



**ACT**  
Government



**NATIONAL  
ARBORETUM  
CANBERRA**

# **NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA**

## **Public Use Policy**

Liz Clarke  
Director, Venues Canberra

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The National Arboretum Canberra surrounds visitors with panoramic views, stunning architecture and the natural beauty of trees and gardens. It is home to a living collection of 94 forests of rare, endangered and symbolic trees from Australia and around the world, growing across the 250 hectare site, only 6 kilometres from the centre of Canberra.

The Village Centre, houses a cafe and restaurant, gift shop, information displays, information desk, visitor facilities, meeting room, the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection and the Terrace Room for meetings, educational activities and workshops as well as children's parties.

The Margaret Whitlam Pavilion serves as a unique and exclusive intimate venue for private functions and public events.

Outdoors, the National Arboretum Canberra features the Pod Playground, a unique nature-themed facility for children, Canberra Discovery Garden, Amphitheatre, Events Terrace, Gallery of Gardens, picnic areas, scenic lookouts, outdoor sculptures, recreational trails, the Centenary Trail and the Bicentennial National Trail.

The Arboretum has been created by the ACT Government with the support of many individuals and organisations for the purpose of conservation, education, recreation and research.

The Arboretum is part of Venues Canberra, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate of the ACT Government.

The visitor experience, including public events, is enhanced through a vibrant volunteer program spearheaded by members of the Friends of the Arboretum ([www.arboretumcanberra.org.au](http://www.arboretumcanberra.org.au)) who provide trained volunteers to assist with guided talks, walks, bus tours, special events and openings and the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection. The Friends also assist with a range of other community activities and events, as well as providing volunteers for working bees and forest research activities.

The Arboretum has a Foundation Membership Program and a range of corporate and individual sponsors and supporters.

A Board of Ambassadors is currently under proposal to undertake fundraising activities and seek in-kind contributions from the Canberra, wider Australian and international communities, including corporate entities to benefit and improve the facilities, research and programs available at the National Arboretum Canberra.

A number of committees and consultative groups have been established to provide strategic advice on the long-term development of the National Arboretum Canberra, including but not limited to:

- The Forest Management Advisory Group (FMAG)
- The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia Collection Advisory Committee (CAC)
- The Research Coordination Committee (RCC)

The Arboretum engages regularly with its partners including the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra, the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park, Ginger Catering, The Curatoreum and the Australian National University.

Venue hire, private functions and booked events are managed by the contracted catering company Ginger Catering, who also run the Sprout Cafe and Conservatory Restaurant in the Village Centre.

Functions and events take place in the Village Centre and the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion and on outdoor sites such as the Amphitheatre, Events Terrace, Dairy Farmers Hill lookout and in designated forests.

## SCOPE

This document outlines the operational policy applying at the Arboretum in regard to access, public safety, public convenience, public orientation and the engagement in recreational activities. In principal, the policy also applies to the undertaking of private functions, public events and other events. This policy is consistent with ACT Government policies where applicable.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide for public access to the Arboretum;
- Outline the available public convenience facilities and services;
- Define conditions of use of sites and venues;
- Define which public activities are encouraged in the Arboretum and which are not permitted; and
- Outline public safety measures and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all visitors, event and function organisers, guests and staff.

## OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES

The grounds of the Arboretum including the Pod Playground are open every day of the year. Parts of the site, or the entire Arboretum, may be closed on days of high fire danger for reasons of public safety. Limitations to access to parts of the site may occur on rare occasions during the year to accommodate special functions or events.

Access to the grounds after opening hours by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians is permitted on Forest Drive, unsealed roads and fire trails and recreational trails in accordance with relevant provision in this policy and at users' own risk.

### Front gate opening and closing times

Daylight Savings Time: 6.00am – 8.30pm daily

Eastern Standard Time: 7.00am – 5.30pm daily

These arrangements are similar to those applying in town and district parks and bushland reserves across Canberra. Special after-hours arrangements may be made for functions and events.

Special gate opening or let-outs attract a service fee as advertised in the Arboretum's fees and charges.

