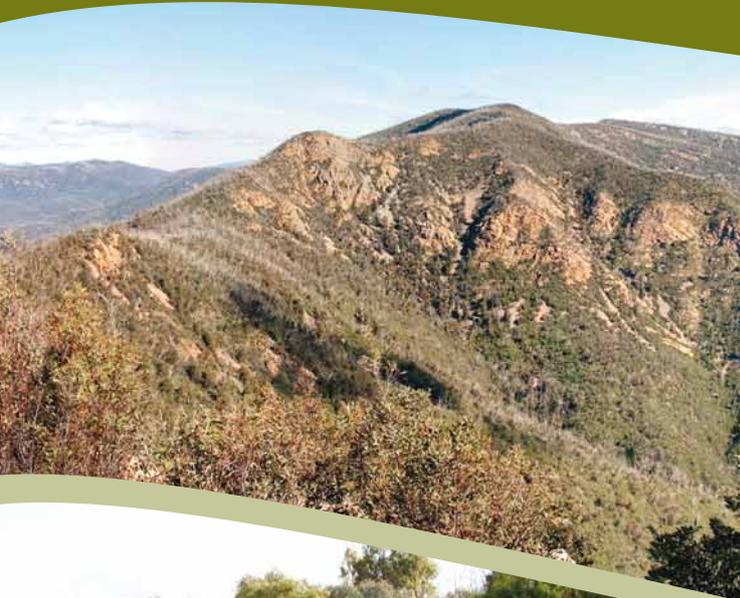


# Tidbinbilla



## Summary of the

# TIDBINBILLA

## PLAN OF MANAGEMENT 2012

Tidbinbilla is located in the foothills of the mountain ranges that dominate the western half of the ACT. It is about 40 km south-west of the Canberra city centre and is adjacent to Namadgi National Park.

Tidbinbilla is a special place, with beautiful mountain ranges, spectacular exposed granite tors, foothill valleys and sheltered streams. It is also a great place to enjoy outdoor activities such as walking, picnicking with family and friends, or viewing native Australian wildlife in a natural setting. As a popular part of the ACT reserve system for more than forty years, it is valued by both Canberra residents and visitors from interstate and overseas.

The Tidbinbilla Valley and surrounding ridges have abundant evidence of traditional Aboriginal occupation back to about approximately 21,000 years ago, and the area continues to hold a great deal of significance for local Aboriginal people. Europeans settled in the Tidbinbilla Valley from the late 1830s and some former residents and descendants of the early pastoralists also hold a close association with the area.

Tidbinbilla plays an important role in research and education activities related to flora and fauna of the area, the wildlife collection, threatened species, and Aboriginal and European occupation.

