

2017/16: Should climbing Uluru be banned?

What they said...

'Closing the climb is not something to feel upset about but a cause for celebration'

From a speech made on October 31, 2017, by senior traditional owner and park chairman, Sammy Wilson

'Well if you want to get rid of 99% of tourists that's the way to go'

Comment posted in The Northern Star on November 1, 2017

On October 31, 2017, the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park's Board of Management voted unanimously to ban the climbing of Uluru from October 26, 2019.

The Board, consisting of eight Indigenous traditional owners and three representatives from National Parks, accepted a proposal to put a stop to climbing on the 34th anniversary of the Uluru handback.

Chairman Sammy Wilson, a traditional owner who also runs a small tourism business, stated, 'Some people, in tourism and government, for example, might have been saying we need to keep it open but it's not their law that lies in this land...'

The Government needs to respect what we are saying about our culture in the same way it expects us to abide by its laws.'

Traditional owners have been asking visitors not to climb Uluru since the 1985 handback and signs requesting people reconsider climbing have been in place at the base of the climb area since 1992.

Central Land Council Director, David Ross, has supported the decision, stating, 'Why this decision wasn't made decades ago is a fair question.' However, he further stated, 'Anangu [the traditional owners of Uluru] have genuinely struggled to accommodate many powerful competing interests and have faced massive pressure.'

In April, 2016, the Turnbull government announced it did not intend to end the climb. The Environment Minister Greg Hunt stated there were 'no plans to change current arrangements.' In 2009, when in opposition, Hunt had claimed that banning the climb would 'end one of the great tourism experiences in Australia.'

Background

Most of the information below has been drawn from a Wikipedia entry titled 'Uluru'

The full text can be accessed at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uluru>

Uluru, also known as *Ayers Rock* and officially gazetted as "*Uluru / Ayers Rock*", is a large sandstone rock formation in the southern part of the Northern Territory in central Australia. It lies 335 km south west of the nearest large town, Alice Springs, 450 km by road.

Uluru is sacred to the Pitjantjatjara Anangu, the Indigenous inhabitants of the area.

The region is home to an abundance of springs, waterholes, rock caves and ancient paintings.

Uluru has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site twice - once for its geographical importance, once for its cultural importance. Uluru and Kata Tjuta, also known as the Olgas, are the two major features of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

Description

Uluru is one of Australia's most recognisable natural landmarks. The sandstone formation stands 348 m high, rising 863 m above sea level with most of its bulk lying underground, and has a total circumference of 9.4 km. Both Uluru and the nearby Kata Tjuta formation have great cultural significance for the Anangu people, the traditional inhabitants of the area, who lead walking tours to inform visitors about the local flora and fauna, bush food and the Aboriginal dreamtime stories

of the area.

Uluru is notable for appearing to change colour at different times of the day and year, most notably when it glows red at dawn and sunset.

Kata Tjuta, also called Mount Olga or the Olgas, lies 25 km west of Uluru. Special viewing areas with road access and parking have been constructed to give tourists the best views of both sites at dawn and dusk.

Ownership and management

The title for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, in which Uluru stands, was transferred to Anangu control in 1985. Following the rock's handback, the traditional owners were obliged to lease the park back to the director of national parks, with day-to-day management handled by Parks Australia.

At the time of the handover, the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of management (made up of a majority of traditional owners) agreed not to close the climb, to minimise harm to the tourism industry.

In 2010, Parks Australia published a report stating the climb would be permanently closed when: the Board, in consultation with the tourism industry, is satisfied that adequate new visitor experiences have been successfully established, or the proportion of visitors climbing falls below 20 per cent, or the cultural and natural experiences on offer are the critical factors when visitors make their decision to visit the park.

Internet information

A Fact Sheet for the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park issued by Parks Australia and titled 'Please don't climb' gives a range of reasons why the traditional owners, the Anangu people do not want tourists to climb Uluru.

The full text can be accessed at <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/4039eb6a-b3e7-49f0-b28d-200793b53057/files/uktnp-a4factsheet-pleasedontclimb-small.pdf>

On November 9, 2017, The Cairns Post published a comment by Julian Tomlinson titled 'Banning climbing Ayers Rock/Uluru does nothing for Aboriginal reconciliation'

The comment argues that the ban is a divisive action which will harm relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The full text of the comment can be accessed at <http://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/opinion/banning-climbing-ayers-rockuluru-does-nothing-for-aboriginal-reconciliation/news-story/b7bd9badcc750c471f9045f50fce11ee>

On November 7, 2017, Red Bull Exploration published a promotion piece by Oliver Pelling titled 'Why you should visit Uluru while you're young' encouraging young Australians to visit Uluru. The piece stresses the range of experiences the region offers and discourages the climbing of the rock. It can be accessed at <https://www.redbull.com/au-en/uluru-history-why-travel-ayers-rock>

On November 6, 2017, The Conversation published the full text of the speech given by Sammy Wilson, the chairperson of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park management board, explaining why climbing Uluru would be banned from October 26, 2017.

The full text of the speech can be accessed at <https://theconversation.com/why-we-are-banning-tourists-from-climbing-uluru-86755>

On November 5, 2017, Welcome to Country published a comment and analysis titled 'Fact Check: Who are the people who still choose to climb Uluru?' which reveals that the majority of those tourists still climbing Uluru are Australian.

The full text can be accessed at <https://www.welcometocountry.org/fact-check-people-who-climb-uluru/>

On November 4, 2017, The Northern Star published an analysis titled ' They did it at Uluru, should we ban climbing at Mt Warning?' which considers the possibility of a further climbing ban being imposed in the wake of the Uluru ban.

The full text can be accessed at <https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/they-did-it-at-uluru-should-we-ban-climbing-at-mt-/3255969/>

On November 1, 2017, the Central Land Council posted a report and comment on its Internet site titled ' Between a rock and a hard place no more: Anangu close Uluru climb at last'

The article supports the scheduled closing of the Uluru climb in 2019.

