



Trampers told not to climb Tongariro Crossing's Mount Doom

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Tongariro Crossing trampers are now being asked not to take the 2-hour plod up the shingle slopes of Mt Ngauruhoe to its peak.

Trampers seeking to climb Mt Ngauruhoe, or "Mt Doom", will be asked to show "respect" for the mountain by giving up their quest.

The popular trek up Mt Ngauruhoe, a feature of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, is an added bonus for keen walkers who embark on the 20-kilometre journey along one of New Zealand's nine Great Walks.

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The mountain holds a special attraction for some visitors thanks to its famous role as Mt Doom in the *Lord of the Rings*.

MIRI SCHROETER/STUFF

The Department of Conservation is placing rangers along the Tongariro Crossing this summer (pictured) to encourage people not to take the detour route up Mt Ngauruhoe.

But the Department of Conservation (DOC) wants people to stop walking up Ngauruhoe as its peak, along with Mt Ruapehu's peak, are considered sacred.

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DOC removed access signs to the peaks in October, and up to five rangers will be monitoring the area from Saturday.

DOC biodiversity services manager Bhrent Guy said the department was not telling people to stop climbing the mountain, but rangers would tell them "to respect [the mountain] by not going up there".

There could be up to two additional rangers each day this year sharing that message, Guy said.

People would be advised it was a culturally significant area, but DOC could not stop them from going up the mountain.

It was time to show respect for the sacred land, he said.

Ad Feedback

DOC hoped the additional information about cultural values of the area would enrich visitors' experiences.

Adrift Guided Outdoor Adventures operations manager Jimmy Brown said it would not stop people from climbing Ngauruhoe, as there were many ways to get up there.

From a health and safety perspective, it was a good move as rocks and boulders often fell as people embarked on the climb, he said.

"From that standpoint, I think limitations are probably a good thing.

"For the general public, Ngauruhoe in particular can be quite dangerous."

In a statement, iwi spokesman Te Ngaehe Wanikau said the mountain peaks and all waterways and peaks on Tongariro were sacred to the local hapū Ngāti Hikairo Ki Tongariro.

People should respect the sanctity of the sacred mountains, Wanikau said.

"Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro places extreme importance on their guardian role in protecting not only Tongariro and his peaks, but also the safety and wellbeing of visitors to the region."

DOC has also introduced a four-hour parking restriction to stop overcrowding at both ends of the crossing.

People could be at risk of having their wheels clamped from October 21 to April 30, 2018.

Hikers will have to pay for a shuttle bus service instead.

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