

Strengthening Australia-Africa University Relationships
AAUN Forum and AGM 2 September 2019
Venue: The University Club of Western Australia

Participants Biographies

Opening Session 1 – Knowledge diplomacy: opportunities and obstacles

Professor John Hearn

Co-Chair, Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN)

Professor John Hearn is founding Co-Chair of the Australia Africa Universities Network since 2012 (www.aaun.edu.au); Board Executive Director of the Worldwide Universities Network (01.07.09-31.07.18) (www.wun.ac.uk); and Professor of Physiology at the University of Sydney. Raised in India, UK and East Africa, he was awarded his BSc (1st), MSc and DSc(hc) from UC Dublin; and PhD from the Australian National University (ANU). He served for 6-7 years each in leading research, teaching and administrative positions at the Universities of Edinburgh, London UCL, Wisconsin, ANU and Sydney. He was Vice President (Research) at ANU 2000-4, and Vice President (Academic and International) at Sydney 2004-13. He teaches first year and advanced students in biomedicine, is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has published 220 research papers and six edited books in reproduction and fertility, stem cell biology and biotechnology. A committed international citizen, he works globally in research capacity development - especially in China, India, Thailand, Brazil and Kenya. He is an adviser in Higher Education and Research to the Australian Government, British Council, Swedish STINT, World Health Organisation and OECD. He was (to 2013) a Board member of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, and Chairman of the Sydney Confucius Institute.

Professor Dawn Freshwater, BA Manc, PhD Nott, FRCN, RN, RNT

Vice-Chancellor, University of Western Australia (UWA)

Professor Dawn Freshwater became Vice-Chancellor of The University of Western Australia in January 2017. She is leading UWA through the implementation of the UWA 2030 Vision and the Strategic Plan 2020-2025, which includes an industry-engaged commercialisation strategy.

Professor Freshwater is Chair and Director of the Group of Eight, Board Vice-Chair of the Worldwide Universities Network and the Matariki Network of Universities, Board Director of the Perth USAsia Centre and Lifeline WA, and a Governor of the Forrest Research Foundation.

She was instrumental in founding the UWA Public Policy Institute (UWAPPI), which creates a bridge between academic research and government, public and business needs. It is vitally concerned with finding solutions to the grand challenges faced locally and globally, with particular concern for those of the nations of the Indian Ocean Rim.

Professor Tawana Kupe***Vice Chancellor and Principal, The University of Pretoria***

Professor Kupe is the Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria. Prior to joining the University of Pretoria, he was based at the University of the Witwatersrand where he held the rotating Vice-Principal post for one year and also served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Advancement, Human Resources and Transformation since January 2013.

Professor Kupe also served as the Executive Dean of the University of the Witwatersrand Faculty of Humanities for six years, between January 2007 and December 2012, after serving as the Head of the then School of Literature and Language Studies, and the founding Head of the Media Studies Department.

Prior to joining University of the Witwatersrand, Professor Kupe lectured at Rhodes University between 1999 and 2001, and briefly acted as the Head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies. He joined Rhodes from the University of Zimbabwe, where he worked in various academic capacities from 1988, including as Chairperson of the Department of English, Media and Communication Studies.

Professor Kupe holds a BA Honours degree and Masters in English from the University of Zimbabwe, as well as a DPhil in Media Studies from the University of Oslo in Norway

Professor Maano Ramutsindela***Dean of Science, University of Cape Town***

Maano Ramutsindela is Professor in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science and Dean of Science at the University of Cape Town. He served as founding Co-Chair (with David Mickler) of WUN Global Africa Group. A geographer by training, Ramutsindela held the Distinguished Hubert H Humphrey Chair of International Studies at Macalester College (St Paul, Minnesota) and the Mandela Mellon Fellow of W.E.B. Institute, Harvard University. He has researched and published widely on the evolution, implementation and consequences of peace parks. He used the empirics of peace parks to test theories of borders and scale, to understand the trajectory of regional integration in Africa, and to contribute to international literature on micro-regions and the society-nature relations. His most recent main publications include Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals (Springer, 2020) co-edited with David Mickler; Greening Africa's borderlands: The symbiotic politics of land and borders in peace parks (Political Geography 56: 106-113, 2017); and Green violence: rhino poaching and the war to save southern Africa's peace parks. African Affairs 115(458): 1-22 (2016) with Bram Büscher.