The full text can be accessed at <https://www.clc.org.au/media-releases/article/between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-no-more-anangu-close-uluru-climb-at-last>

On November 1, 2017, The Northern Territory News published a report titled ' Uluru climb to be banned from October 2019' The report gives details of the decision and some of the background to it.

The full text of the report can be accessed at <http://www.ntnews.com.au/lifestyle/climb-may-be-banned-today/news-story/1302b4d486684c8a05fdbddb376228ff>

On November 1, 2017, The Northern Star published a news report titled 'Climbing Uluru will be banned' The report gives details of the decision and some of the background to it.

The full text of the report can be accessed at <https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/climb-may-be-banned-today/3253924/>

On November 1, 2017, The Huffington Post ran a report titled ' Climbing Uluru Will Be Banned From 2019' The report gives details of the decision and some of the background to it.

The full text of the report can be accessed at http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2017/10/31/climbing-uluru-will-be-banned-from-2019_a_23262690/

On November 1, 2017, The Telegraph published a news report titled ' Tourists banned from climbing Uluru as Aboriginal owners say "it's not Disneyland"' The report gives details of the decision and some of the background to it.

The full text of the report can be accessed at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/01/tourists-banned-climbing-famous-australian-landmark-uluru/>

On July 12, 2017, CNN published a background analysis titled ' Uluru: Should you climb Australia's sacred monolith?' which gave arguments for and against climbing and an overview of recent developments regarding the issue.

The full text can be accessed at <http://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/australia-uluru-ayers-rock-climbing/index.html>

On February 6, 2017, Adventure Tours Australia posted a comment on their Internet site titled ' Should you climb Uluru? Here's what the experts say' which gives a variety of reasons as to why it is inadvisable to climb the rock.

The full text can be accessed at <https://www.adventuretours.com.au/australia-outback-yarns/should-you-climb-uluru-heres-what-the-experts-say/>

On August 20, 2016, The Australian published a report titled ' Uluru's Voyages Indigenous Tourism offers Ayers Rock-based jobs path'

Though the article notes the growing number of jobs available within tourism immediately outside the National Park for Indigenous Australians, it also indicates that many employees are drawn from all over Australia.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/careers/ulurus-voyages-indigenous-tourism-offers-ayers->

[rockbased-jobs-path/news-story/57fe2aa5cc3f4810fad55cfa84c8af3b](http://www.rockbased-jobs-path/news-story/57fe2aa5cc3f4810fad55cfa84c8af3b)

On April 24, 2016, The Northern Territory News published a comment titled ' Rock solid case can be made to allow tourists to climb Uluru'

The opinion piece written by Maria Billias argues that the economic advantages that climbing makes available to the Indigenous owners justify the climb.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.ntnews.com.au/news/opinion/rock-solid-case-can-be-made-to-allow-tourists-to-climb-uluru/news-story/3513d663b96ae87dd302a7d6f8812c8e>

On April 20, 2016, ABC News ran a report titled ' Uluru climb controversy: Social media, tour guides reject Giles' comments'

The report details the criticisms received in response to the statement by the Northern Territory's chief minister, Adam Giles, that traditional owners should support the climbing of Uluru.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-20/uluru-climb-tour-guides-reject-giles-claims/7341800>

On April 12, 2016, the Sydney Morning Herald ran a news report titled ' Turnbull government decides against banning tourists from climbing on Uluru' The report referred to a statement made by the Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, indicating that the federal government had no plans to ban the climb.

The full text of the report can be accessed at <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/turnbull-government-decides-against-banning-tourists-from-climbing-on-uluru-20160411-go3qso.html>

On January 27, 2015, Alice Springs News Online published an analysis and opinion piece titled ' The Rock: To climb or not to climb' which casts doubt on the validity of claims that traditional owners object to the climbing of Uluru.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.alicespringsnews.com.au/2015/01/27/the-rock-to-climb-or-not-to-climb/>

In 2010 the Director of National Parks released the ' Management Plan 2010-2020 for the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park'

The plan foreshadowed the closure of the Uluru climb by 2020 and outlined the circumstances under which it could be closed earlier.

The full management plan can be accessed at <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/f7d3c167-8bd1-470a-a502-ba222067e1ac/files/management-plan.pdf>

On October 27, 2010, Australian Geographic published an analysis and comment titled 'Uluru: stories in stone' on the 25th anniversary of the return of the area to the traditional owners.

The full analysis and comment can be accessed at <http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2010/10/uluru-stories-in-stone/>

On October 26, 2010, The Telegraph published an analysis titled ' Aborigines "have received fraction of benefits from Ayers Rock hand back"'.
The report examines allegations that the traditional owners and nearby Indigenous communities receive too little of the money coming into the region through tourism.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/8087670/Aborigines-have-received-fraction-of-benefits-from-Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html>

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/8087670/Aborigines-have-received-fraction-of-benefits-from-Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html>

[Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/8087670/Aborigines-have-received-fraction-of-benefits-from-Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html)

On November 10, 2007, The Age published an analysis and comment by Martin Flanagan titled ' In spirit country'

The piece supplies a detailed treatment of the circumstances and attitudes of Indigenous

Australians living in the vicinity of Uluru.

The full text can be accessed at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/federal-election-2007-news/in-spirit-country/2007/11/09/1194329510914.html>

Arguments in favour of banning climbing Uluru

1. The traditional owners see climbing Uluru as the violation of a sacred site

The principal reason offered for not climbing Uluru is that it offends the traditional owners, the Anangu people, for whom Uluru is a sacred site.

