



The Honourable Matt Kean MP
Minister for Energy and Environment

MD21/3961

Ms Helen Minnican
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Minnican

Thank you for your email about an ePetition with more than 500 signatures requesting reopening the Wollumbin (Mount Warning) summit track in Wollumbin National Park.

Wollumbin National Park was closed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in March 2020 due to COVID-19 health restrictions. The closure has been extended until the end of November 2021 due to public safety risks associated with the summit walking track and permit further consultation with the Aboriginal community and other key stakeholders about the future management of the site.

I am advised the decision to extend the closure due to public safety risks was based on a structural assessment carried out in August 2020 by an independent engineer. The assessment identified significant safety issues with the post and chain system used in the final approach of the summit track. Given the findings, NPWS removed the climbing chain in November 2020.

As you may know, the upper reach of Wollumbin was declared an Aboriginal Place in 2014 in recognition of its special significance to Aboriginal people. This affords the place special protections. I understand the local Aboriginal community has long expressed a view that access to the summit should be closed due to its significance.

An Aboriginal Place Management Plan is being finalised which formally sets out the Aboriginal community's advice on access to the summit and documents Wollumbin's significant Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

The Plan has been prepared in consultation with the Aboriginal community including the Wollumbin Consultative Group, which represents a range of Aboriginal groups and families with connection to Wollumbin and has been providing advice to NPWS since 2000. The decision to extend the closure to the end of November 2021 will enable further consultation with the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders about the future of the track.

While this consultation process takes place, the NSW Government is investing in a range of visitor infrastructure across the region as part of the largest capital investment program ever undertaken in our national parks.

By way of example, the \$7.35 million Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project will provide a four-day walk from Unicorn Falls to Minyon Falls with new and upgraded visitor facilities at key points along the trail. Initial works at the Minyon Falls visitor precinct commenced in December 2020.

If you have any further questions about this matter, please contact Mr Russell Madeley,
Director North Coast, NPWS on 6652 0923 or at russell.madeley@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matt Kean', with a stylized flourish at the end.

26 July 2021

Matt Kean MP
Minister for Energy and Environment