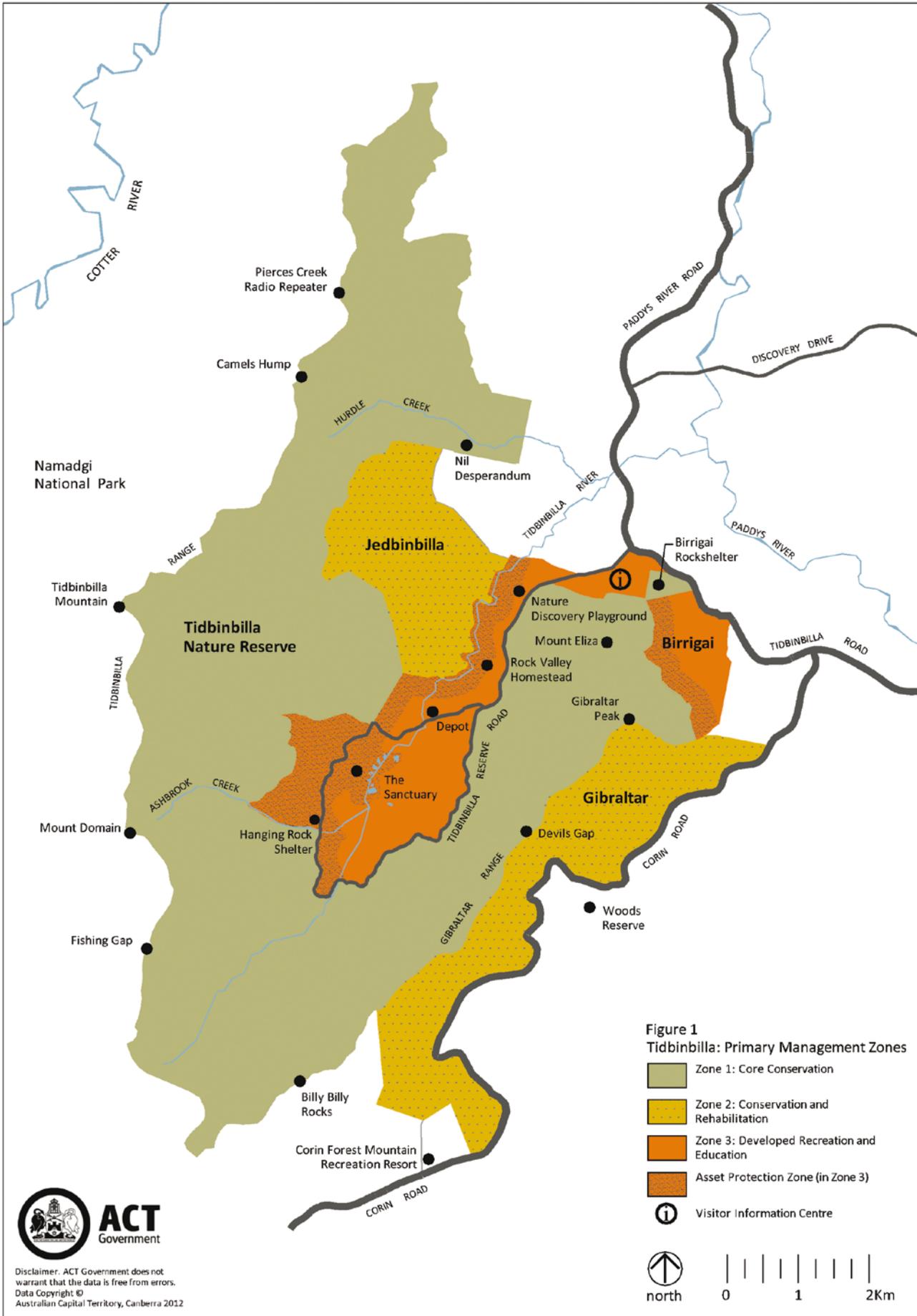
The fascinating cultural heritage, natural surroundings and significant research at Tidbinbilla allow visitors a glimpse into the past and provide many enjoyable recreational and educational opportunities.

Tidbinbilla and the adjacent Namadgi National Park, are two of the eleven parks and reserves which are managed cooperatively as the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves to provide protection for much of the alpine, subalpine and montane environments of mainland Australia. This system of parks and reserves is on the National Heritage List.



**ACT**  
Government

Figure 1. Tidbinbilla: Primary Management Zones



## A Plan of Management for Tidbinbilla

The *Tidbinbilla Plan of Management 2012* identifies the values of the area and how they can be protected and enhanced. The plan provides guidance to the ACT Government's land management agency and informs the ACT community and visitors of the primary objectives for managing the area over the next ten years.

Tidbinbilla is public land reserved under ACT legislation either as National Park, where the emphasis is on conserving the natural environment, or Special Purpose Reserve, where providing for recreation, education and research is also an objective. In the ACT it is a legal requirement to prepare a plan of management for public land.

Tidbinbilla is made up of: Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve; Birrigai at Tidbinbilla (an outdoor school and accommodation facility); and two areas of former pine plantation; Jedbinbilla (previously referred to as Block 60 Paddys River) and the former Gibraltar Creek pine plantation, west of Corin Road. The *Tidbinbilla Plan of Management 2012* replaces the 1999 management plan, which was for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve alone.



## Management Zoning

Zoning is a system of defining areas within a reserve based on the important values to be protected. Three management zones have been defined for the Tidbinbilla precinct. These are broadly graded from Zone 1 Core Conservation, where protecting natural values is a priority, to Zone 3 Developed Recreation and Education, where the primary management focus is on providing for visitors. Zone 2 Conservation and Rehabilitation, encompasses the former pine plantations of Jedbinbilla and Gibraltar Creek where the management focus is on rehabilitation to native forest.

Zoning in Tidbinbilla also specifies the appropriate types and levels of activities and access to the reserve, particularly for recreation, as well as the requirements for facilities and management. Figure 1 shows the primary management zones for Tidbinbilla.