Sammy Wilson, chairman of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of management, when announcing that the climb would be prohibited from October 26, 2019, stated, 'The climb is a men's sacred area. The men have closed it. It has cultural significance that includes certain restrictions...' Climbing route follows a sacred ceremonial path traditionally used by the Mala men, and it is against the wishes of the local indigenous people for tourists to undertake the climb. Though it is not possible to explain to non-Indigenous people the full significance of the rock for its traditional owners, not climbing Uluru is demanded out of respect for the Indigenous creation myth, Tjukurpa, which refers to the period when ancestral beings are believed to have created the world.

' Tjukurpa includes everything: the trees; grasses; landforms; hills; rocks and all. You have to think in these terms; to understand that country has meaning that needs to be respected. If you walk around here you will learn this and understand. If you climb you won't be able to...

We work on the principle of mutual obligation, of working together, but this requires understanding and acceptance of the climb closure because of the sacred nature of this place. '

<https://theconversation.com/why-we-are-banning-tourists-from-climbing-uluru-86755>

Prior to the announcement of the impending ban on climbing, the Anangu have repeatedly requested that the rock not be climbed. Kunmanara, another traditional owner, has expressed very much the same view as Sammy Wilson, stating, 'That's a really important sacred thing that you are climbing... You shouldn't climb. It's not the real thing about this place. And maybe that makes you a bit sad. But anyway that's what we have to say. We are obliged by Tjukurpa to say. And all the tourists will brighten up and say, "Oh I see. This is the right way. This is the thing that's right. This is the proper way: no climbing."' <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/do/we-dont-climb.html>

Currently a huge signboard at the base of the climb reads, ' We, the traditional Anangu owners, have this to say. Uluru is sacred in our culture, a place of great knowledge. Under our traditional law, climbing is not permitted. This is our home. Please don't climb.' <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/ausandpacific/ayers-rock-uluru-climb-indigenous-australians-sacred-site-australia-red-centre-a7936046.html>

2. Climbing Uluru is dangerous

One of the principal reasons climbing Uluru is to be banned is that the climb is dangerous and has resulted in death and injury. Thirty-six people have been recorded to have died attempting to climb Uluru since records began in 1958. Most deaths on Uluru are due to cardiac arrest, while some are the result of falls.

Parks Australia's Internet site informs potential visitors, ' At 348 metres, Uluru is higher than the Eiffel Tower... The climb is very steep and can be very slippery. It can be very hot at any time of the year and strong 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.' <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/4039eb6a-b3e7-49f0-b28d-200793b53057/files/uktnp-a4factsheet-pleasedontclimb-small.pdf>

The travel site, Australian Traveller, offers similar warnings, 'Unfit tourists often underestimate the task, and the chain along the climbing route is inadequate for the steep and sometimes slippery surface.

The 95-storey climb is often closed anyway due to wind, storm, and over the hot summer months (or temperatures above 36°C).' <https://www.australiantraveller.com/nt/red-centre/uluru/5-reasons->

[you-should-not-climb-uluru/](#)

In 1964, during a camping holiday with friends, Penny Campbell from Victoria climbed the rock. She has since been quoted as saying, '[The climb] was very, very dramatic... absolutely frightening, so steep. It was terrifying coming back down as well. It's undulating and you could get lost so easily, and you could fall over the side into a cavern inside. It's very dangerous.'

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-26/uluru-climb-in-northern-territory-should-be-banned-tourists-say/8557416>

The most recent death occurred in April, 2010, when a 54-year-old Victorian collapsed and died near the base on his way down. <http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/uluru-death-fuels-call-to-close-rock-climb/news-story/2b81fa8bce0b63094f6e45838f091c3b> As recently as September, 2016, three 23-year-old climbers were dislodged from a crevice after an 11-hour rescue effort. The three men reportedly went off the regular path. <http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/uluru-death-fuels-call-to-close-rock-climb/news-story/2b81fa8bce0b63094f6e45838f091c3b>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/09/19/three-idiot-rescued-from-uluru-after-climbing-getting-stuck_a_21475214/ While in June, 2015, a 27-year-old Taiwanese tourist fell down a crevice high on the rock and had to be airlifted to safety. <http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/uluru-death-fuels-call-to-close-rock-climb/news-story/2b81fa8bce0b63094f6e45838f091c3b>http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/09/19/three-idiot-rescued-from-uluru-after-climbing-getting-stuck_a_21475214/<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-13/taiwanese-tourist-recovering-after-night-trapped-on-uluru/6543812>

Parks Australia stress the dangers associated with the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park even without climbing the rock. Their Internet site states, 'There is a risk of serious heat-related incidents around the base of Uluru due to excessively high temperatures over the summer period (October to March). For visitor safety, portions of the Uluru base walk will be closed in high risk areas, where extreme heat and exposure is the greatest.' <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/plan/staying-safe.html>

The traditional owners have further stated on the Park management site, 'The climb can be dangerous. Too many people have died while attempting to climb Uluru. Many others have been injured while climbing. We feel great sadness when a person dies or is hurt on our land. We worry about you and we worry about your family. Our traditional law teaches us the proper way to behave.' <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/do/we-dont-climb.html>

Reinforcing the traditional owners' safety concerns, Keith Aitken, a 61-year-old elder of the Mtitjulu community, has stated, 'Seeing people up top scares me. I'm looking at people about to get hurt. With us mob, when people hurt themselves while climbing Uluru it makes us feel no good. It's like if you woke up to find someone dead in your backyard. How would that make you feel?' <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/indigenous-affairs/2016/04/02/cutting-the-climbing-chains-uluru/14595156003071>

3. Climbing Uluru causes environmental damage

A major reason for banning the climbing of Uluru is the ecological and environmental damage the climb causes.

Melbourne-based ecologist, Chris Watson, has worked in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park area for 10 years, first as a tour guide then an ecologist. Mr Watson has stated, 'There are many reasons why climbing is inadvisable, but from an ecological point of view there are no toilet facilities or bins at the top. So there's an accumulation of human excrement, toilet paper, sanitary items, nappies and god knows what else. Rubbish accumulates and when it rains it gets funnelled down into the waterholes below.' <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/indigenous-affairs/2016/04/02/cutting-the-climbing-chains-uluru/14595156003071>

Andrew Simpson, the general manager of a tour company run by Indigenous people in Alice Springs, has stated, 'And then there are the environmental issues of the rubbish and people defecating on top of the rock and polluting the waterholes around Uluru.'

