

Tracking the Dragon, Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage, (CACH) Summary Update

Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development,
The Australian National University
Museums Studies, The University of Queensland &
Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage State and Territory Project Committee

Project Scope

Development of a sustainable web-based management tool for the Chinese-Australian Cultural Heritage (CACH) database, and the establishment of a nation-wide framework for assessing the significance, collection, verification and uploading of data and images on the database and website.

Aims, Outcomes and Timelines of Project

The Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage (CACH) is a cross-sectoral linkage project that aims to locate and assess significant heritage collections, objects, art works and documentary heritage, sites, places, landscapes, throughout Australia associated with Chinese Australians, and to create a National Database of Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage. The project was transferred from the Australian Heritage Commission to the Australian National University in 2003.

The National Database was initially part of the National Thematic Survey of Sites of Chinese Australian History, an initiative in 1994 of the Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne, and partly funded by National Estates Grants Program for one year. In 2000, the Australian Heritage Commission resumed responsibility for the project, which became known as the Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage (CACH) Project. On 13 February 2002, the first results of the Chinese Australian Cultural Heritage Project, [Tracking the Dragon. A guide for finding and assessing Chinese Australian heritage places. Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission \(2002\)](#) was launched in Canberra by Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, The Hon Dr David Kemp, MP.

The project is now in its state/territory phase. Cross-sectoral CACH Project Committees have been established in each state and territory, and these committees are responsible for collecting and preparing verified and validated information and images of heritage sites. In consultation with CACH national and state representatives, The ANU has initiated work on an online database and website content management tool which will enable state and territory CACH representatives to upload data and images directly to the national CACH database and website.

The CACH project in New South Wales (CACH-NSW) is supported by a NSW Heritage Project Grant for 2002-2004, and the data available in the National database has been verified and validated by CACH-NSW. NSW is the only state to have so far submitted entries for the national database. Months of work has already been provided gratis by the ANU and the Research of Pacific and Asian Studies' IT section at the ANU to convert this data from Access databases into a web-based MySQL software platform. An as-yet-untested online management tool has been developed by the ANU to avoid many months of this conversion work and enable individual CACH state and territory committees to enter their validated data directly. This data will be rolled over into the website – made live - once legal protection for the website host is assured.

Stakeholder symposium

The Stakeholder Symposium will address three key elements of the project:

1. Development by RSPAS IT of an online database and website (cach.org.au) content management tool;
2. Drafting of a framework for assessing the significance of ethno specific heritage resources in a Multicultural Australia;
3. Testing and checking the web management tool and assuring indemnity for the website host, the ANU; and
4. Future directions for the Sustainable Heritage Development Program in RSPAS, the ANU and the Museum Studies Program at the University of Queensland to work on the project to initiate the process of gathering and validating entries for states and territories other than NSW.