## Involving the Community

Aboriginal people have a great sense of connection to the montane and tableland landscapes of the south-east region, of which Tidbinbilla is part. The Canberra and region community has developed a close relationship with Tidbinbilla and many people participate in volunteer activities, outdoor recreation, and conservation of the cultural heritage and flora and fauna of the area. Groups who are actively involved in Tidbinbilla include Friends of Tidbinbilla, Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association and Conservation Volunteers.

The community has made a significant contribution to the development of a plan of management for Tidbinbilla. The plan aims to continue, support and further develop these relationships.

### SOME OF THE POLICIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Established community groups that contribute to the planning and management of Tidbinbilla will continue to be encouraged and supported.

Other members of the community will be encouraged to become involved in the planning and management of Tidbinbilla.

## Tidbinbilla’s Natural Values

The landscape of Tidbinbilla is varied and spectacular. Diverse vegetation communities range from subalpine snow gum on the exposed windswept ridges, to woodlands, grasslands and shrublands in the valleys. Tall wet forests thrive in the moist sheltered gullies, grass trees add character to open slopes above the valley floor, and the fresh waters of the Tidbinbilla River provide habitat to many aquatic and semi-aquatic species.

The natural environment at Tidbinbilla has changed dramatically as a consequence of the 2003 bushfire and the process of recovery is a long-term and continuing process. The effects of climate change are of great concern in protecting natural values, with the Australian Alps network particularly under threat as global warming is expected to have a significant impact in higher altitude alpine and subalpine areas.

The plan of management places a high priority on protecting Tidbinbilla’s biodiversity, geodiversity, and natural heritage and landscape values.

## Native Plants

An important part of managing Tidbinbilla is to maintain native plant species and communities and ensure that the vegetation, particularly those species which are endangered, are monitored, protected and considered in management activities. Various stages of natural regeneration are seen in the former pine plantations and areas affected by the 2003 fires. Assisting vegetation rehabilitation involves significant management input, such as controlling weeds and soil erosion, and limiting recreational activities when needed.

### SOME OF THE NATIVE VEGETATION POLICIES

Information about the vegetation of Tidbinbilla will be collected in a systematic manner and will inform management programs.

Vegetation that is regionally significant in terms of conservation status, sensitivity to environmental change, ecological role (e.g. habitat), or representativeness will be given conservation priority.

## Native Animals

The diverse geology and vegetation communities at Tidbinbilla provide different types of habitat for a variety of species including 160 birds, 30 reptiles, 34 mammals and a native fish. Some species found at Tidbinbilla, such as the yellow-bellied glider, spotted-tailed quoll and varied sittella, are listed as threatened in the ACT. Emus, once common in the ACT region, were reintroduced to Tidbinbilla in the 1960s and the koala population, maintained in a natural enclosure, has been a popular attraction from the early days of the reserve.

Protection of the native fauna was an important rationale for the establishment of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve in the early 1960s and remains a central aspect of the biodiversity conservation role of the area. As such, it is important that native animal species and their habitat are protected.

### SOME OF THE NATIVE ANIMAL POLICIES

An animal survey and monitoring program will be maintained as part of an ACT-wide biodiversity monitoring program.

Management priority will be given to those species that are threatened, uncommon, vulnerable to disturbance or environmental change, or are of regional significance.

Kangaroo management, including population control, will be guided by the principles and policies of the ACT Kangaroo Management Plan.



## Pest Plants and Animals

As well as looking after the native plants and animals, control of pest plants and pest animals is an important management task. For example, the former pine plantations of Jedbinbilla and Gibraltar Creek are now regenerating to native vegetation and pine regrowth is being removed. Animals such as rabbits, foxes, wild dogs, and more recently, the European wasp, can have harmful impacts on the biodiversity, habitat, water quality, recreational and scenic quality of Tidbinbilla, as well as the productivity of adjacent rural lands.

### SOME OF THE PEST PLANTS AND PEST ANIMAL POLICIES

Integrated programs of pest plant and pest animal management will be undertaken at Tidbinbilla consistent with the ACT Weeds Strategy and ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy, including cooperation with adjacent land managers and evaluation of the effectiveness of previous programs.

Priorities for pest animal control will be guided by management objectives for, and pest animal impacts on: landscape; cultural heritage and biodiversity conservation; ecological restoration; and public safety.

## The Human History

Tidbinbilla has important Aboriginal cultural heritage values and ongoing significance as the Country of the Ngunnawal people. Aboriginal use of the Birrigai rock shelter has been dated to approximately 21,000 years ago showing that Aboriginal people occupied the area during the last glacial maximum, when the tablelands would have been an inhospitable, sparsely populated landscape.

