



Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management

MEDIA RELEASE

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Worimi Conservation Lands to reopen for holidays

Stockton Beach in Worimi Conservation Lands north of Newcastle will reopen this weekend in time for visitors to enjoy the school holidays exploring this remarkable Aboriginal-owned place.

Worimi Conservation Lands Board chairperson Ms Petrice Manton said the park had been closed since late April due to concerns about visitor safety, and the protection of significant cultural sites in the aftermath of the April storms that devastated parts of the region.

"Favourable weather conditions have seen a big improvement in the beachfront in the past two weeks and given us the opportunity to complete the highest priority work to protect cultural sites," Ms Manton said.

"With average tides and no large swells predicted, we are confident that, with some additional management strategies and staff in place, we can safely reopen the park to visitors from this weekend."

Ms Manton said although there had been significant recovery of the beachfront, driving conditions remained potentially hazardous.

"We urge all visitors to take notice of beach driving warnings and the advice of staff who will be patrolling the beach and entry points during the holidays," she said.

"The beach remains hazardous at high tide with staff reporting at least three areas along the beach between Lavis Lane and Gan Gan Road entry points where the beach is likely to be too narrow to pass at high tide."

Ms Manton said drivers unable to continue along the beach must retrace their route as driving over the frontal dune was "absolutely not permitted."

"The best way to avoid this situation is to restrict travel on the beach one hour either side of high tide."

Ms Manton said NSW National Parks and Wildlife staff had worked with Traditional Owners over the past eight weeks to assess eight new cultural sites and protect several existing sites damaged by the storm.

"Protection of cultural sites is incredibly important to the board and one of our major responsibilities," Ms Manton said.

“It has been a huge job to survey the park for new exposed sites, assess the damage to existing sites, and then ensure that all of the sites are adequately protected.”

Ms Manton said regular visitors will be surprised to see how the park has changed as a result of the storm.

“The impacts of this storm are a reminder of the fragile and changeable nature of the Worimi Conservation Lands and the challenges we face as those responsible for the park’s sustainable management.”

For the latest beach conditions or more information go to www.worimiconservationlands.com or phone NPWS Hunter Coast Area office on 02 4994 8200.

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