

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this issue.

From a Google search and AI overview –

[Lithgow Small Arms Factory](#) (SAF) is currently under review for listing on the NSW State Heritage Register to protect its significance as Australia's oldest munitions factory (opened 1912). The Heritage Council of NSW has recommended listing the site due to its role in both World Wars and its intact, rare industrial precinct.

Key Details on the Heritage Listing:

- **Significance:** *The site represents crucial military, industrial, and regional history, operating continuously since 1912.*
- **Status:** *The Heritage Council recommended listing in late 2025. The [Independent Planning Commission](#) is currently reviewing this recommendation, with a final decision by the Minister for Heritage expected by May 5, 2026.*
- **Impact:** *Listing would protect the site—specifically the "heritage core" including Buildings 80, 52, 45, and 35—from redevelopment or inappropriate modification.*
- **Museum & Archive:** *The site includes a museum (in the former admin block) and an archive recognized for its extensive collection of manufacturing history.*

Our submission is in opposition to the proposed listing.

We accept the significance of the site in Lithgow's, and Australia's, military history, and its importance in the industrial and social history of Lithgow and its surrounds. The Small Arms Factory has provided meaningful employment for the people of Lithgow since 1912 and continues to do so through its current occupier, Thales.

We believe that a Heritage Listing of the site could result in a decision by Thales to move its operations elsewhere.

To lose Thales would be another nail in the coffin of a town that is not thriving. The closure of Wallerawang Power Station, the closure of many coal mines and the imminent closure of those remaining, has meant a decline in the economy of Lithgow due to job losses and to loss of expenditure and investment in allied industries and activities.

Heritage listing of the whole site would mean that the condition of the already decaying and derelict buildings would decline further. It would take a great deal

of money to restore or adapt these buildings for any kind of use. The Lithgow community could not afford it. Lithgow City Council could not afford it.

We would suggest that a partial listing would be appropriate. The buildings already mentioned in the AI overview are obviously considered worthy of retention.

The buildings used by the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum should be protected by heritage listing. The Museum has a world class collection of material and its exhibits support the great importance of the Small Arms Factory in the history of the area. Supporters of the Museum fear that the institution could be forced to vacate the site if it was to be redeveloped. It would be a travesty if that happened. The site is as historically important as the collections.

If sections of the site were listed it would leave a substantial area free for some other kind of development. In our view this should be affordable residential development. The site is centrally located – close to a shopping centre, on a bus route – but not totally alienated from native bushland. Lithgow is increasingly seen as attractive to retirees from Western Sydney and a boost in population would be economically beneficial to the region. The site could be used to address the chronic housing shortage in NSW.

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