CALL FOR PAPERS / FORGING AUSTRALIA 2027

Robert Menzies INSTITUTE

Menzies and Asia:

A Sense of Place

25–26 NOVEMBER 2027 · UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE 7 MAY 2027

The Robert Menzies Institute invites scholars from Australia and internationally to propose papers for a major conference exploring Australia's evolving relationship with Asia and its distinctive national identity.

Marking 70 years since the landmark 1957 Australia–Japan Commerce Agreement, the conference will reconsider how Australia has negotiated the relationship between its historical inheritance, Asian geography, strategic interests and developing sense of place.

Selected conference papers will be developed for a scholarly volume with Melbourne University Publishing.



Visit by R.G. Menzies to Japan, April 1957

The 2027 conference

Signed just twelve years after the Second World War, the Australia–Japan Commerce Agreement was a milestone in postwar reconciliation and Australia's growing economic engagement with Asia.

Seventy years later, its anniversary prompts fresh questions. How did political leaders, diplomats, businesses and intellectuals reshape Australia's regional relationships? How did this change how Australians understood their own country? What roles have cultural traditions and Australia's ancient Indigenous inheritance played in shaping that identity?

Papers may explore these questions across the Menzies era and beyond; they need not focus exclusively on Menzies or his government.



Visit by R.G. Menzies to Japan, April 1957

The Forging Australia conference series

This is the final conference in the Institute's three-year series on the people, ideas and international relationships that helped forge modern Australia's liberal democracy.

2025	Menzies and the British Commonwealth of Nations
2026	ANZUS, Menzies and America
2027	**Menzies and Asia: A Sense of Place**

Themes and approaches

We welcome original research, new archival findings, comparative studies and critical interpretations across history, politics, international relations, economics, cultural studies and related disciplines. Possible themes include:

Australia's engagement with Asia
Diplomacy, trade, security, migration and cultural exchange, including relations with Japan, China and Southeast Asia.

Menzies and Australia's place in the world
Postwar reconciliation, regional diplomacy, and the interplay of British inheritance, American alliance and Asian geography.

Australian identity and culture
The emergence of distinctive political, intellectual, literary and artistic traditions, and debates about national belonging.

Indigenous heritage and sense of place
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and traditions, and their place in evolving understandings of Australian identity.

Ideas, institutions and nation-building
Political thought, education, religion, economic policy, civic institutions and Australian cultural development.

Comparative and transnational histories
Australia in regional and international perspective, including how its Asian neighbours have understood it.

Publication and participation



Visit by R.G. Menzies to Japan, April 1957

An opportunity to exchange ideas with leading and emerging scholars, present original research and contribute to a reassessment of Australia's historical place in the world.

Publication: selected papers will be developed into chapters of up to 4,000 words for a scholarly volume with Melbourne University Publishing.

Who should apply: established scholars, early-career researchers, postgraduate students and independent researchers. Limited financial assistance is available for presenters who could not otherwise attend.

How to submit

We invite proposals for individual papers or panels of three interconnected presentations. Each paper proposal should include a title, abstract of up to 300 words identifying its argument and contribution, and a short presenter biography with institutional affiliation where applicable.

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE	Friday 7 May 2027
NOTIFICATION	By Monday 24 May 2027
CONFERENCE	Thursday 25 – Friday 26 November 2027
MANUSCRIPT DEADLINE	Monday 3 January 2028

SEND YOUR PROPOSAL TO **zachary@robertmenziesinstitute.org.au**

Conference presentations will include Q&A and scholarly discussion. We look forward to welcoming participants to Melbourne in November 2027.