### Village Centre

The Village Centre is open daily for general public access between 9am to 4pm except on Christmas Day and on selected special occasions. Closures will be notified in advance on the website at [www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au)

The Village Centre incorporates the Sprout Cafe, Conservatory Restaurant and The Curatoreum gift shop. The restaurant is open weekends from 8am for breakfast (except public holidays). Bookings for the cafe and restaurant may be directed to Ginger Catering on 02 6273 4366. Enquiries to The Curatoreum may be directed to 02 6251 3371.

Please note only food and Beverages purchased from Ginger Catering can be consumed in the Village Centre.

The Bonsai and Penjing Collection operates the same hours as the Village Centre.

## Disability Access

Mobility disability access is provided at the following facilities and locations:

- Twelve dedicated disability parking spaces are available on the top tier of the main car park. All vehicles displaying a valid Australian disability pass are entitled to free parking in these and in any other available car park space;
- Smooth pathway access is available from the main car park to the Village Centre main entrance, the north and south side decks, around the access road to and from the Pod Playground and between the Village Centre and Margaret Whitlam Pavilion;
- The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection Pavilion;
- The Margaret Whitlam Pavilion;
- Dairy Farmers Hill car park to Dairy Farmers Hill lookout;
- The Himalayan cedars forest car park to the picnic and BBQ area;
- The Canberra Discovery Garden - access via the south deck at the Village Centre and
- The Gallery of Gardens - access via the south deck at the Village Centre.

Three wheelchairs are available for loan from the Village Centre whilst visiting the Arboretum and may be booked in advance.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND SITE AMENITY

Visitors undertaking walking or other active outdoor activities are advised to wear sturdy footwear, protective clothing, carry water and use hats and sunscreen. It should be noted that most roads and trails are gravel or dirt. Marked trails are available only in the northern parts of the Arboretum including around the Village Centre, Dairy Farmers Hill, STEP forest, Himalayan cedars and the Cork oak forests.

### Children and Hazards

Parents are advised to supervise children at all times. The site has many hidden hazards and may have areas closed due to maintenance or construction.

The Pod Playground is a popular attraction for families but requires special diligence by parents and has specific rules for access - rules can be found on signage at the entrance to the playground.

Visitors are advised to be alert to snakes, biting insects, swooping birds and exposure to the elements.

Please report any hazards to onsite staff or call Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

### Smoking

A general No Smoking policy applies throughout the entire Arboretum site; including forests and venues. This also applies to all guests attending private functions and public events at the Arboretum.

### Security

Security patrols the site prior to closing to ensure nobody is locked in when the front gates are closed. Signage is posted at the front gate advising any member of the public locked in to call Access Canberra for

assistance. Fees apply for gate opening. Random security patrols are conducted during the day and at night.

Security CCTV cameras are located in and around the Village Centre and Margaret Whitlam Pavilion. There are cameras located in the main car park, and front entrance gate, however visitors are advised not to leave valuables or attractive articles in view in parked vehicles.

Any incidents should be reported to the Arboretum ON CALL officer 0481 003 666 as well as the ACT Police.

## **First aid and emergency services**

A First Aid room is available at the Village Centre. Designated staff trained in the application of first aid are available between 9am – 4pm, during special public events and during private functions after hours. Otherwise, visitors and guests are to take personal responsibility and call 000 in the event of an emergency.

## **Vehicle speed limits**

All roads have a maximum speed limit of 40km/hr. A speed limit of 10km/hr applies to service roads, car parks, the Events Terrace, the Amphitheatre Zone and shared paths.

## **Use of portable BBQs in forests and picnic facilities**

Due to the fire risk, portable BBQs are not permitted. A public and free of charge electric BBQ is available at the Himalayan cedar Forest picnic area.

## **Alcohol Consumption**

Alcohol should be consumed in a responsible manner. Anyone consuming alcohol at the Arboretum is subject to all Australian Capital Territory laws governing alcohol consumption.

