

Expression of interest to host Australasian Urban History/Planning History Group (AUHPHG) conferences 2014 , 2016 and 2018

The AUHPHG series has established itself as credible and attractive event for those in the tertiary, public and private sectors with scholarly and policy interests in the urban and planning histories of urban places in Australia and New Zealand. Since 1996 a biennial conference has been held, normally in February. The 11th conference was recently held in Perth. Future conferences are projected in 2014, 2016 and beyond. At the Perth conference, there was strong support for instituting a (slightly) more formal system of governance within the AUHPHG 'coalition'. This was based around (a) instituting a website as the main portal to and resource for the group, and (b) a representative collective of individuals as an interim committee to help inclusively guide decisions affecting the group, including selection of conference venues. The initial membership of the committee is Andrew May (Chair, Melbourne), Stefan Petrow (Tas), Peter Spearritt (Qld), Rob Freestone (NSW), Errol Haarhoff (Auckland), David Nichols (Vic), Christine Garnaut (SA), Jenny Gregory and Andrea Gaynor (WA). The intent of both initiatives is to secure the sustainability of the AUHPHG 'brand', raise its profile and provide an internet site for information and inquiries. In the past decisions about future conferences have been made informally and ad hoc, and have depended on the goodwill of prospective convenors. Without compromising the latter, the need to inject a more strategic and transparent approach to the forward planning of conferences became evident in discussion in Perth.

Several future venues have been mooted or suggested verbally for 2014 and 2016, but agreement and confirmation are now required to enable future planning. Accordingly the interim committee now call for written expressions of interest from individuals to convene the next three conferences, with 2014 the priority. Only a brief statement is required and the intention will be to make decisions in collaboration with those interested so that the best and most practical sequence of events is secured. The deadline is 2 April 2012. The expression of interest should nominate a convenor or co-convenors with a contact name, a host institution(s), proposed venue, timing, potential theme, and the approach to support from other cultural, public or private institutions.

The AUHPHG series imposes no hard and fast rules for organising conferences, and the history of these series shows that innovation has characterised every one of the eleven held so far. The last two conferences in Perth and Melbourne provide an indicative structure:

- a draft conference program usually circulated at least two months before the conference in order that all delegates can make suitable arrangements for attendance
- a conference theme, but acceptance of all papers of merit
- a process for refereeing papers and producing a record of proceedings
- at least one keynote address
- provision for a fieldtrip(s)
- a conference reception and dinner (usually at extra cost)
- an associated event providing a public face to the conference
- affordable registration fees, with the host institution assuming all risk
- acknowledging the importance of postgraduate students
- three-day events providing for a mix of urban and planning history perspectives
- usually held in the first week of February

Dependent upon interest, a decision on 2014 would be made by the end of May. Decisions on later events would be locked-in on principle only and revisited as circumstances changed.

Inquiries and submission of EOI to: UHPHGroup@gmail.com