

Should Canberra be listed as a National Heritage site?

Canberra Times May 23, 2015 [Georgina Connery](#)

ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has written to the federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt asking him to refuse a submission to include Canberra on the national heritage list.

A decision on the city's listing has been in limbo since 2011.

A verdict was put off until December 2012 by former Environment Minister Peter Garrett, then by Mr Hunt until September 2014 and again until June 2015.

A federal Department of Environment spokesman confirmed the Australian Heritage Council had provided its assessment to Mr Hunt and it was under consideration.

"Until the minister makes a decision to list or not list a place, the legislation prevents disclosing information from the council's assessment," he said.

Mr Barr made the ACT government's position clear to the Commonwealth in March.

"The government has concerns that this listing and the associated regulatory burden would have negative impact on jobs and the economy in the ACT by hitting business confidence and investment," Mr Barr said.

"Canberra's special place as the capital is already more than adequately protected through the oversight of the NCA and our own planning rules."

Despite repeated extensions to allow for further consultation, National Capital Authority chief planner Andrew Smith said the NCA had been left out of the loop "for the past two years".

"My new board hasn't looked at it, we haven't been asked to comment on it, and to be honest I can only assume what we saw two and a bit years ago remains unchanged."



Gary Kent believes Canberra could follow Broken Hill's lead as the only town or city to make the national world heritage list. *Photo: Graham Tidy*

Inner South Community Council president Gary Kent said he believed Canberra could

follow Broken Hill's lead as the only town or city to make the national list and suggested the capital was worthy of consideration by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

"The listing would recognise the significance of Canberra as a symbol of federation and as a city of exemplary 20th century town planning."

Mr Kent said robust debate as a community was necessary to fairly resolve the lingering bid.

"We are concerned that if development interests in the ACT government have been urging that Canberra not be listed, and they have every right to do that, the community and citizens groups should be given equal time," he said.