Dr David Mickler***Director of the Africa Research & Engagement Centre, University of Western Australia (UWA)***

Dr David Mickler is the Director of the Africa Research & Engagement Centre (AfREC) at the University of Western Australia and a Senior Lecturer in Foreign Policy & International Relations in the School of Social Sciences. From 2016-18, Dr Mickler was the inaugural Co-Chair (with Prof. Maano Ramutsindela, University of Cape Town) of the Worldwide Universities Network Global Africa Group (WUN GAG), and he has co-hosted the AAUN Australia Forum at UWA since 2016. His research

focuses on Australia-Africa relations as well as on the role of the African Union in regional governance. He has been a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia, 2013), a Visiting Researcher at the African Union Commission (Ethiopia & South Africa, 2017), and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria (South Africa, 2019). His most recent book is M. Ramutsindela and D. Mickler (eds), *Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Springer, 2019). At UWA, he teaches courses on Africa's international relations, Africa's security, and a collaborative short course in Pretoria and Jakarta on cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. Dr Mickler won the Community Pillar Award at the Inaugural WA African Community Awards 2019.

Dr Nikola Pijović

Lecturer, Queen's University Belfast; Research Fellow, AfREC UWA

Dr Nikola Pijović is Lecturer in International Relations at Queen's University Belfast and a Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia's Africa Research and Engagement Centre. He has a PhD in International Relations from the Australian National University, and is a leading expert on Australia's engagement with Africa. Nikola has contributed media commentary on Australia and Africa, and formal submissions to Australian parliamentary inquiries into engagement with African states. His book, *Australia and Africa. A New Friend From the South?* is the first comprehensive examination of Australia's historical and contemporary engagement with Africa

HE Mr Isaiya Kabira

***High Commissioner of Kenya to Australia and New Zealand
Dean of the African Heads of Missions***

HE Isaiya Kabira is the High Commissioner of Kenya to Australia and New Zealand. Since his posting Kabira has sought to define his agenda through the pillars of TOURISM, TRADE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, MINING, HEALTH, and SECURITY (TTEAHMS). Prior to his appointment, from January 2003 to 2013, Kabira was the Press Secretary of H.E. President Mwai Kibaki. Prior to joining the Government in 2003, he worked with various private local media firms. He is a graduate of the University of Nairobi where he was awarded a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Anthropology in 1990. Between 1990 and 2002, he undertook various study tours on broadcast journalism in the USA, UK, Germany and China.

HE Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk

High Commissioner of South Africa to Australia

His Excellency Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk assumed the post of High Commissioner for the Republic of South Africa to Australia on 20 May 2019, having previously served as Ambassador to Greece.

Born in 1959, Mr Van Schalkwyk studied Matric at Hoërskool Pietersburg, in Polokwane. He has a B PROC (Law) (1983); a BA Hons (Political Science, Cum Laude) (1984) and an MA (Political Science) (1990), all from Rand Afrikaans University.

A political appointee, Mr Van Schalkwyke is a former Premier of the Western Cape (2002-2004), Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2004-2009) and

Minister of Tourism (2009-2014). He served as a Member of Parliament for 25 years and was Leader of the Official Opposition from 1996-1999.

He has been a Member of the Executive Council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and a Chairperson of the Aviation, Travel and Tourism Industry Agenda Council of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Mr Van Schalkwyk is married to Suzette van Schalkwyk. They have two children.

Mr Ian Halliday

Australian Consul General Dubai; General Manager Middle East and Africa, Australian Consulate-General Dubai; Australian Trade and Investment Commission

Mr Ian Halliday joined Austrade in July 2018 as General Manager – Middle East and Africa with responsibility for Austrade operations across the region. He also holds the position of Consul-General of Australia to Dubai. Prior to joining Austrade, Ian was Managing Director of Dairy Australia from January 2010. Ian's expertise includes an extensive range of management roles with SPC, Goodman Fielder, Kraft Foods, KR Castlemaine and Vesco Foods. At Vesco Foods and KR Castlemaine he was the CEO, responsible for leading transformational change at both organisations. Whilst at Kraft Foods, Ian was Director of Operations responsible for all manufacturing and supply chain activities for the Kraft Australia organisation. He was also responsible for all Kraft Australia Export business, most of which included sales into Asia and the Middle East. His last appointment at Kraft Foods was the Director of Coffee Operations based in the United Kingdom.

Ian has a Bachelors in Applied Sciences (Food Tech) from Hawkesbury Agricultural College. He is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), and a former Director of Agrifood at Skills Australia, and GOTAFE.

HE Jenny Dee

Australian High Commissioner to Mauritius

Her Excellence, Ms Dee is currently the Australian High Commissioner to Mauritius. She also holds non-resident accreditation as Ambassador to Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles. Prior to her appointment she was a senior career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and was most recently Director, External Budget Section. In Canberra Ms Dee has held a range of positions in DFAT, including as Director, Sri Lanka and Maldives Section; India Political and Regional Section; and Indonesia Economic and Transnational Issues Section. She has served overseas at Australia's missions in Jakarta and Harare.

