

Bidjigal Reserve

FORMERLY EXCELSIOR RESERVE



Bidjigal
Reserve



Rugged sandstone cliffs, towering gums, shady rainforest patches and winding bush tracks of Bidjigal Reserve provide a chance for relaxation, inspiration and reflection within the confines of busy urban Sydney. It is a must visit.



Bidjigal Reserve, (previously known as Excelsior Reserve and Darling Mills State Forest), is a 300 hectare corridor of protected public bushland along Darling Mills Creek and its tributaries.

With towering eucalypt forest, weathered sandstone cliffs, sparkling creeks and sheltered rainforest gullies, Bidjigal Reserve is an island of natural habitat in the heart of the Hills area. 370 native plant species, over 140 native animals, myriads of birds, spectacular

varieties of native orchids and a diverse show of fungi makes a walk through Bidjigal Reserve an interesting, relaxing and educational experience.

The earliest record of Indigenous people in the Bidjigal Reserve is from a rock shelter where, starting 10,000 years ago, they left many stone artefacts along with numerous animal bones. The area was part of the territory of the Bidjigal clan of the Darug people and provided an abundance of fresh water, fish, shelter, stone for tool sharpening and a wide range of plants and animals for food, medicine, weapons, tools and containers.

Vegetation in the reserve ranges from tall eucalypts to native heath, small nectar producing shrubs and soft grasses. Bidjigal Reserve has its own cool rainforest in small patches and narrow bands along the creek and in sheltered sections of the gully. The canopy is dense and shady with an understorey of tall shrubs and young rainforest trees. The trees in the ridge top sections are lower and more widely spaced with a shrubby understorey.

Mammals such as Echidnas, Sugar Gliders and Swamp Wallabies have made Bidjigal Reserve their home. There have been reports of possible Bandicoot tracks, but no actual sightings. Bush Rat, Water Rat and Antechinus may still be there but have not been found in recent surveys. Platypus were regularly seen up till the installation of the sewer in the mid 70s, but none since.

A wide range of reptiles, with 22 species recorded, can be found in Bidjigal Reserve; the Eastern Water Dragon is common. The reserve is teeming with cicadas, dragonflies, butterflies, worms and other insects which constantly help keep the reserve in good health. The freshwater habitats in the reserve still support yabbies, eels and turtles.



The diversity of birds is well known in Bidjigal Reserve with 127 species being documented. Rare insectivorous species such as Wrens and Thornbills have been recorded and the more common species of Kookaburras and Crimson Rosellas seem to be doing well. In recent years, there has also been an increase in numbers of Sulphur Crested Cockatoos and Rainbow Lorikeets. The Powerful Owl, Australia's largest owl, also breeds in the reserve.



Walks

Murri-Yanna Track leads from Whitbread Place, North Rocks to Heidi Place, West Pennant Hills. It stays close to Darling Mills Creek for most of its length and provides the best access to rainforest and riverflat areas. *Distance: 8km. Time: approx 3.5 hours.*

Burruga Track can be accessed from various points in Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill and West Pennant Hills. It passes through some of the healthiest weed free bushland in areas away from creeks and boundaries. *Distance: 4.7km. Time: approx 2.5 hours.*

Platypus Track is accessed from the eastern end of Excelsior Avenue, Castle Hill. This short loop passes the once popular swimming and picnicking spot at Loch Bruce. *Distance: 1.7km. Time: approx 1 hour.*

There are other bush tracks throughout Bidjigal Reserve which connect with the longer designated tracks. All tracks within the reserve are bush tracks so conditions do vary. [See map overleaf for access points to tracks.](#)

Countless hours of work by professional and volunteer bush regenerators have transformed Bidjigal Reserve into what it is today. Be part of protecting this natural environment and join a bush care group. Phone Baulkham Hills Shire Council on (02) 9843 0555 and volunteer your services.

Acknowledgement:

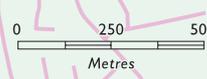
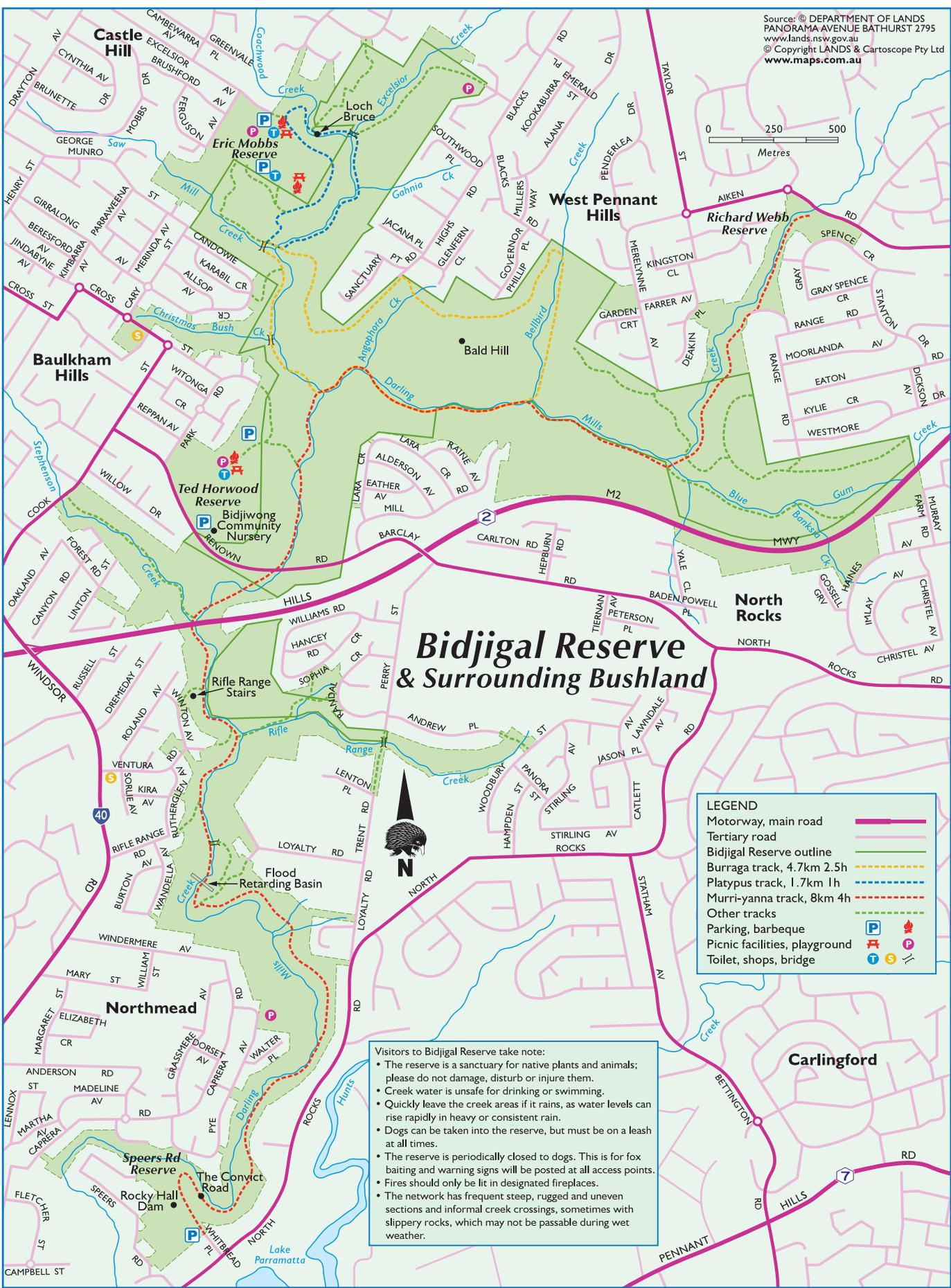
Thanks to Baulkham Hills Shire Council for reference material from their booklet "The Bushland of Bidjigal Reserve and adjoining reserves". More information and copies of this book can be obtained from Council offices or call (02) 9843 0555.



For further information, contact the Sydney Hills Visitor Centre at 656a Old Northern Road, Dural or phone us on: 1300 884 881.

www.sydneyhills.com.au





Visitors to Bidjigal Reserve take note:

- The reserve is a sanctuary for native plants and animals; please do not damage, disturb or injure them.
- Creek water is unsafe for drinking or swimming.
- Quickly leave the creek areas if it rains, as water levels can rise rapidly in heavy or consistent rain.
- Dogs can be taken into the reserve, but must be on a leash at all times.
- The reserve is periodically closed to dogs. This is for fox baiting and warning signs will be posted at all access points.
- Fires should only be lit in designated fireplaces.
- The network has frequent steep, rugged and uneven sections and informal creek crossings, sometimes with slippery rocks, which may not be passable during wet weather.

| LEGEND | |
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| Motorway, main road | |
| Tertiary road | |
| Bidjigal Reserve outline | |
| Burruga track, 4.7km 2.5h | |
| Playtpus track, 1.7km 1h | |
| Murri-yanna track, 8km 4h | |
| Other tracks | |
| Parking, barbecue | |
| Picnic facilities, playground | |
| Toilet, shops, bridge | |