Mr Simpson has explained, 'Basically it can take you quite a while to get up there and there are no facilities up there. So when nature calls you must do what nature needs you to do.'

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-09-08/uluru-being-used-as-a-toilet/1420964>

Researchers from Newcastle University are investigating whether bacteria left from human excrement at the top of Uluru is affecting local wildlife populations. In 2009, Professor Brian Timms, of the University of New South Wales, announced that his research had indicated that human waste was altering the populations of rare invertebrates on the rock, including the localised extinction of one species of fairy shrimp. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-09-29/tourist-poo-killed-rare-shrimp-on-uluru/1446342>

Also of concern is the impact that climbing and the pollution caused by climbers may be having on the region's frogs. The death of frogs at Mutitjulu waterhole noted in 2011 has concerned Parks Australia and monitoring has been undertaken on the four waterholes at the base of Uluru to determine what is causing these fatalities. <https://blog.parksaustralia.gov.au/2011/10/13/taking-care-of-frogs-at-uluru/>

In 2013, Kerrie Bennison, a natural and cultural resources manager of the park, stated that the climb was also inflicting irreparable physical damage on the site. Bennison observed, 'The scar that it leaves, you can see from being here. The path is worn and it's a very obvious impact from having lots of feet up and down it each time.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/09/people-still-climbing-uluru-closure>

There is visible erosion along the historic climbing route which is now known as the 'Scar of Uluru.' <https://www.australiantraveller.com/nt/red-centre/uluru/5-reasons-you-should-not-climb-uluru/>

A recent federal government report on the impact of global warming on Australia's World Heritage areas has suggested that Uluru is susceptible to damage. There are likely to be temperature increases, more frequent droughts, extreme weather events and flash flooding and wildfires. All these developments will impact on the surrounding area and the rock itself. Climate change will have some effect on the morphology of the region, including increasing what is referred to as 'cavernous weathering'. Cavernous weathering may form solitary cavities or pseudo-regular structures of cavities separated by walls on the surface of rocks. This latter is sometimes referred to as 'honeycomb weathering'.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/0e1207d8-6078-43e0-8f48-d17100efe786/files/worldheritage-climatechange.pdf>

Some critics have argued that these climate stressors mean that attempts should be made to reduce human impacts on the rock.

4. Tourism in the area no longer relies on visitors climbing Uluru

Those who argue that Uluru should no longer be climbed contend that the tourism industry in the area is not dependent on climbing the rock.

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Management Plan 2010-2020 declares that, once the percentage of visitors climbing Uluru falls below 20 percent, climbing will be disallowed. Provision 6.3.3(c) states 'The climb will be permanently closed when: the Board, in consultation with the tourism industry, is satisfied that adequate new visitor experiences have been successfully established, or the proportion of visitors climbing falls below 20 per cent, or the cultural and natural experiences on offer are the critical factors when visitors make their decision to visit the park.' <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/f7d3c167-8bd1-470a-a502-ba222067e1ac/files/management-plan.pdf>

This figure was set in the belief that alternate tourism attractions could be established and the climbing of the rock would cease to be a focus of visitor interest. A steady decline in the number of tourists climbing the rock in recent years has been seen by many as an indication that the climb no longer offers the appeal to visitors it once did. A decade ago (in 2007), 38 per cent of visitors climbed the rock. Recent figures provided to Fairfax Media indicate that about 20 per cent climbed. <http://www.smh.com.au/national/uluru-very-likely-to-close-to-climbers-its-not-a-disney-ride-says-chairman-20171031-gzccjo.html>

Because of the unreliability of motion sensors used to count the number of climbers, a new and independent analysis was commissioned from statisticians at Griffith University. The Griffith

University survey indicates that only 16 per cent of visitors to Uluru climb the rock.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/australia-ban-climbing-uluru-rock-sacred-indigenous-site-180967044/> Reasons for the drop in the number of climbers are believed to include deference to local culture, as well as lack of interest in climbing and safety concerns.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/australia-ban-climbing-uluru-rock-sacred-indigenous-site-180967044/http://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/australia-uluru-ayers-rock-climbing/index.html>

The Parks Australia Internet site for the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park notes the other attractions available in the area. It states, ' We encourage all our visitors to think about the other great ways to experience Uluru - taking our daily ranger-guided walk, a cultural tour or dot painting workshop, discover the many surprising wonders of this landscape by taking our base walk right around Uluru, or taking on the challenge of the Valley of the Winds walk out at Kata Tjuta.'

<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/4039eb6a-b3e7-49f0-b28d-200793b53057/files/uktnp-a4factsheet-pleasedontclimb-small.pdf>

The director of the Central Lands Council, David Ross, has argued that if fledgling Anangu tourism plans, especially in the vast Indigenous Protected Area surrounding the national park, receive the assistance they need from the federal government no one will miss the climb.

Sammy Wilson, chairman of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Board has stated, ' Visitors needn't be worrying there will be nothing for them with the climb closed because there is so much else besides that in the culture here. It's not just inside the park and if we have the right support to take tourists outside it will benefit everyone...

We have a lot to offer in this country. There are so many other smaller places that still have cultural significance that we can share publicly. So instead of tourists feeling disappointed in what they can do here they can experience the homelands with Anangu and really enjoy the fact that they learnt so much more about culture.' <https://theconversation.com/why-we-are-banning-tourists-from-climbing-uluru-86755>

5. Continuing to allow Uluru to be climbed is disrespectful of Indigenous beliefs

It is argued that allowing Uluru to be climbed against the expressed wishes of its traditional owners shows disrespect for Indigenous beliefs.

