBL by storm and she's only getting started
- US sends more troops to north-eastern Syria to protect oil fields from Islamic State, Kurds pull out
- Murray-Darling chief apologises for public release of dam satellite images
- Worst measles outbreak this century in WA expands with another diagnosis confirmed today
- Opinion: Has Scott Morrison underestimated Labor? We may soon find out
- **SPORT** Soccer fans say their ethnic heritage is part of the game
- Doctor accused of negligence after baby born without a face
- Essex discovery the brutal truth in operations which smuggle up to 40,000 people into the UK each year
- Chinese-owned nickel plant in PNG shut down after toxic spill

Get the headlines to your mobile.
NEWS on Messenger



CONNECT WITH ABC NEWS



YouTube



News Podcasts
Catch up with ABC News programs.



GOT A NEWS TIP? >

If you have inside knowledge of a topic in the news, [contact the ABC](#).

NEWS IN YOUR INBOX

Get the latest ABC News delivered to your inbox every morning and afternoon.

Email address

Sign up

[More info](#)

ABC BACKSTORY >

ABC teams share the story behind the story and insights into the making of digital, TV and radio content.

EDITORIAL POLICIES >

Read about our editorial guiding principles and the standards ABC



PHOTO: Elder Nelly Patterson addresses the media after the Uluru climb closes. (ABC News: Samantha Jonscher)

She said seeing people climb Uluru had been hurtful for Anangu.

"I was worrying all the time because a lot of people climb here ... go in and make a mess for the toilet and everything, rubbish mess," she said.

"That's why a lot of people pass away, everyone pass away, all the elders people, that's why I worry and today I'm really happy," she said.

“ "No more climb today ... close it. Thank you very much."

Climbers now facing prosecution

In a statement, a spokesperson for Parks Australia said anyone who chose to ignore the closure would be pursued and that extra patrols of Uluru would be conducted over the weekend.

"Although we expect our visitors to respect the law and the wishes of traditional owners when they visit, significant penalties can be issued," the statement said.

“ "If a serious offence is pursued by Parks Australia it could attract court-ordered fines of up to \$10,000."

As of 4:00pm Australian Central Standard Time (ACST), anyone aiming to ascend Uluru will be in breach of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act (EPBC).

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park manager Mike Misso said there was a range of legislative instruments under the Act to enforce the ban.

"Under the EPBC, we can issue fines or infringement notices for people who climb up and then that can scale to actually taking people to court if they're illegally climbing Uluru," he said.

“ "Any climbing of Uluru will be illegal from today onwards."

"We'll have extra rangers on over this period, over the period of the climb closure, so there'll be a lot more staff on the ground. The Northern Territory Police are also supporting us, so there'll be a very high level of compliance presence over this period."

Tourists kept waiting on final day





VIDEO: [Climbers wait to ascend Uluru as traditional owners aim to educate](#) (ABC News)

Earlier this morning, a line of tourists snaked around the base of Uluru, after hundreds of [climbers' plans were thrown into disarray](#) when rangers closed the trail due to dangerous weather conditions.

The climb was scheduled to open at 7:00am ACST but high winds kept hopeful hikers stuck at the base for several hours.

After a mid-morning assessment, the trek was reopened and the scores of visitors began scrambling to the top.

Over the past few weeks, tourists have flocked to the region in a last-ditch effort to scale one of Australia's most famous landmarks.

Traditional owners said they had been left frustrated and disappointed that so many had rushed in and disregarded their wishes in the final few weeks.

Uluru is a sacred site and of great spiritual significance to First Australians, and Anangu traditional owners say climbing it is not only disrespectful but also dangerous.



PHOTO: [A sign at the base of Uluru confirming the landmark's permanent closure.](#) (ABC Darwin: Samantha Jonscher)

Uluru and Kata Tjuta was handed back to the Anangu traditional owners on October 26, 1985.

In Uluru's history, at least [37 people have died while climbing](#) and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of management said they shared in the grieving process each time a visitor died.

"Tjukurpa [Cultural law and dreaming] requires that Nguraritja [traditional owners] take responsibility for looking after visitors to their country and each time a visitor is seriously or fatally injured at Uluru, Nguraritja share in the grieving process," they said.

The dismantling of the chain and trail is expected to commence over the weekend.

Topics: [tourism](#), [rural-tourism](#), [travel-and-tourism](#), [indigenous-protocols](#), [indigenous-culture](#), [indigenous-policy](#), [aboriginal](#), [land-rights](#), [national-parks](#), [alice-springs-0870](#), [yulara-0872](#), [darwin-0800](#), [nt](#)

First posted October 25, 2019 17:38:04

Contact Chelsea Heaney

More stories from Northern Territory



How we made Australia Talks

What happens when you ask 54,000 Aussies for their thoughts and feelings? Here's how the ABC made Australia Talks.



