

Australian Capital Territory – Permits and permissions required to access indigenous and other lands, including national parks

As far as I can ascertain there are no areas in the ACT where any form of aboriginal permit is available or required. However, there are a whole series of National Parks, Forests and Reserves where camping is permitted and at least two where some limited four wheel drive touring is available. Most areas also provide quite reasonable facilities and some reasonably remote camping opportunities are also available. Camping where facilities are offered is normally by permit or pre booked camp site – fees generally apply.

The most convenient way of accessing general information about the Parks, Forests and Reserves is to go to the Territory and Municipal Services Department website and download a 28 page PDF file which contains all of the information. The website is at www.tams.act.gov.au then click on the “Play” button, (“Play” in this context means recreational playing), and then on “Parks, Conservation and Lands” and then click on the “Activities and Events - Get Out There” PDF file download.

Whilst the TAMS website states that “Bookings are Essential” for all areas within the ACT, there does appear to be a range of systems in place to collect camping fees. In some areas you can just arrive and pay at an “Honesty Box”. In others, you can just select your camp site and at some stage a Ranger will come around and collect the appropriate fees. In others, for example, Blue Range (which is the only one nominated in the booklet where some limited four wheel drive touring is facilitated), Honeysuckle, Mt. Clear, Old Kowen Homestead, Orroral and Woods Reserve you can book on-line by going to www.bookings.act.gov.au and then click on “Camping”. Whilst the info says you can book on-line, it is actually done by way of an email message via a nominated email address. It also appears that bookings can be made via nominated contact telephone numbers or via “Canberra Connect” on 13 22 81. “Canberra Connect” is also another good source of information and help. The “bookings” website also provides some good contact details for each site, plus a site availability table, charges that apply and a lot of other excellent information about the sites nominated. It’s well worth a visit.

Namadgi National Park:

Namadgi National Park also offers some limited opportunities for 4WD touring and remote area camping, (primarily in the Cotter Dam and Brindabella Ranges areas of the Park); however there is no mention of this in the 28 page PDF download booklet. The best option for gaining information about Namadgi National Park is to contact the Namadgi Visitor Centre on 02 6207 2900 or call in when you are in the area and pick up the information available plus a map which shows the recreational vehicle tracks which are open and available for touring. The Visitor Centre address is Naas Road (which is about 2k’s past Tharwa) in the ACT. It’s well signposted. There is also a website with some limited information at www.australianalps.environment.gov.au/parks/namadgi.html

Camping fees and charges:

In general, camping fees (in 2010) are \$7.80 per person per night, with kids under 10 camping free. A few areas are \$5.55 per person per night with again, kids under 10 camping free and one particular area in Namadgi only attracts a charge of \$3.30 per person per night, again with kids under 10 camping free. A hut is also available at Blue Range which sleeps up to six people and will set you back \$50.15 per night. To access Blue Range you will also need to pay a Key Deposit of \$50 and collect a key to the locked gate. The Rangers at Blue Range can be contacted on 02 6207 2498 for further information.

Road Conditions:

Up to date road reports are available at www.exploroz.com/Roads/Default.aspx

Can I get a Concession?:

Don't forget, if you are dealing with a National Park Service or any Government Agency, and you have a Seniors Card or a Pension Card of some description; always ask whether a Seniors Discount is available. In most cases the answer is, yes!

Disclaimer:

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this information, no responsibility can be accepted for either the accuracy of the contents or for any errors or omissions.

With your assistance we might also endeavour to maintain this information in an updated form. So if you wish to amend, or add to any of the information contained in this article, please contact the undersigned on (02) 9523 9266 or email john.greig@bigpond.com

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Please also be sure to read the first part of this site titled “Heading Outback – Do I Need a Permit? – Can I Drive that Track?” in conjunction with the information above.