The Tidbinbilla Valley has a history of European settlement dating from the 1830s. Farming and grazing and eucalyptus oil distilling were carried out until land was resumed in 1962 for the reserve. Much of the record of this human past has been lost over time. However, significant elements, such as the former Nil Desperandum residence and Rock Valley homestead remain.

### SOME OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE POLICES IN THE PLAN

The Ngunnawal community and other Aboriginal groups in the region will be consulted regarding any proposed management actions that have the potential to impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage values at Tidbinbilla.

Interpretation of Aboriginal cultural heritage at Tidbinbilla will be undertaken by Ngunnawal people.

Research into European cultural heritage at Tidbinbilla will be encouraged and supported.

Community attachment to the Tidbinbilla area, including significant European cultural heritage places, will be recognised and the community will be encouraged to participate in heritage management and interpretation.

## Education at Tidbinbilla

Environmental education is an established part of the programs at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Education and interpretation have a strong focus in the wildlife precinct and material is provided throughout the reserve to guide and inform visitors. Community groups also have an important role e.g. Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association with a focus on European settlement in the area, and Friends of Tidbinbilla with programs such as Frogwatch.

Birrigai at Tidbinbilla has operated for 30 years providing programs for school students in outdoor education, environmental education and heritage studies. While Birrigai will remain primarily an educational centre serving schools, the potential is recognised to further develop the use of the facility by non-school groups.

### SOME OF THE EDUCATION POLICES

Education programs and materials at Tidbinbilla aim to improve knowledge and understanding of the environment, environmental issues and appropriate ways to use and relate to the environment.

Opportunities will be taken to integrate the outdoor education, environmental education and heritage studies programs that are organised by Birrigai at Tidbinbilla into the education programs for Tidbinbilla as a whole.

## Research and Monitoring at Tidbinbilla

An important ongoing role for Tidbinbilla is to facilitate research into the conservation biology of threatened species. The captive wildlife collection and captive breeding programs are distinctive and well-known features of Tidbinbilla. There has also been significant archaeological and historical survey and research work at Tidbinbilla and there is potential for further research in a range of environmental, educational and social disciplines.

### **SOME OF THE RESEARCH AND MONITORING POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

Priority for the wildlife collection will be given to threatened species that have a natural range within, or migration corridors across, the South Eastern Highlands and/or Australian Alps bioregions.

The general captive display in the wildlife collection will primarily focus on environmental education; introducing visitors to animals that occur in the ACT region and that they are unlikely to see otherwise; and educating them about the animals that are more commonly seen.

Pursue opportunities for collaborative research with Australian Alps national parks agencies, research institutions, other government agencies and community groups.

Facilitate and support research into the natural and cultural values of Tidbinbilla.



## Recreation at Tidbinbilla

Tidbinbilla is popular for outdoor recreation and social gatherings and significant investment in visitor facilities has been undertaken since the 2003 bushfire. The main attractions are the wildlife enclosures, the Sanctuary wetlands, the Nature Discovery Playground, barbecue and picnic facilities and Aboriginal and European cultural heritage places, all in a natural bushland setting.

It is intended to further promote and develop the tourism potential of Tidbinbilla taking account of the other objectives and policies in the plan of management relating to natural and cultural values.

A range of recreation opportunities will be provided in Tidbinbilla that accord with its natural setting, its quiet and peaceful atmosphere, its education role, and the protection of its significant natural and cultural heritage values. Bushwalking remains one of the most popular activities.

Recreational activities permitted in each management zone are shown in Table. 1.

### **SOME OF THE RECREATION POLICIES**

The promotion of Tidbinbilla as a nature based tourism destination will be enhanced in tourism marketing for the ACT.

Suitable measures will be put in place to avoid or minimise potential visitor impacts and to address those already occurring.

A commercial tour operator will be required to prepare an environmental management plan for a proposed operation at Tidbinbilla. The content of such a plan will depend upon the type of operation and its potential environmental and social impact.



## Overnight Stays

Although Tidbinbilla has always operated as a day-use area, the plan of management provides for a range of low key accommodation options to be considered for the Tidbinbilla Valley. Nil Desperandum house will be made available for short term hire.

Birrigai at Tidbinbilla provides accommodation for schools and other organisations, with dormitory and unit accommodation for up to 198 people. There is the opportunity for Birrigai at Tidbinbilla to further develop and market its accommodation facilities. There is also the opportunity for tent camping in association with outdoor/education programs.



