

SUMMARY OF COMMITMENTS

1. A Liberal Government will commit to developing a heritage strategy for Canberra and the region. Preparation of the strategy will involve consultation with stakeholders and the community. The strategy will include ways of encouraging the community to embrace heritage and the opportunities it brings for the region including through tourism. The strategy will encompass all aspects of heritage policy in the ACT.
2. A Liberal Government will implement a blue plaques scheme to make sites with heritage significance more prominent. Residents would be able to nominate sites and the Heritage Council would determine the successful locations.
3. A Liberal Government will provide an expanded facility for people to record their history. Such recordings are an invaluable resource for families, historians and the City as a whole. The commitment includes increasing the number of recording kits, providing additional advice to interviewers and interviewees about how to conduct interviews, and active promotion of the scheme. The commitment expands and promotes the program run by the ACT Heritage Library.
4. A Liberal Government will introduce heritage grading of buildings. The grading of heritage listed buildings will ensure that buildings with different levels of significance can be treated appropriately. The detail of the scheme, including the degree of flexibility, the number of grades and the relevance of the gradings will be determined after an extensive consultation.
5. To make people more aware of the rich heritage of Canberra and the region, the Canberra Liberals will expand the Canberra Tracks App to include more heritage information in multi-media formats. The App will include information about popular and less well-known sites in Canberra and will be useful for tourists as well as for Canberrans who want to find out more about their local area. Local experts will be invited to contribute to the development of the App.
6. The Canberra Liberals will commit to ensuring that heritage sites are incorporated in estate plans from before suburbs are developed. This incorporation will help ensure that heritage sites are treated as assets central to communities rather than as fenced-off liabilities.
7. To allow peak bodies to operate effectively, the Canberra Liberals will provide \$200,000 in additional annual ongoing financial support for heritage organisations, reviewed every four years. The amount received by each organisation will vary according to the role they play in the heritage strategy and the organisation's need.

HERITAGE

As Canberra grows older, it is important that the preservation of our heritage is taken seriously. Properly recognising significant historical buildings, places and achievements is an important part of honouring our history. However, it is also important that buildings and objects are not preserved just because they are old; there must be a good reason to preserve a building. The historical significance of the building as well as the ongoing costs of preserving it for future generations must be taken into consideration before a decision is made to add a building or object to the Heritage Register.

The advice of the Heritage Council must also be taken into consideration. Heritage experts understand the benefits as well as the costs of preserving places.

- 1. A Liberal Government will commit to developing a heritage strategy for Canberra and the region. Preparation of the strategy will involve consultation with stakeholders and the community. The strategy will include ways of encouraging the community to embrace heritage and the opportunities it brings for the region including through tourism. The strategy will encompass all aspects of heritage policy in the ACT.**

As part of the Heritage Strategy, the Canberra Liberals will also commission a heritage tourism plan. The plan will consider ways to encourage tourism based on heritage features of the ACT. The plan will include recommendations about the best way to market the ACT as a heritage tourism destination. There are many organisations that are willing to work with the Government to make Canberra's historical sites more accessible and prominent. The Canberra Liberals will commit to working with local organisations to promote Canberra's heritage value.

There are many locations in Canberra where the current or former buildings are of significance. The significance may relate to the structure, past residents or occupants, or events that have taken place there. The Canberra Liberals would like to make this history more prominent.

Case study: English Heritage Blue Plaques

The Blue Plaques scheme commenced in 1866 in the United Kingdom after it was suggested by William Ewart MP in the House of Commons. The Society of Arts placed its first plaque in 1867 to commemorate the poet Lord Byron at his birthplace. The earliest surviving blue plaque was placed in 1867 on King Street, Westminster to commemorate Napoleon III. The Scheme was administered by the London County Council and later the Greater London Council who together placed over 500 plaques. English Heritage took over the scheme in 1986 and has placed over 360 plaques. The Blue Plaques Panel advises on the selection of individuals to commemorate. The current criteria used by English Heritage are:

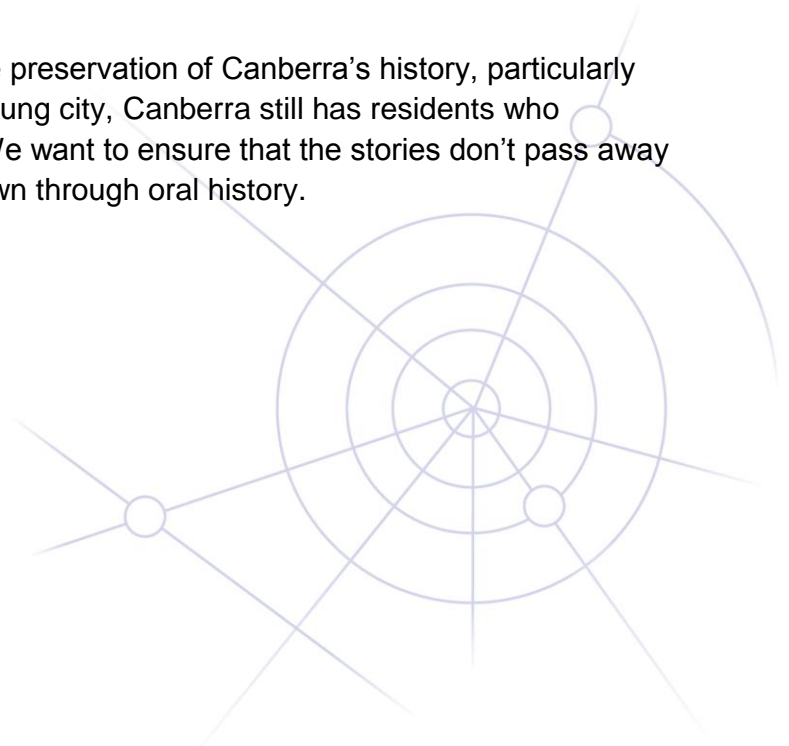
- At least 20 years must have passed since a proposed figure's death.
- At least one identified building associated with the figure must survive within Greater London (but outside of the City of London, which has its own separate scheme).
- The building must survive in a form that the commemorated person would have recognised, and be visible from a public highway.
- Buildings with very numerous personal associations, such as churches, schools and theatres, are not normally considered for plaques.
- No more than two plaques on a building is the usual limit.
- Nominations for the commemoration of buildings that have historical significance for an event, or a group of individuals, will be considered as resources allow.

For more information, see: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/>

2. A Liberal Government will implement a blue plaques scheme to make sites with heritage significance more prominent. Residents would be able to nominate sites and the Heritage Council would determine the successful locations.

Oral history

The Canberra Liberals believe that the preservation of Canberra's history, particularly first hand stories, is important. As a young city, Canberra still has residents who remember the early days of the city. We want to ensure that the stories don't pass away with the people; they need to pass down through oral history.



3. A Liberal Government will provide an expanded facility for people to record their history. Such recordings are an invaluable resource for families, historians and the City as a whole. The commitment includes increasing the number of recording kits, providing additional advice to interviewers and interviewees about how to conduct interviews, and active promotion of the scheme. The commitment expands and promotes the program run by the ACT Heritage Library.

Heritage grading of buildings

There is a distinct lack of clarity about what heritage listing means for the conservation, management and redevelopment of property. There needs to be a system that gives the community, neighbours and land owners a clear indication of the protections and opportunities that exist on heritage listed properties. Many jurisdictions have gradings that can vary from absolute preservation of a site through to allowing sensitive redevelopment, and everything in between. Such a system is needed in Canberra.

Whilst the gradings will not necessary coincide with the grades found in the UK or other jurisdictions, they will have a similar intention. Guidelines for determining the heritage grade will be developed, as will the conditions associated with each grade. This will allow for certainty around historic buildings and the way they are to be preserved.

Case study: Listed buildings in the UK

If a building is considered by the Secretary of State (for Culture, Media and Sport) to be of special architectural or historic interest, it will be included in a list of such buildings.

