Australia is a nation of 'coast-huggers', with the vast bulk of its population residing within 50 km of the sea. The geographical centre of the continent constitutes its demographic periphery. This apparent inversion, in which an edge condition fosters fecundity and the centre is displaced to a margin, neatly encapsulates the thematic focus for the 2020 iteration of the Urban History Planning History conference. To be held in Launceston, Tasmania, a regional town within an entire state classified as 'regional' – a periphery of a periphery – the conference aims to explore the formation, conditions and potentials of edges, margins, peripheries and islands in illuminating the understanding of cities and urban phenomena.

This thematic is open to both literal and metaphorical readings. The 'edge conditions' of the title may be understood in geographic, demographic, historical, spatial, disciplinary, or methodological terms. Geographically inspired papers may focus on peri-urban zones or suburbia, settlement and mobility patterns mediating edges and centres, forgotten projects or abandoned sites. Demographic approaches may highlight the experience and environments of marginalised groups, ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous or migrant communities. Edge conditions in historical terms may suggest thresholds or 'tipping points' associated with technological, institutional, or environmental change. Spatial and architecturally-oriented studies may consider how edge conditions at various scales may operate variously as transitional or liminal spaces, 'terrains vague', contact zones, public spaces, or delineations of culture and identity. Consideration of edge conditions in disciplinary and methodological terms invites productive engagements with alternate ways of researching the shaping of cities, whether through landscape studies or land economics, actor-network theory or action research.

Our general interest is to explore the valency of edge and periphery in our urban histories, and with it the potential recasting of our imaginative geographies of distance and propinquity.

Notwithstanding the thematic prompt detailed above, submissions on all other aspects of urban and planning history in Australia and New Zealand will also be welcomed.

Proposals are invited for the 15th Australasian Urban History / Planning History conference, to be held in Launceston, Tasmania from 5-7 February 2020.

www.utas.edu.au/urban-history-planning-history-conference-2020