Sarah Reid, an English columnist writing for The Independent, has stated, ' I can accept that the cultural impact of clambering on the icon might be a little hazy for visitors with limited English skills, but given climbers come from all walks of life, there seems to be only one explanation as to why so many still do it: Indigenous culture is still not taken seriously, in Australia, or abroad. If it was, tourists would show the same unquestioning respect for local culture and customs that they do in other destinations, whether it be removing your hat to enter a church, avoiding certain parts of a temple or mosque if you are a woman or removing your shoes before entering someone's home. Locals would encourage it, and the government would enforce it.'

<http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/ausandpacific/ayers-rock-uluru-climb-indigenous-australians-sacred-site-australia-red-centre-a7936046.html>

The same point was made by Julie Power in an opinion piece published in The Sydney Morning Herald on August 7, 2017. Power writes, ' Most people wouldn't defecate on the shrine to unknown soldiers at the Australian War Memorial, picnic in front of the Mona Lisa, scale the spire of St Mary's Cathedral or urinate on the wailing wall in Jerusalem.

These are sacred or special places, maybe not to us individually but to others with different beliefs and cultures that we respect.

But every day as many as one in three visitors to Uluru disregard the traditional owners' requests to keep off the rock - a deeply spiritual place to them - and climb this sacred site, which should be as special to white Australians as it is to its Indigenous owners...

As I looked up on a recent visit, it was hard not to see the vertical line of climbers as one giant finger of disrespect for Indigenous culture.' <http://www.smh.com.au/national/uluru-to-climb-or-not-to-climb-the-great-australian-conundrum-20170801-qxmqt.html>

Some climbers have made their lack of respect for the views of the rock's traditional owners

flagrantly apparent. In 2010, French stripper, Alizee Sery, provoked controversy when she 'fulfilled a lifelong dream' to climb Uluru and stripped when she reached the top. While discussing Sery's strip on a Melbourne radio program in 2010, football personality Sam Newman revealed he had once hit a golf ball off Uluru. Australian director, Brian Trenchard-Smith, has since apologised for filming a kung-fu fight scene there in 1975. However, in 1986, Uluru was again filmed as a setting, this time for a children's storybook featuring a bear named Bromley. Park management tried unsuccessfully to stop the book being reprinted in 2003, ten years after it was first published.

<http://www.themercury.com.au/news/national/uluru-a-history-of-disrespect/news-story/b1e6ce0ba5a81e7a5d1627cedcfe87b2>

Sammy Wilson, chairman of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of management, has stated, 'Imagine if our mob went to Asia and started climbing on their temples? For us it is the same; Uluru is our sacred place. By climbing it you are disrespecting our culture. Why would you still do it when you know that?' <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/ausandpacific/ayers-rock-uluru-climb-indigenous-australians-sacred-site-australia-red-centre-a7936046.html>

At Uluru, Parks Australia has faced some particularly challenging years, as a decline in tourists - from 349,172 in 2005 to 257,761 in 2012 - caused revenue from the sale of entry tickets to fall.

Arguments against banning climbing Uluru

1. Banning climbing Uluru will harm tourism to the area

Supporters of Uluru continuing to be climbed argue that a ban would seriously damage tourism to the area. It has been noted that tourism to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and adjoining areas is already in decline. Numbers have been falling for the last decade. From 2004 to 2014, visitor numbers to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park fell 20 per cent. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-09/reversing-long-term-decline-in-tourism-to-uluru/6608226>

At Uluru, Parks Australia has faced some particularly challenging years, as a decline in tourists - from 349,172 in 2005 to 257,761 in 2012 - caused revenue from the sale of entry tickets to fall.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-09/reversing-long-term-decline-in-tourism-to-uluru/6608226><https://theconversation.com/why-is-it-still-possible-to-climb-ulu-u-r-u-u-58729>

Supporters of the climb argue that there are not sufficient alternate attractions at the Park to compensate for the rock climb being banned. It has been argued that the Uluru Cultural Centre, where tourists are encouraged to begin their visit to the Park and learn about Anangu culture, has not been maintained properly and looks dilapidated, and therefore not an attractive alternative to climbing. <https://theconversation.com/why-is-it-still-possible-to-climb-ulu-u-r-u-u-58729>

Despite claims that the percentage of tourists visiting Uluru who climb the rock has fallen to between 16 and 20 percent, it is argued that this is not a reflection of what tourists want.

Opponents of the ban claim that if tourists felt welcome to climb they would do so. A poll conducted by the Northern Territory News after the ban was announced found that over 60 per cent of respondents were in favour of visitors being allowed to climb Uluru. More than 5,000 readers had responded to the poll by November 11, 2017. <http://www.ntnews.com.au/lifestyle/climb-may-be-banned-today/news-story/1302b4d486684c8a05fdbddb376228ff>

Uluru has approximately 270,000 visitors each year with Australian tourists the most likely to climb the rock followed by the Japanese, according to the Park's figures. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5041105/Two-thirds-Australians-DON-T-support-Uluru-climbing-ban.html>

Japanese tourism to Australia is already in significant decline. Tourism Australia's figures indicate the number of Japanese tourists visiting Australia fell to 351,000 in 2009 - less than half the 1997 level of 841,000. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5041105/Two-thirds-Australians-DON-T-support-Uluru-climbing-ban.html>

<http://www.traveller.com.au/insensitivity-makes-waves-with-japanese-tourists-olzn> External factors such as the global financial crisis have negatively affected the tourism industry throughout Australia, including that to Central Australia; however, critics of the climb's closure argue that such outside pressures as the GFC mean that Australia has to be even more careful not to undermine attractions which draw tourists to this country.