## **Fire and emergency procedures**

The Arboretum has an Emergency Procedures Manual to manage fire and other emergencies including evacuations. These procedures are ready for implementation should the occasion arise. Fire wardens will manage evacuations from onsite venues and facilities. Marshalling areas are identified for fire evacuation from all buildings and appropriate signage is installed.

Response and actions on days of a total fire ban will be as per the details outlined in the Emergency Procedures Manual. The entire Arboretum site will be partially closed on days when the Emergency Services Authority declare a total fire ban with a fire danger rating of Severe, and completely closed when the Emergency Services Authority declare a total fire ban with a fire danger rating of Catastrophic. All on-site personnel and members of the public must follow the instruction of authorised personnel.

Lighting of fires and naked flames are not permitted in the Arboretum except with written permission from the Arboretum's Executive Manager. Exceptions may be considered for special functions and events where a full risk assessment and plan has been undertaken and approved by the Arboretum's Executive Manager.

# **PUBLIC CONVENIENCE**

## **Vehicle access and parking**

All vehicles must remain on designated roads and accessible dirt or gravel tracks and not roads that are gated or signposted as "No Public Access" or "Authorised access only". Vehicles are not permitted to enter forests, allies or other grassed areas unless approved for special events.

The main car park is to be used for all general parking. There are 12 designated free disability parking spaces and separate designated space for motorcycles available on the top tier nearest the Village Centre entrance. There are 254 designated paid parking spaces which require payment for parking between 9am

and 4pm, 7 days a week. Parking rates are specified in the fees and charges schedule on the Arboretum website. In 2017, rates are \$2.10 per hour to a maximum of \$7.80 per day.

Paid parking may be completed using a phone app., a credit card or coins. There are five parking machines which are checked regularly. Proceeds of all parking fees are returned to the Arboretum. Parking inspectors patrol the area and will issue infringement notices as required.

If the main car park is full, the overflow car park may be opened by staff for general use. No payment applies for overflow parking. In all other instances only vehicles with authorised parking stickers displayed may park in the overflow car park including staff and volunteers working in the Village Centre.

Limited free car parking is also available at Himalayan cedars forest-20 spaces and Dairy Farmers Hill- 30 spaces including 1 disability space.

Guest parking for functions held at the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion is limited to 36 spaces including disability parking. This parking area is reserved for Pavilion function guests only.

### **Buses and coaches**

ACTION buses on route 81 on weekdays and 981 on weekends stop at the Arboretum five times per day.

The service runs every 90 minutes and starts its journey at the City Bus Station, continuing to the National Zoo and Aquarium, the National Arboretum Canberra, Black Mountain Tower, the Australian National Botanic Gardens and back to the City Bus Station.

Tourist and chartered coaches entering the Arboretum may do so via Lady Denman Drive or Tuggeranong Parkway, and then take Forest Drive to the Village Centre and exit via Dairy Farmers Hill. This route offers passengers a view of many of the Arboretum's forests.

Free bus and coach parking is available on the top tier of the main car park only. No more than one bus or coach may stop at Dairy Farmers Hill and at the Himalayan cedars car park at one time. Access to Cork oak Road is limited to mini buses and not suitable for larger buses and coaches.

### **Taxi**

Taxi pick up/drop off is located at the 'Drop Off' zone on the top tier of the main car park.

### **Public orientation**

Maps are available at the Village Centre with orientation signage throughout the site. All publications are available for downloading from the Arboretum website. The main orientation sign is erected at the front entry gate, with smaller signs at entry points on River Road, and the Cork oak entry gate near William Hovell Drive.

### **Night lighting**

Night lighting is provided around the Village Centre, main Events Terrace and in the main car park. This is consistent with the standard provided in Canberra's town and district parks and public buildings.

Limited lighting is available for guests accessing the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion.

### **Rubbish bins**

Limited rubbish and recycling bins are provided at the Village Centre and none are provided across the rest of the site. Visitors are encouraged to take their waste home for recycling, consistent with the policy across Canberra's urban parks, open space areas and reserves.

### **Public telephone – free public Wi-Fi**

Public telephone facilities are not provided at the Arboretum. Free access to Wi-Fi is available within the Village Centre, the Terrace Room and the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion.

