



Hon Reece Whitby MLA
Minister for Environment; Climate Action

Your Reference: PER/CORC/5026/2019 PER/CORC/5025/2020
PER/CORC/5026/2020 PER/CORC/5027/2020
Our Reference: 79-06864

Ms S H Linton
Deputy State Coroner
Level 10, Central Law Courts
501 Hay Street
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Coroner Linton

I refer to your coronial findings of 17 June 2022 in relation to the investigation into the deaths of Hans-Juergen Friedrich BUSKE, Anne Maree POLLARD, Brian Patrick GREEN and Thelma Jacinta GREEN (Mount Augustus deaths).

I am writing to inform you of the progress and actions undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) in relation to the recommendations in the coronial findings relating to these deaths.

In relation to Recommendations 1 and 2, I can confirm that DBCA has implemented the closure of the Summit Trail as per the recommendations contained in the findings.

The Gully Trail was closed during 2021 following a review of the trail by DBCA and remains closed at present. The closure of the Summit Trail from 7am was implemented by DBCA as of 3 October 2022 and the 7am closure remained in place until the end of October when a full closure was implemented. The Summit Trail will remain closed to all walkers until the end of February 2023, at which time the trail closure will revert to a 7am closure which will remain in place until the end of April 2023.

The delay in implementing the trail closure for 2022 was due to the time taken to update signage, brochures and websites and to inform relevant stakeholders. In future years the 7am closure of the Summit Trail will commence on 1 September.

The trail closures have been communicated to various stakeholder groups and to members of the public via social media and DBCA's website. Signage is also in place at the start of the Summit Trail and at various locations in Mount Augustus National Park, and the adjacent tourist park, informing visitors of the trail closures.

DBCA will continue to provide messaging through these mechanisms about the safe use of trails, particularly from November to February when the Summit Trail will be closed at all times to hikers.

In relation to Recommendation 3, I can confirm that DBCA is continuing with the process of procuring three small cell mobile phone towers which will enable phone communication from the national park to the Mount Augustus Tourist Park. It is planned to have these towers operational by mid to late 2023.

In relation to a memorial at the start of the Summit Trail to commemorate the four deaths, DBCA has recently contacted your office via the State Solicitor's Office and requested that the families contact DBCA to discuss their wishes for a memorial. I am advised that at this point in time, no contact has been made by the families.

Yours sincerely

Reece Whitby MLA
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

23 NOV 2022