In his tourist advice column, Travellers' Check, published in The Age on December 14, 2009, travel journalist, Clive Dorman, stated, 'I think the ban will do more harm than good if it goes

ahead. It will kill off what is left of Red Centre tourism: if you can't personally have what is an exhilarating experience, I think there is no point going there. You might as well look at a picture in a coffee-table book.' <http://blogs.theage.com.au/travel/travellerscheck/2009/12/14/whenisetout.html?page=fullpage>

In a letter published in the Sydney Morning Herald on November 4, 2017, Greg Cantori similarly noted, 'It will be interesting to look back from the Uluru settlement ghost town in 20 years and wonder why the tourists stopped coming.' <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-letters/letters-uluru-climbing-ban-shows-respect-for-wishes-of-the-anangu-people-20171102-gzdis9.html>

2. Banning climbing Uluru will financially disadvantage the indigenous community

The Indigenous communities in the region of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park are already financially disadvantaged. In Mutitjulu, an indigenous community just three miles from Uluru, unemployment, deprivation and poverty are rife. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/8087670/Aborigines-have-received-fraction-of-benefits-from-Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html> Aboriginal suicides are at record levels in remote Australia, and the Territory has the highest youth suicide rates in the world. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/8087670/Aborigines-have-received-fraction-of-benefits-from-Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html> <http://www.news.com.au/travel/australian-holidays/northern-territory/will-uluru-become-offlimits-to-tourists/news-story/dd2522e63eafbd34a592aec717bce9da> Rates of family violence are by some estimates 30 times higher than in the non-Indigenous community. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/8087670/Aborigines-have-received-fraction-of-benefits-from-Ayers-Rock-hand-back.html> <http://www.news.com.au/travel/australian-holidays/northern-territory/will-uluru-become-offlimits-to-tourists/news-story/dd2522e63eafbd34a592aec717bce9da> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-21/stan-grant-a-decade-on-from-the-nt-intervention/8638628> A lack of employment opportunities has been claimed as a major source of Indigenous disadvantage.

It has been argued that allowing tourists to climb Uluru is a source of income for the region and is particularly advantageous to the local Nguraritja and Anangu people. Rather than banning the climb, a number of Northern Territory leaders have suggested that climbing the rock should be more widely exploited than is currently the case.

The Northern Territory Chief Minister, Adam Giles, has stressed the potential advantages to the Uluru Indigenous community of encouraging tourists to climb the rock. At a sitting of the Northern Territory Parliament in Darwin on April 19, 2016, Mr Giles stated that an Aboriginal-supported climb would 'lead to jobs and a better understanding of Indigenous culture'. Mr Giles further stated that promoting climbing of the rock would result in a 'great opportunity for the local Anangu to participate in a lucrative business and create much-needed local jobs'. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-19/adam-giles-call-to-support-uluru-climb-eiffel-comparison/7339976>

Supporting the argument that climbing Uluru should continue because of the economic advantages it can offer Indigenous Australians, Maria Billias, writing in the Northern Territory News, stated, 'Why should we not be encouraging our indigenous Australians to take control of their destiny and harness any economic opportunity that comes their way to help "close the gap"?' <http://www.ntnews.com.au/news/opinion/rock-solid-case-can-be-made-to-allow-tourists-to-climb-uluru/news-story/3513d663b96ae87dd302a7d6f8812c8e>

Referring to Chief Minister Adam Giles' claim that fostering Uluru climbing as a tourist attraction would supply employment for Indigenous communities, Billias asks, 'Should the practice of people climbing Uluru be endorsed by Traditional Owners as a means of supporting economic advancement in one of the poorest regions in this country?' Her response is 'The Chief Minister believes so. And he is probably right.' <http://www.ntnews.com.au/news/opinion/rock-solid-case-can-be-made-to-allow-tourists-to-climb-uluru/news-story/3513d663b96ae87dd302a7d6f8812c8e>

3. Measures can be taken to reduce safety risks

Supporters of continuing to allow tourists to climb Uluru acknowledge the risks; however, they

argue that the hazards can and are being minimised.

The Northern Territory Chief Minister, Adam Giles, has argued that risks can be responsibly managed. Mr Giles has stressed that measures are already being taken to ensure that only those who are fit to do so attempt to climb the rock. Giles has noted that on the Parks Australia Internet site, people are warned not attempt it 'if you have high or low blood pressure, heart problems, breathing problems, a fear of heights or if you are not fit'. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-19/adam-giles-call-to-support-uluru-climb-eiffel-comparison/7339976>

Mr Paddy Uluru, an Indigenous elder who has since died, noted the actions already taken to reduce the risks to climbers and to rescue them should that be necessary. 'Maintenance of the park's vertical rescue capability requires that the numerous staff involved undertake intensive external training and regular in-house training.

Each time an incident occurs several staff and emergency personnel are involved and helicopters are often utilised.' <http://www.alicespringsnews.com.au/2015/01/27/the-rock-to-climb-or-not-to-climb/>

Further to these existing warnings and rescue procedures, Mr Giles has recommended, 'We could get a professional expert in to look at stringent safety requirements. The climb is not easy. There are safety issues. However, a regulated climb could deliver an unforgettable, unique experience in the heart of Australia's Indigenous culture.' <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-19/adam-giles-call-to-support-uluru-climb-eiffel-comparison/7339976>

The same point was made by Maria Billias in a comment published in The Northern Territory News on April 24, 2016. Billias states, 'If safety issues were addressed and more guides were employed to make sure tourists oblige by strict cultural protocols - even if it means keeping the climb closed on certain days or even during entire seasons - then I can only see a potential profitable business opportunity that should be explored.' <http://www.ntnews.com.au/news/opinion/rock-solid-case-can-be-made-to-allow-tourists-to-climb-uluru/news-story/3513d663b96ae87dd302a7d6f8812c8e>