## Lost and found property

Lost and found enquiries are managed by staff at the Information Desk in the Village Centre.  
Phone: 02 6207 8484 or email: [arboretum@act.gov.au](mailto:arboretum@act.gov.au)

# PLANT AND MATERIAL COLLECTION

Collecting of any plant material is strictly restricted to authorised persons and is guided by the Living Collections and Collection and Harvesting policy.

Collection and removal from site of any other materials, infrastructure such as signs, posts, and irrigation materials is not permitted.

The disposal of any materials onto the site is also not permitted except as included in an approved works plan or as included in site management operations.

Removal of living creatures including mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, and freshwater crustaceans is also strictly not permitted except by prior written agreement.

# PUBLIC RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

## Driving

The main Forest Drive Loop provides panoramic views and access to the main focal points of the Arboretum. Limited stopping bays are provided so drivers must take care when sightseeing. Future public vehicle access to more remote parts of the Arboretum such as via River Road will be provided when conditions allow.

## Walking

Walking visitors are encouraged to explore the forests and landscapes of the Arboretum. There is a network of marked trails. Visitors are permitted to walk anywhere on the site including through forests. Please use the Arboretum brochure and map for orientation. Trails are available on the STEP circuit, Himalayan cedars trail, Cork oak trail and the Dairy Farmers Hill circuit. These trails are shared use and available to walkers, runners and cyclists. The Centenary Trail and Bicentennial National Trail traverse the Arboretum.

Cyclists are required to give way to horses, walkers and joggers. Walkers are required to give way to horses.

Guided walks are available and are best booked in advance. Phone: 02 6207 8484 or email: [arboretum@act.gov.au](mailto:arboretum@act.gov.au)

## Cycling

Cycling is permitted on all roads and trails. Road cycling is a popular activity, taking in the Forest Drive loop road. Cyclists should exercise special caution at road junctions, car park exits and on steep gradients. Cyclists are required to give way to horses, walkers, joggers and abide to the 40km speed limit.

Mountain bikes are also popular with the Arboretum forming a connection between Stromlo Forest Park and Black Mountain/north Canberra. Mountain bikes are permitted on bike trails and existing tracks. The ACT Centenary Trail passes through the site taking walkers and cyclists through many of the Arboretum's forests.

There are a small number of bike racks located on the North Deck of the Village Centre, near the Pod Playground. Bikes may be parked on the north or south deck provided they do not present a safety hazard.

Bicycles are not permitted within the Pod Playground and must be left parked outside the area.

Organised cycling events must apply for approval from the Arboretum. Any enquiries phone 02 6205 8484 or email: [arboretum@act.gov.au](mailto:arboretum@act.gov.au)

### **Equestrians and horses**

The Arboretum welcomes recreational horse riding and provides a purpose-built horse yard, water trough and mounting block in Forest 13, close to the Village Centre. Please refer to the map of recommended routes for equestrians, available at [www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au)

Note: these routes were determined in conjunction with the ACT Equestrian Association.

Equestrians should exercise special caution at road junctions, car park entrances and exits and on steep gradients. Cyclists are required to give way to horses, walkers and joggers.

### **Horse riding is permitted**

- on all unsealed roads (fire trails) throughout the Arboretum;
- on the wide, cleared alleys between each forest;
- along the marked Bicentennial National Trail.

### **Horse riding is NOT permitted**

- on the sealed roads throughout the Arboretum, except to cross the road when necessary;
- on other trails, pathways or lawns, including the Events Terrace, Amphitheatre and the Ceremonial Pathway (also known as the zig zag path) in Central Valley;
- within any of the forests or gardens (except forests along the Bicentennial National Trail).

### **Horse holding yard**

A purpose-built horse holding yard, water trough and mounting block are located in Forest 13, close to the Village Centre. The large holding yard ensures that horses are kept separate from passing visitors. This means riders can take a break, relax and enjoy the great surroundings on offer at the Arboretum.

