Imagined Pasts, Imagined Futures

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This volume of Historic Environment is the second thematic volume to be inspired by discussions and debates developed following the 2013 Australia ICOMOS Conference, Imagined pasts, imagined futures. This 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. The conference aimed to involve diverse communities of interest, connecting professionals, academics, activists and community members, and conservation practitioners with creative practitioners. The volumes that have followed 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 Canberra and Australia in a regional and comparative context, and this volume highlights Canberra in relation to planned cities in other regions (Albury-Wodonga) and in other nations (Ottawa in Canada), as well as two papers on urban heritage in China. Another aim of the conference was to integrate consideration of Indigenous heritage values throughout all themes and Draper’s paper on urban Indigenous heritage values in Adelaide is an important contribution in this regard.

A further thematic volume arising from the conference focusing on future directions for heritage practice will also appear in 2015. On behalf of the conference committee, I express our thanks to both the editors and contributors to this volume for their hard work in developing and expanding the discussions on this theme begun at the conference and at the wonderful associated symposium Issues and Opportunities for Cultural Landscapes and Routes in the 21st Century hosted by ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee (ISC) on Cultural Landscapes and the ICOMOS ISC on Cultural Routes. 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, Australian Garden History Society, Heritage Council of Victoria, the National Capital Authority, the Getty Conservation Institute and Cityplan.