The cost of cancer

Last year, Nigel and Belinda Shedden got married and moved into their dream home. Today, the couple are living with Mr Shedden's mother in small apartment.



'I felt broken': What it's like living with Borderline Personality Disorder

It's estimated between one and four per cent of Australians live with Borderline Personality Disorder.



'It's an addiction'

Rebecca Van Dyk's photography is growing from hobby to habitat protection as she takes on the mission of conserving Lake Cargelligo's birds.

TOP STORIES

- [Climbing Uluru is now a 'serious offence' as closure kicks in](#)
- [Visiting professor resigns from Murdoch university over Four Corners whistleblower case](#)
- [Angus Taylor to apologise to Sydney's Lord Mayor for 'not clarifying' figures](#)
- [Controversial cash-ban bill under review after MPs flooded with community objections](#)
- [Analysis: A ghost from Trump's past is lingering in the impeachment inquiry](#)
- [Melbourne all-boys school students filmed performing sexist chant encore](#)
- [Concerns for welfare of Thai royal consort swirl after demotion](#)
- [Breeding colony a no-show for the first time in living memory](#)
- [Woman charged with murder after head-on crash](#)
- [MP says sorry after mic catches him calling woman 'a f***wit'](#)

JUST IN

- [Jillaroos post convincing victory over Kiwi Ferns to keep winning streak alive](#)
- [Woman charged with murder after head-on crash](#)
- [Live: Brisbane Roar host Melbourne Victory at Lang Park](#)
- [Woman famous as Angelina Jolie lookalike interviewed on Iranian TV](#)
- [Boating tragedy survivor clung to boat for five hours](#)
- [Two arrested in relation to missing man cold case](#)
- [Visiting professor resigns from Murdoch university over Four Corners whistleblower case](#)
- [A 16-year-old has taken the WBBL by storm and she's only getting started](#)
- [Breeding colony a no-show for the first time in living memory](#)
- [Pilots still exhilarated 50 years after first flight](#)

MOST POPULAR

- [Beware property spruikers: Matt's speaking out to stop others making a very expensive mistake](#)
- [Has Scott Morrison underestimated Labor? We may soon find out](#)
- [Final hour before Uluru climb closes forever](#)
- ['Sex monster' raped men, women and children. Now there are fears he may come after his wife](#)
- [Recommended sports clubs shunned as new details emerge in Georgina Downer cheque scandal](#)
- [Melbourne all-boys school students filmed performing sexist chant encore](#)
- [Trump's 2016 election obsession may come back to haunt him in 2020](#)
- ['I will never live to be an old man. This will take my life'](#)
- [39 dead in Essex truck container believed to be Chinese nationals, police say](#)
- [16 sentenced to death for burning Bangladeshi teenager alive, killing her](#)

ANALYSIS & OPINION

- [Trump's 2016 election obsession may come back to haunt him in 2020](#)
- [Has Scott Morrison underestimated Labor? We may soon find out](#)
- [Can Donald Trump really get away with murder? Maybe](#)
- [Returning from Davis Cup exile, Kyrgios could become an unlikely Australian hero](#)
- [Toxic masculinity's latest form is private school boys chanting a sexist song. This is how to set things straight](#)
- [Blowing the whistle on alleged wrongdoing should not destroy your life](#)
- [Justin Trudeau now has this in common with Donald Trump](#)
- [As three strongmen struggle for power, there's likely to be one eventual winner in Syria](#)
- [Bridget McKenzie met the demands of She Who Must Be Obeyed — and now she's paying the price](#)
- [One unlucky smoker will determine whether cannabis really is legal in Canberra](#)

SITE MAP

Sections

[ABC News](#)
[Just In](#)
[World](#)
[Business](#)
[Health](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Sport](#)
[Analysis & Opinion](#)
[Weather](#)
[Topics](#)
[Archive](#)
[Corrections & Clarifications](#)

Local Weather

[Sydney Weather](#)
[Melbourne Weather](#)
[Adelaide Weather](#)
[Brisbane Weather](#)
[Perth Weather](#)
[Hobart Weather](#)
[Darwin Weather](#)
[Canberra Weather](#)

Local News

[Sydney News](#)
[Melbourne News](#)
[Adelaide News](#)
[Brisbane News](#)
[Perth News](#)
[Hobart News](#)
[Darwin News](#)
[Canberra News](#)

Media


[Video](#)
[Audio](#)
[Photos](#)

Subscribe

[Podcasts](#)
[Newsletters](#)

Connect

[Contact Us](#)

 [Change to mobile view](#)

This service may include material from Agence France-Presse (AFP), APTN, Reuters, AAP, CNN and the BBC World Service which is copyright and cannot be reproduced.

AEDT = Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time which is 11 hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time)