

Media Release:

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Swimming Restrictions at West MacDonnell National Park

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) advises that Ormiston Gorge waterhole and Ellery Creek, part of the West MacDonnell National Park have been temporarily closed for swimming and will remain closed over the weekend.

Parks and Wildlife Service senior district ranger for the West MacDonnell region Ross Nowland said due to recent strong winds and heavy rain a lot of soil and other flood debris has been washed into central Australian waterholes.

“We have temporary closed the Ormiston Gorge waterhole and Ellery Creek for swimming to ensure visitor safety,” Mr Nowland said.

“Both areas are still open to the public but swimming access is not permitted.

“Large branches and reeds have been deposited into the waterhole and could cause swimmers to become pierced or entangled.

“The heavy rains have also caused some erosion of the river banks, and they are unstable for visitor access.

“We are monitoring these waterholes daily and undertaking bacterial water testing at both sites to ensure the water is safe for visitors and as soon as we are able to reopen the areas we will advise the public and tourist operators in the area.”

Visitors are reminded to take care and not to dive into any waterholes throughout the Central Australian region as the floods have changed the depth, and with the water more turbid bottoms could have changed and unknown debris or submerged branches and rocks may be present.

Ormiston Gorge is located 135 km west of Alice Springs, access is via Larapinta and Namatjira Drives.

For the latest access reports or information about parks and reserves administered by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport go to www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Ross Nowland on 8956 7799

Images – Ormiston Gorge waterhole and Ellery Creek.

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