## Planning, Protection and Management of the Environment at Tidbinbilla

The plan of management contains detail on how the environmental quality of Tidbinbilla will be maintained. This includes fire management, assessing the environmental impacts of any new developments, protecting water quality, and reducing water and energy use. Requirements for environmental assessment of proposed works or developments in the ACT are contained in the *Planning and Development Act 2007*.

### SOME ACCOMMODATION POLICIES

The opportunities for accommodation in Birrigai at Tidbinbilla will be investigated, developed and marketed.

Nil Desperandum house will be made available for short term hire according to a hiring policy and conditions. There will also be provision for limited tent camping in association with the hire.

A range of low key accommodation options will be considered for the Tidbinbilla Valley (Special Purpose Reserve - Zone 3) in association with exploration of further tourism opportunities for Tidbinbilla.

Specific proposals for the development of new facilities for overnight stays would be subject to environmental impact assessment, and an analysis of their likely viability.

### SOME OF THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION POLICIES

#### *Fire*

The Tidbinbilla Regional Fire Management Plan (2009-2019) provides the basis for the management of bushfire risk at Tidbinbilla.

Prescribed burning is to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Environment Protection Act 1997*.

#### *Environmental Impact Assessment*

Appropriate levels of environmental assessment will be undertaken for works planned for the reserve.

For minor works that do not trigger legislative requirements, an environmental assessment is to be conducted and appropriate management, preventative and remediation requirements established as part of the planning, design and carrying out of the works.



**Table 1. General policies for recreational activities and permitted/prohibited activities in the Tidbinbilla management zones**

Recreational Activity and Policy	Zone 1: Core Conservation	Zone 2: Conservation & Rehabilitation	Zone 3: Developed Recreation & Education
			
<b>Permitted Activities</b>			
<b>Walking</b> Tidbinbilla is available for day walks only (no overnight bush camping). Walking is encouraged on designated walking tracks and management trails.	Mainly longer or more strenuous day walks, including those for more self reliant bush walkers.	Walks to be investigated and developed.	Short family oriented walks, also suited to school children. Some suitable for use with strollers or wheel chairs.
<b>Cycling (including mountain bike riding)</b> Cycling will be permitted on formed vehicle roads, management trails and designated cycle paths, including multiuse paths (i.e. no off-road or walking track riding).	All management trails.	All management trails.	Public roads, management trails, designated cycle paths.
<b>Picnicking (including use of barbecue facilities)</b> Picnicking is a very popular recreational activity at Tidbinbilla and will be supported by the provision of suitable facilities (Zone 3).	Permitted. Few facilities and no general vehicle access.	Permitted. Few facilities and no general vehicle access.	Main area for picnics with seating, tables, barbecues, toilets and some shelter provided.
<b>Fires (lighting of fires)</b>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Only in wood barbecues.
<b>Scenic Driving/Sightseeing (2wd)</b> This is confined to the sealed 2wd circuit at the head of the Tidbinbilla Valley passing the Sanctuary. There is a lookout on the southern side of this loop.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	On public roads.
<b>Rock Climbing and Abseiling</b> There is a low level of rock climbing and abseiling use (Gibraltar Rocks, Birrigai).	Permitted (except for significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites).	Not permitted in Jedbinbilla.	Permitted under supervision by qualified staff at Birrigai.
<b>Flying - non-powered (e.g. hang gliding, paragliding, balloon flying)</b> Tidbinbilla lacks suitable sites for hang gliding and paragliding. Hot air balloons may be associated with special events.	Management permission required.	Management permission required.	Management permission required.

Recreational Activity and Policy	Zone 1: Core Conservation	Zone 2: Conservation & Rehabilitation	Zone 3: Developed Recreation & Education
			
