



CANBERRA NATIONAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

In 2013 Australians will be celebrating the centenary of their nation's capital. The city of Canberra tells us the story of our country's democracy, spirit, achievements and aspirations.

In addition to the planned centenary celebrations there is an opportunity to recognise the national heritage of Canberra and its symbolic importance as the capital city of Australia through National Heritage listing. The importance of the city as an example of twentieth century town planning may also be recognised.

The National Heritage List

Australia's National Heritage List comprises exceptional natural, Indigenous and historic places that contribute to Australia's national identity. These places define the critical moments in our development as a nation and reflect achievements, joys and sorrows in the lives of Australians. They encompass those places that reveal the richness of Australia's extraordinary Indigenous and diverse natural heritage.

Inclusion in the National Heritage List is the highest heritage honour within Australia. There are almost 100 places of outstanding heritage value on the list including Bondi Beach, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Uluru Kata-Tjuta, the Great Barrier Reef, Port Arthur Historic Site, Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout and West Kimberley.

Several places within the Australian Capital Territory are already included on the National Heritage List including Old Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial and Memorial Parade, the High Court and National Gallery Precinct, the Australian Academy of Science Building and, as part of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves listing, Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.



Who is assessing Canberra?

The Australian Heritage Council is currently in the early stages of assessing two nominations for the inclusion of Canberra on the National Heritage List. When the assessment and consultation process is complete the Council will provide a report to the federal heritage minister for a decision on whether to include Canberra on the National Heritage List.

How is a heritage assessment prepared?

Australia's national environment law, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, sets out the process that must be followed for a heritage assessment. For its Canberra assessment the Council will:

- consider whether Canberra might have outstanding heritage value to the nation against the nine statutory heritage criteria
- undertake formal consultation with owners, occupiers and Indigenous people with rights or interests, and
- consider all comments received relating to Canberra's heritage significance before providing an assessment to the minister.

The minister will then consider the Council's advice on heritage values and the public comments in deciding whether to include Canberra on the National Heritage List.

What would National Heritage listing mean?

Places on the National Heritage List receive national attention and can benefit from increased tourism. The Australian Government may also provide financial or other assistance towards the promotion or conservation of Canberra's national heritage values.

National Heritage listing is not a means to prevent development. Rather it seeks to ensure that the place's outstanding heritage values are appropriately considered when making decisions. It is the listed national heritage values, and not the entire place, that are protected under national environment law.

Will National Heritage listing affect my property?

It is unlikely that the inclusion of Canberra in the National Heritage List would impose any additional controls or approval requirements on property owners beyond the current approval processes administered by the National Capital Authority (NCA) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government. Heritage listing does not change land ownership or land use.

To avoid duplication of current approval processes appropriate management arrangements will be developed with the NCA and the ACT Government after the Australian Heritage Council has considered whether Canberra might have National Heritage values.



What areas of Canberra are being assessed?

The assessment will consider potential natural, Indigenous and historic heritage values related to the historic layers of Canberra against the backdrop of the inner hills and Lake Burley Griffin. It will also investigate the city, its layers of town planning and its symbolic importance as the capital of Australia. Out of these considerations a study area will be established.

How can I be involved?

During 2012 the Council will consult with owners, occupiers, Indigenous people with rights or interests, business interests and key community and heritage agencies.

Organisations and members of the public can also submit comments on a discussion paper about the assessment. The discussion paper is expected to be released in March 2012. A public forum is also planned that will give the community an opportunity to discuss the assessment.

Where can I get more information on the National Heritage List?

Information about the National Heritage List, the assessment criteria and other places in the list can be found at environment.gov.au/heritage/ahc/national-assessments

