



## Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

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### Catherine Forbes

Catherine Forbes is an architect with over 25 years experience in heritage conservation. She is Built Heritage Advisor at GML Heritage, a member of the Australian Institute of Architects and Australia ICOMOS, and an expert member of ICOMOS-ICORP (International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness).

Catherine has training in International Humanitarian Action with Australian Red Cross, was a volunteer and former director of Emergency Architects Australia, and has been a member of the ACFID (Australian Council for International Development) Shelter Reference Group. She has had experience in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction both in Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

In 2014 Catherine undertook the UNESCO International Training Course in Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage at Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, and prepared a Draft Disaster Risk Management Plan for the Rocks as her case study.

### Preparing for the Worst: Disaster planning for The Rocks, Sydney

#### Paper Abstract

Although built cultural heritage contributes to the structure, grain and character of our cities, it is rarely considered in emergency planning. Yet cultural heritage connects people to their past, provides security and comfort in the present and a firm foundation on which to build the future. The loss of built cultural heritage following disaster is often greatly mourned by local communities.

Focusing on The Rocks, this paper will examine the importance of cultural heritage to the life of Sydney, its economy and cultural identity. It will analyse the vulnerabilities and risks to the built fabric and heritage values of The Rocks and identify the potential losses to the community in the event of disaster. It will discuss disaster planning for the precinct, including mitigation strategies to minimise the risk from anticipated hazards, and preparation, response and recovery strategies to minimise the losses following disaster. The approach presented may be adapted and used as a basis for preparing development of disaster risk management plans for other cultural heritage sites around Australia.

The paper will also raise the need for inclusion of cultural heritage in local, regional and state level emergency plans.