4. Uluru is an Australian icon not merely an Indigenous one

Among those who argue that Uluru should continue to be climbed by tourists are those who stress that the site belongs to all Australians, not merely the Anangu people who claim ownership of it. This was a common thread in reader responses to a news report titled 'Climbing Uluru banned' which was published on November 1, 2017, in The Australian. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/indigenous/climbing-uluru-banned/news-story/53511b7f2e58f7ed03d5b0c3f66e2792>

The following were among the comments posted. 'What right do any group of Australians have to claim singular title and possession to a landmark that they did not build and which has been there for millions of years longer than them?'; 'It saddens me to think my Australian children, who are as Australian as any of these "Indigenous" people, are now not able to enjoy the same path I did'; 'This is a geological part of Australia. All Australians own it. Same as we all own the beaches, the sun and the trees.' 'You cannot lock up Australian natural icons for circa 3% of the population.' 'What a ridiculous decision. Ayers Rock or Uluru belongs to all Australians.' 'What right have these people got to prevent me from climbing up a rock in my own country? A natural crag in the middle of the desert.' 'Whilst I can respect some indigenous not wanting us to climb it the reality is it belongs to all of us and I do not think climbing it should be banned at all'; 'Ayers Rock belongs to all Australians. If people want to climb it why can't others respect that?'; 'Uluru is owned by all Australians'; 'Now we can't climb this amazing inspiring piece of our topography because the beliefs of some of the first Australians supersede the rights of all others.'

Similar sentiments were expressed by a number of posters responding to a Herald Sun report also published on November 1, 2017, titled 'Permanent ban on climbing Uluru to be considered'. <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/permanent-ban-on-climbing-uluru-to-be-considered/news-story/bb0759a14cd3e0a27d9a63a040150b3e> The following were among the comments posted. 'No one owns the rock and never will'; 'Ayers Rock is an Australian icon belonging to everyone'; 'When will all this pandering to minorities stop and the common good be taken as the priority?';

'They didn't build it; Nature built it so it belongs to everyone'; 'I was born here and I consider it my rock too'; 'Ayers Rock is 600 million years old. As such there can be no legitimate human claim to ownership'. It belongs to the earth; not any one person, culture or race. It belongs to everyone'; 'The Rock was there for thousands of years before the local indigenous laid claim to it and it will be there for thousand more after you and I are gone for all to enjoy. It is there for all to see and if you want to climb it you should be able to do so.'

A letter to the editor written by Peter Waterhouse and published in The Sydney Morning Herald on November 3, 2017, stated, 'The impending closure of the famous Uluru climbing track, while certainly understandable from a sacral point of view, from a social point of view seems to be based on the pretence that the rock is essentially owned by one group of people, rather than to be respectfully shared by all... It forms part of our historic landscape, which should not be denied to subsequent generations, who[se ancestors] simply weren't born early enough to be able to claim an exclusive connection to a natural beauty...' <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-letters/icac-cuts-are-evidence-of-berejiklian-revenge-20171101-gzd684.html>

5. Banning the climbing of Uluru is divisive and will impede reconciliation

Some opponents of the banning of the Uluru climb claim the action is divisive and part of an ethnically-based form of segregation and legal pluralism that will harm good relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Julian Tomlinson, writing in The Cairns Post in an opinion piece published on November 9, 2017, stated, 'Closing The Rock to climbers will likely set off a domino effect of similar exclusion orders around the country.' Tomlinson argues that such exclusions privilege Indigenous laws and customs over those of the rest of Australia and so serve to consolidate divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. He writes, 'Those proposing closures say indigenous law should trump the law of the land.

For instance, chairman of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of management at Ayers Rock, Sammy Wilson, said of the native people: "Anangu have a governing system but the whitefella government has been acting in a way that breaches our laws."

This is absurd and divisive.' <http://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/opinion/banning-climbing-ayers-rockuluru-does-nothing-for-aboriginal-reconciliation/news-story/b7bd9badcc750c471f9045f50fce11ee>

Tomlinson further argues that such divisive, segregationist policies are in evidence in other parts of Australia. He writes, 'Locally, entry to Mossman Gorge is controlled by the Kuku Yalanji people...

In the Daintree, the State Government is looking at increasing the role of Aboriginal culture in managing the area. This includes limiting entry to "sacred sites"...

Another example from the Daintree is that indigenous people can take dogs into the World Heritage area, light fires and shoot guns...

In the Hinchinbrook, a big chunk of Missionary Bay is off-limits to anyone who's not a traditional owner without a permit in order to protect "cultural resources", without actually saying what those are.' <http://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/opinion/banning-climbing-ayers-rockuluru-does-nothing-for-aboriginal-reconciliation/news-story/b7bd9badcc750c471f9045f50fce11ee>

Similar concerns have been expressed in relation to a possible ban on climbing Wollumbin (also known as Mt Warning), in New South Wales. Some tour operators in the area are concerned about the divisive impact of such a ban. Mt Warning Rainforest Park's Mark Bouchier has stated, 'I would be very disappointed if they closed the mountain.' However, Arakwal Aboriginal Corporation acting general manager, Sharon Sloane, said the branch would support anyone that attempted to enforce a ban on climbing Wollumbin. She said Wollumbin was 'a sacred men's ground within the Bundjalung Nation' for the Arakwal people. <https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/they-did-it-at-uluru-should-we-ban-climbing-at-mt-/3255969/>

Concern has been expressed for many years about the potentially divisive nature of a dual legal system in Australia which would recognise some aspects of Indigenous law. The Australian Law Reform Commission's Report 31 titled 'Recognition of Aboriginal Customary Law' published on

June 12, 1986, included the statement, 'A view strongly stated in several submissions was that recognition would create an undesirable form of legal pluralism, and that it would be divisive or an affront to public opinion. Proponents of these views argue that there should be "one law for all", and that the goal should be "social equality for Aborigines within the concept of racial unity and integration".' <https://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/8.%20Aboriginal%20Customary%20Laws%3A%20Recognition%3F/arguments-against-recognition-aboriginal-cus>

Further implications

Indigenous cultural dislocation

Cross-cultural understanding and mutual respect is difficult to achieve for any post-colonial society founded by a civilisation of conquest. Having been conquered is an existential challenge for any indigenous population and culture. This was and is true for Australia's Indigenous inhabitants. The British and more broadly the European values of the conquering culture established since 1788 have substantially determined Australia's national values, leaving Indigenous Australians struggling to retain their original languages and culture. Their marginality has been intensified by their frequent economic dependence on the white, Western society which has largely displaced their own.

