Imagined Pasts, Imagined Futures

Tracy Ireland
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This volume of *Historic Environment* is the first of a number of thematic volumes inspired by discussions, papers and debates that took place at the 2013 Australia ICOMOS Conference, *Imagined pasts, imagined futures*.

The conference took the imagining of the city of Canberra as stimulus for an event exploring how heritage participates in the ‘imagined communities’ and ‘imagined geographies’ of nations in a globalising world. It aimed to involve diverse communities of interest, connecting professionals, academics, activists and community members, and conservation practitioners with creative practitioners. The volumes developed following these initial meetings will, I believe, become landmark publications signalling new directions for heritage and conservation in Australia and beyond.

The conference had a strong focus on Australia in its regional context in Asia, and this volume makes a significant contribution to the discussion on the use of heritage in nation building and development in Asia. Three further thematic volumes are currently under development, focusing on future directions for heritage practice, Historic Urban Landscapes and creating sustainable futures for heritage places. On behalf of the conference committee, I express our thanks to the editors and contributors to this volume for their hard work in developing and expanding the discussions on this theme that began at the conference. The conference would not have been possible without the hard work of a tireless Conference Committee (Kirsty Altenburg, Sandy Blair, Kate Cowie, Celia Cramer, Anne Claoue-Long, Edwina Jans and Juliet Ramsay) and without the generous support of our sponsors: the Australian Government through the Department of the Environment, the Museum of Australian Democracy, the ACT Government, University of Canberra, Lovell Chen, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Rio Tinto, the Australian National University, Context, Ironbark Heritage, Canberra Museum and Art Gallery, GML Heritage, AHMS, Australian Council of National trusts, Garden History Society, Heritage Council of Victoria, the National Capital Authority, the Getty Conservation Institute and Cityplan.