The yard enables riders visiting the Arboretum to secure their horses and collect refreshments from the Sprout Cafe or visit the Village Centre. However, the Arboretum requires that at least one responsible adult stay with the horse(s) at all times.

Signage has been installed at the yard to inform riders and pedestrians about horse etiquette, safety and rider obligations.

### **Drinking water for horses is available at**

- the water trough in the horse yard in Forest 13, close to the Village Centre;
- the front dam near the main entrance to the Arboretum, near Forest 27;
- the 'farm dam' in Forest 2 near the northern entrance/exit to the Arboretum;
- the 'western dam' in forest 36 (sides are fairly steep).

**NOTE:** The 'southern dam' in Forest 91, near the entrance/exit to the Arboretum from Equestrian Park **IS NOT** recommended for horses because of the rocky sides.

### **Horse tethering**

Horses are to be tethered within the horse yard only, in Forest 13, across Forest Drive from the Village Centre. Horses may **not** be tethered to trees.

## Horse floats

Horse floats may NOT be unloaded within the Arboretum grounds unless as part of an approved event or function. Enquiries to [arboretum@act.gov.au](mailto:arboretum@act.gov.au)

## Fishing

Fishing and associated activities are not permitted in any of the dams and waterways of the Arboretum.

## Drones, UAVs and RPA

In the interests of public safety, the use of drones, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and RPA (Remotely Piloted Aircraft) within the Arboretum is **prohibited** unless the pilot has prior approval from Arboretum management. Phone: 02 6207 8484 or email: [arboretum@act.gov.au](mailto:arboretum@act.gov.au)

All Drone, UAV and RPA operators must also adhere to the legal and safety requirements of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Privacy legislation.

This applies to Included and Excluded RPAS and their pilots irrespective of the intent of the flight, whether for recreational or commercial purposes.

## Photography and filming

Photography and filming are free unless part of a pre-negotiated commercial arrangement or where specific areas are required for use. Please note drones are not allowed onsite, unless prior written approval is granted by the National Arboretum Canberra management. Visitors are encouraged to post and share photographs of sufficient quality via Twitter or Facebook.

## Helicopters

Helicopters may not land or take off from the Arboretum unless prior approval has been sought and granted by Arboretum management.

## Other aerial activities

Hot air balloons, hang gliders, paragliders and motorised gliders may not be launched from the Arboretum but may fly over, subject to aviation laws and provided they do not cause a nuisance to Arboretum visitors. Landings by hot air balloons, hang gliders, paragliders and motorised gliders are not permitted unless absolutely necessary and only in designated safe areas well clear of planted forests and gardens. Designated areas include the Overflow car park, Forest 69 and Forest 94. Other areas such as unplanted areas, allees, unsealed roads and car parks should be avoided.

Any damage caused by balloon/helicopter/glider landings or balloon/glider retrieval must be reported to the Arboretum by the pilot within 24 hours. Damages costs will be sought by Arboretum management. Arboretum ON CALL phone number is 0481 003 666.

## **Drones – may be permitted to be flown subject to written application and approval where the pilot can show evidence of a CASA licence. Picnic and BBQ**

Free electric barbecues and picnic tables are available at the Himalayan cedars picnic area. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own picnic and may use any forest area for this purpose. Due to the fire risk, portable BBQs are not permitted. Lighting of fires and naked flames are not permitted in the Arboretum except with written permission from the Arboretum's Executive Manager. Exceptions may be considered for special functions and events where a full risk assessment and plan has been undertaken and approved by the Arboretum's Executive Manager.

## Skateboards

Use of skateboards, scooters and rollerblades is not permitted in any public areas.

## Ball sports

Ball sport games or other related activities such as frisbee throwing are discouraged near young forests to avoid possible damage and are not allowed within the Pod Playground.

## Boot camps, exercise and yoga classes

Boot camps and other similar fitness or recreation activities are permitted but must be booked. A hiring fee applies. This is consistent with current policy applying to holding such activities on ACT sportsgrounds. Phone: 02 6207 8484 or email: [arboretum@act.gov.au](mailto:arboretum@act.gov.au)

## Dogs

Dogs on leads are permitted in the Arboretum during normal opening hours. Dogs are not allowed in buildings and the Pod Playground, other than assistance animals carrying a registered permit.