<p><b>Nature Based Activities including Wildlife Viewing and Bird Watching</b> These activities will be encouraged and supported.</p>	Permitted.	Permitted.	Permitted.
<p><b>Visiting Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites</b> Encouraged and appropriate facilities, interpretation and site protection will be provided.</p>	Facilities and interpretation limited or not provided. Protection measures, if necessary.	Facilities (e.g. walks) and interpretation to be investigated and may be developed. Protection measures, if necessary.	Facilities (e.g. car parks, walkways, boardwalks), interpretation, and protective measures provided.
<p><b>Geocaching</b> Geocaching is permitted with conditions.</p>	Not permitted.	Conditional (no digging, burying, use of rock shelters, or leaving objects).	Conditional (no digging, burying, use of rock shelters, or leaving objects).
<p><b>Orienteering, Rogaining, Mountain Running</b> These events may involve a large number of participants. A small number of events are conducted each year at Tidbinbilla and require a permit.</p>	Permitted. Conditional.	Permitted. Conditional.	Permitted. Conditional.
<p><b>Non-commercial Group Activities (e.g. bush walking clubs, social clubs, tour groups, conference groups, family and other groups)</b> Group activities that are in accordance with the management objectives for Tidbinbilla will continue to be supported.</p>	Permitted. Mainly bush walking.	Permitted.	Permitted. Birrigai at Tidbinbilla has conference facilities.
<p><b>Special Events</b> Special events encompass a range of activities such as weddings, ceremonies, concerts, Aboriginal cultural events and other public gatherings.</p>	Not generally permitted (except orienteering, rogaining, mountain running above). Aboriginal cultural events subject to negotiation and protocols.	Not generally permitted (except orienteering, rogaining, mountain running above). Aboriginal cultural events subject to negotiation and protocols.	Permitted. The preferred location for events.

Recreational Activity and Policy	Zone 1: Core Conservation	Zone 2: Conservation & Rehabilitation	Zone 3: Developed Recreation & Education
			
<p><b>Commercial Recreation/Tourism Activities</b> Commercial activities are those undertaken by organisations, businesses or individuals that charge a fee for services or products. A permit is required.</p>	Permitted. Conditional and permit/licence required.	Permitted. Conditional and permit/licence required.	Permitted. Conditional and permit/licence required.
<p><b>Public Vehicle Use on Management Trails (trail bikes, 2wd and 4wd vehicles, other powered vehicles)</b> Only for management and other approved purposes. Public vehicles are normally only permitted on the public road network in Tidbinbilla.</p>	Not generally permitted. May be permitted for specific authorised purposes (no trail bikes).	Not generally permitted. May be permitted for specific authorised purposes (no trail bikes) and access to Nil Desperandum.	Public vehicles on public road network only.
<p><b>Car Camping</b> Car based camping is generally not permitted in the precinct. It may be permitted in association with the hire of Nil Desperandum (Zone 1) and in Zone 3 subject to the objectives and policies in this plan.</p>	Not generally permitted. May be permitted in association with the hire of Nil Desperandum	Not permitted	May be permitted subject to the objectives and policies in this plan. Permit required.
<b>Prohibited Activities</b>			
<p><b>Pack Camping</b> Pack camping (overnight bushwalking) is not permitted in the precinct.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
<p><b>Car Rallies (using management trails)</b> Car rallies using management trails do not accord with the management objectives for Tidbinbilla and will not be permitted.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
<p><b>Fishing</b> The Tidbinbilla River is a Closed Water under the <i>Fisheries Act 2000</i> and fishing is not permitted. Yabbying is not permitted in dams or impounded waters in the precinct except as part of an approved educational activity.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
<p><b>Boating, Canoeing, Rafting</b> The Tidbinbilla River is not a suitable stream for such activities. Use of water craft for recreational purposes is not permitted on other water bodies in the precinct such as dams or impounded waters.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.

Recreational Activity and Policy	Zone 1: Core Conservation	Zone 2: Conservation & Rehabilitation	Zone 3: Developed Recreation & Education
<p><b>Hunting</b> Hunting is not permitted. Under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i>, the taking of animals or use of a firearm or other hunting weapon is not allowed in reserve areas.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
<p><b>Bringing Pets</b> Pets (e.g. dogs and cats) are not permitted in the precinct. Guide dogs are permitted.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
<p><b>Horse Riding</b> Horse riding is not permitted in the precinct.</p>	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
<p><b>Flying (powered, low altitude e.g.ultralights)</b> Ultralight aircraft are not permitted to land or take off in the precinct except in an emergency.</p>	Emergency only.	Emergency only.	Emergency only.





## Further Information

The information in this summary of the *Tidbinbilla Plan of Management 2012* is intended as a brief overview. For more comprehensive information, including details of the activities allowed at Tidbinbilla, please refer to the full plan of management.

Copies of the plan and other information on Tidbinbilla are available from the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate.

Enquiries: Canberra Connect on 13 2281

Website: [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au)

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