The designation regime is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The list is maintained by Historic England and is available online through the National Heritage List for England. Applications for new entries and to remove or amend an existing entry are made to Historic England. It will investigate the merits of the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State (for Culture, Media and Sport) who will make the decision.

As of 2012 there were approximately 375,588 listed buildings in England. Listed buildings are classified into three grades:

Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest. Only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade I.

Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest. 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II*.

Grade II buildings are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them. 92% of all listed buildings are in this class.

The special interest of a candidate building is assessed with the greatest care. Government has set out the criteria for selection in Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (March 2010).

The special interest may arise from the contribution the building makes to the architecture or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part (group value). Many buildings are interesting architecturally or historically but in order to be listed a building must have special interest. The Secretary of State uses the following general criteria when deciding whether a building is of special interest.

Architectural Interest

To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms.

Historic Interest

To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing.

There is more detail on the relevance of age, rarity, aesthetic and other factors in Principles of Selection. Historic England has supplemented these general principles with selection guides to offer further insight into designation decision-making.

The entry in the statutory list contains a description of each building to aid identification. This can be just a description of the building and its features, but more modern entries will set out a summary of the assessment of special interest in the building at the time of designation. However, descriptions are not a comprehensive or exclusive record of the special interest or significance of the building and the amount of information in the description varies considerably.

Any omission from the list description of a feature does not indicate that it is not of interest and advice should be sought from the local planning authority if there is any doubt in a particular case.

As from 26th June 2013 some new list entries or list entries amended after that date may provide that part or feature of the building is not of special architectural or historic interest.¹

- 4. A Liberal Government will introduce heritage grading of buildings. The grading of heritage listed buildings will ensure that buildings with different levels of significance can be treated appropriately. The detail of the scheme, including the degree of flexibility, the number of grades and the relevance of the gradings will be determined after an extensive consultation.**

Heritage tourism map

The ACT and surrounding region has a rich cultural heritage that is not often recognised. There are many sites of significant interest that people have no idea exist. Marketing the ACT as a heritage destination will attract further attention to these forgotten sites and capture another sector in the tourism market. Historical tourism is an important untapped potential for the ACT.

- 5. To make people more aware of the rich heritage of Canberra and the region, the Canberra Liberals will expand the Canberra Tracks App to include more heritage information in multi-media formats. The App will include information about popular and less well-known sites in Canberra and will be useful for tourists as well as for Canberrans who want to find out more about their local area. Local experts will be invited to contribute to the development of the App.**

Incorporating heritage sites in estate plans

Heritage sites in the ACT are rarely identified as a positive aspect of the infrastructure of new suburbs. They are frequently fenced off and left to deteriorate. Valuable historical sites are in danger of becoming so derelict that they can no longer be enjoyed by the public because they are dangerous.

A Canberra Liberals Government will ensure that as new areas are developed, heritage sites are properly incorporated into the planning so that the locations are properly woven in to the layout of the future precincts.

- 6. The Canberra Liberals will commit to ensuring that heritage sites are incorporated in estate plans from before suburbs are developed. This incorporating will help ensure that heritage sites are treated as assets central to communities rather than as fenced-off liabilities.**

Heritage funding

There are a number of community organisations with an expertise in heritage matters in the ACT and region. These groups assist the Government and the community by making submissions to Government inquiries, providing informal advice about heritage matters and seeking to extend the community's knowledge of heritage places in the ACT. These

organisations are mostly staffed by volunteers. This means that although they have the expertise, they are unable to contribute as much as they would like due to limited funds.

Currently, bodies such as the National Trust, the Historical Society, the Railways Historical Society, and others do not have access to regular funds. They currently receive funding that is linked to particular projects. This means that they cannot rely on a constant level of funding to employ staff or take on ongoing or complex projects. The volunteer-run organisations are also tasked with the challenge of writing complex grant and tender applications.

7. To allow peak bodies to operate effectively, the Canberra Liberals will provide \$200,000 in additional annual ongoing financial support for heritage organisations, reviewed every four years. The amount received by each organisation will vary according to the role they play in the heritage strategy and the organisation's need.

ⁱ <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/listed-buildings/>, accessed 5 September 2016.