The measures of achievement in Australian society are Western, materialistic measures which do not sit well with Indigenous Australian values centring on group obligation and support. Though the traditional values of urban Indigenous Australians have been severely challenged, they have retained a strong sense of the importance of family and kinship group. Despite this, racial prejudice, family disruption, loss of culture, loss of connection with the land, unemployment, poverty, ill health, poor diet, substance abuse and incomplete conventional education have created a nexus of disadvantage within which many urban Indigenous Australians are trapped. <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/families-and-cultural-diversity-australia/3-aboriginal-families-australia>

Remote Indigenous populations able to preserve traditional language

The position of Indigenous Australians living in remote areas is somewhat different. Indigenous Australians living in remote areas have a greater opportunity to retain their traditional culture as they have relatively less association with non-Indigenous Australians. The 2001 census indicated 'while their total numbers are relatively small as a proportion of the total population, Indigenous peoples constitute 28.8% of the total population of the Northern Territory.'

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2> The same census indicated 'While the majority of Indigenous people live in either major cities, or...regional areas of Australia, the proportion of [Indigenous] people that live in remote or very remote areas is much higher than for the non-Indigenous population.' <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2><https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2> In circumstances such as these, remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory have a greater opportunity to retain their traditional language and connection with the land than Indigenous Australians in other areas. 55% of those living in remote areas reported speaking an Indigenous language, compared with one per cent in urban centres. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2><https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2><https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/statistical-overview-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-australia#toc2>

Socio-economic disadvantage worse in remote Indigenous communities

Despite better retention of language and by extension culture, the socio-economic position of Indigenous Australians living in remote areas is markedly worse than that of non-Indigenous Australians and worse than that of Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional Australia.

Using disadvantage indices such as poverty, unemployment and restricted formal education, the 2011 census shows there was no single area in Australia where the Indigenous population had better or even relatively equal outcomes compared with the non-Indigenous population. The gap between the two populations was smallest in city and regional rural areas (37-38 percentage points) and highest in Indigenous towns (89 percentage points) and remote dispersed settlements (81 percentage points). <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/indigenous/Health-Performance-Framework-2014/tier-2-determinants-health/209-index-disadvantage.html>

Preserving culture, promoting understanding and improving physical quality of life

The figures referred to above indicate a startling disjunction in remote Indigenous communities. In precisely those areas where Indigenous Australians have been best able to retain elements of their culture, their physical and social living circumstances (as measured by indices such as wealth, employment, formal education, housing, physical and mental health and longevity) are the worst. No causal relationship is implied here, just a clear statement of the fact that the areas within which Indigenous Australians have been most able to preserve their culture are also those areas least conducive to their having a standard of living comparable to that of a majority of Australians.

This dilemma is the background to the desire of the local Anangu people to have their culture respected in the management of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park while at the same time converting it into something which will improve their physical quality of life. Their closure of the rock for climbing is also an attempt to educate that non-Indigenous Australia about the beliefs and values of Indigenous Australians.

Sammy Wilson's Statement

The speech delivered by Sammy Wilson, the Chairman of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Board, explaining why climbing Uluru will be banned, contains a number of important statements. <https://theconversation.com/why-we-are-banning-tourists-from-climbing-uluru-86755>

Firstly it stresses the importance of Indigenous cultural law to the traditional owners of the land now referred to as the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. It alludes to their belief system and to what this dictates in terms of how the land should be treated. ' This is a sacred place restricted by law... Some people, in tourism and government for example, might have been saying we need to keep it open but it's not their law that lies in this land.'

Secondly, it is a plea for non-Indigenous people 'to understand that country has meaning that needs to be respected'. It is a request that non-Indigenous Australians learn to appreciate the land rather than attempt to conquer it. 'If you walk around here you will learn this and understand. If you climb you won't be able to.' It is also a plea for respect and understanding of the traditional owners. 'We can't control everything you do but if you walk around here you will start to understand us.'

Thirdly it is a statement requesting that the Anangu people receive government funding that will allow them to establish further centres to educate non-Indigenous people in the value of their culture. ' We want support from the government to hear what we need and help us. We have a lot to offer in this country. There are so many other smaller places that still have cultural significance that we can share publicly. So instead of tourists feeling disappointed in what they can do here they can experience the homelands with Anangu and really enjoy the fact that they learnt so much more about culture.'

Finally, it is a rejection of Western materialism and an assertion of the value of a spiritually based culture. ' Whitefellas see the land in economic terms where Anangu see it as Tjukurpa. If the Tjukurpa is gone so is everything. We want to hold on to our culture. If we don't it could disappear completely in another 50 or 100 years. We have to be strong to avoid this.'

Wilson's explanation reveals the tensions experienced by those attempting to live within a culture very different from their own. He is requesting government funding to establish additional centres that will promote tourist experiences that are in accord with Indigenous culture. He, and those on

whose behalf he speaks, do not want to have to forfeit their traditional beliefs in order to attract investment and paying visitors.

It is an awkward compromise the Anangu are attempting to achieve - fostering respect for their non-materialistic minority tradition within a predominantly materialistic mainstream culture. It is the position most indigenous peoples find themselves in - finding an acceptable accommodation with a dominant settler culture.

A related challenge faces non-Indigenous Australians. If an accommodation cannot be found, Wilson is correct. Indigenous values and beliefs will cease to exist and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will be spiritually and culturally diminished.