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## Media release

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# The Federal Government's misuse of the national heritage regime

The Federal Minister for Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell has failed to carry out his statutory duties and has misused heritage programs for political purposes, according to a new report released by The Australia Institute today.

The report details how:

- in breach of the law, the Minister delayed rejecting the nomination of Sir Donald Bradman's birthplace for inclusion on the National Heritage List until after the federal election campaign for what appear to be political reasons;
- in contrast to the delay concerning his decision in relation to Bradman's birthplace, the Minister listed Kurnell Peninsula on the National Heritage List on questionable grounds during the election campaign after a request was made by the Liberal Member for Cook, Bruce Baird MP;
- following the Minister's refusal to list Don Bradman's birthplace on the National Heritage List, \$50,000 grants were provided to two Bradman-related projects involving Cootamundra Shire Council, a major critic of the listing decision, after meetings with the Prime Minister's office and the Minister;
- the funding application for one of the projects, the Don Bradman Heritage Trail was not lodged until at least seven and a half months after the applications for funding under the grants program had closed and the project appears to have been devised by the Minister and the Department of the Environment and Heritage; and
- in relation to the other project, the Australian Cricket Captains' Walk, Cootamundra Shire Council did not even make an application for funding despite being the project recipient, and it appears the grant was 'arranged' by the Nationals Member for Riverina, Kay Hull MP.

The report concludes that the Auditor-General should be asked to undertake a comprehensive review of the Federal Government's administration of the National Heritage List and related funding programs.

*The paper may be read under What's New on the Australia Institute's website,  
[www.tai.org.au](http://www.tai.org.au).*

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