Dog owners are expected to carry bags to clean up after their dogs. No disposal bins or bag dispensers are provided.

## VENUES AND FACILITIES

### Village Centre and Events Terrace

Visitors can wander freely through the architecturally stunning Village Centre with its sweeping views across Canberra. The space is available as a function venue after hours for up to 900 guests. The Green Room (capacity 40 seated) and the Terrace Room (capacity 40 seated) are both available to hire for meetings, celebrations and other events.

To the south, the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection hosts Australia's most significant collection of bonsai and penjing art. Volunteer guides are available to interpret the living art on display.

Outside, the Amphitheatre and Events Terrace provide a space for large functions, events and community recreation. The Canberra Discovery Garden showcases water-wise gardening and landscaping design. There is also a drinking fountain. Four of the seven gardens in the Gallery of Gardens are open to visitors while three gardens are being further developed. This includes the OGA Celebration Garden; The Labyrinth Garden; the AIDS Garden of Reflection and the Mununja the Butterfly Garden.

### Margaret Whitlam Pavilion

The Margaret Whitlam Pavilion is booked through Ginger Catering for private and public functions and events including weddings, funerals and memorial services, planning days, product launches, concerts and performances among other activities. The capacity for this space varies depending on set-up requirements to a maximum of 138 persons – including any staff required.

It is accessed from the south off Forest Drive and has limited, up to 35 car parking spaces including 4 disability spaces. Alternatively guests may walk from the main car park and around the Event Terrace.

### Pod Playground

The Pod Playground is a unique feature at the Arboretum and is designed for active and engaging play for children up to approximately 14 years of age. Parents must supervise children at all times.

Pod Playground provides toilet facilities and a drinking fountain.

Access restrictions include no glass, no balls, no bicycles, no animals. All users are requested to respect the plantings and landscape within the playground.

## USE OF THE ARBORETUM FOR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNCTIONS, EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Village Centre and Margaret Whitlam Pavilion and many outdoor areas are available for private functions and events. Enquiries and bookings can be directed through the venue booking agent Ginger Catering on 02 6273 4366 or email; [info@gingercatering.com.au](mailto:info@gingercatering.com.au)

Ginger Catering are also the contracted caterers for the main venues and have first right of refusal for any catering needs. Only food products purchased from Ginger Catering can be consumed within the Village Centre.

All organised public and private events and activities conducted at the Arboretum require approval. This includes small and large private functions or organised community events as well as all recreational activities held in the Arboretum grounds. An organised event is one that is planned in advance by an organisation or social/community group.

Other events such as rallies and rides, sporting competitions, major public concerts and celebrations require applications to be made directly through the National Arboretum events team using the appropriate event application form and involving risk assessment and evidence of appropriate insurances.

Fees and charges for most types of events and activities will be charged. A fee schedule can be accessed on the Arboretum website. Additional costs incurred for services to support events (such as traffic management, security, sound and light, waste removal) will be charged to the hirer.

It should be noted that, although approval is required to use the Arboretum for outdoor events, it does not guarantee exclusive use of a site. The Arboretum will seek, however, to avoid any conflicts arising with other approved events and activities.

## Weddings

All weddings in the Arboretum grounds must be booked with Ginger Catering irrespective of catering needs, and venue hire charges will apply. The use of confetti, petals, and plastic or metallic stars is not allowed.

Wedding photography sessions are allowed subject to visitors adhering to this policy and not interfering with booked weddings or functions on site or other public visitation.

## SPECIAL EVENT CONDITIONS

The public use policies outlined in this document may be varied for special events at the discretion of Arboretum management.

## REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed three years from the date noted on the cover page or as required to reflect current policy.

## LINKS TO RELATED POLICIES

- Sponsored Infrastructure Policy
- Pricing Policy
- Living Collections Policy

For further information about the Arboretum go to [www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/](http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/) or call 02 6207 8484.



Liz Clarke  
Director, Venues Canberra

August 2018