Ms Dee holds a Master of Arts (Foreign Affairs and Trade) from Monash University and a Bachelor of Business (Journalism) from the Queensland University of Technology. She is married with two children.

Session 2

Strengthening University Relationships – what works and what does not?

Chair: Prof Dawn Freshwater, Vice Chancellor, UWA

Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu

Vice Chancellor, University of Ghana

Professor Owusu is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, having previously served as Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Science, Dean/Ag. Dean of the School of Biological Sciences, and Provost of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Prof Owusu has

worked extensively on millet, vegetable, and urban insect pests, especially in the areas of insecticide resistance and use of indigenous plant materials for management of major insect pests. He has attracted some funds for research, and in 1999, personally built a laboratory (Food Security) at the University of Ghana for use by staff and students. He was instrumental in seeking for a grant for the acquisition and installation of a Scanning Electron Microscope (first of its kind in West Africa, worth US\$500,000) through a grant aid from the Government of Japan. He was the Chairman of the Volta Basin Research Project (VBRP), University of Ghana. In 2008, Prof Owusu was significantly decorated as a “LIVING LEGEND” by the People of Kochi Japan for his contribution to Science and the Internationalization of Kochi city. In 2010, he was named the Tourism Ambassador of Kochi Prefecture, Japan. In 2017, Emperor Meiji awarded Prof Owusu with the “Order of the Rising Sun” of Japan, in recognition of his distinguished achievements.

Prof Eeva Leinonen

Vice Chancellor and President, Murdoch University

Professor Eeva Leinonen joined Murdoch University as Vice Chancellor and President in April 2016, after three years of service as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Wollongong.

Professor Leinonen has an academic background in linguistics and psychology and has extensive experience in higher education in the United Kingdom, Europe and internationally. Her academic research focuses on pragmatic deficits of children with autistic spectrum disorders as well as higher education topics relating to curriculum and use of technology in learning.

Prior to moving to Australia in 2012, Professor Leinonen held the position of Vice-President (Education) and Professor of Clinical Linguistics at King’s College, University of London. She has also been Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Hertfordshire, UK where she also held a number of other academic leadership positions including Dean of the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences, Director of the Health and Human Sciences Research Institute, Head of the School of Psychology and Head of the School of Humanities.

Professor Leinonen has been actively involved in national and international higher education debates and advisory groups, including: Universities UK, Universities Australia; Chair of the UK Higher Education Funding Council/ Quality Assurance Agency advisory group into Employer Engagement in Learning, Chair of the King’s –Warwick Project, Trustee of IntoUni Charitable Trust; Trustee of the School’s Competition Settlement Trust, Member of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group in Australia, Member of the CEOs Council of Open Educational Resources University; Director of University of Wollongong Dubai Ltd; Director and Board Member of Future Directions International; Forrest Research Foundation Governors Committee Member; WA Health Translational Network Board Member and Chair of Innovative Research Universities.

Dr Thandi Mgwebi

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Tshwane University of Technology

Dr Thandi Mgwebi is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation & Engagement) at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in South Africa. Prior to joining TUT, she was Director of Research at the University of the Western Cape since 2015. Dr Mgwebi is a research and innovation leader with a PhD in Cell and Development Biology from the University of Cape Town. Her experience includes two years as a Postdoctoral Research

Fellow with the South African Vaccine Initiative (SAAVI) at UCT; a ten-year full-time appointment as research leader and manager at within the SA System of innovation from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); MRC and the NRF where she was Executive Director for the South African Research Chairs and centres of Excellence.

She is an insightful leader in the SA Higher Education landscape, served in the Ministerial task team for design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a National Mathematical Sciences Programme. She has featured in many international forums for research management and practice in higher education. Dr Thandi has provided training on research and grant management to a range of stakeholders in and outside South Africa including her role as trainer and facilitator for Objective 1 of the Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) in Africa. Dr Thandi is an advocate of science engagement and communication; she has concluded significant international partnerships that have leveraged financial and in-kind support for the national science agenda.

She has also represented the country at many international forums such as the World Science Forum; the American Association for the Advancement of Science; the European Open Science forum; the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS).

Session 3

Australia Africa Teamwork – AAUN innovation programs, Communications

Chair: Mellissa Wood, General Manager Global Programs, ACIAR

Ms Mellissa Wood

General Manager, Global Programs

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

Mellissa Wood is ACIAR's General Manager, Global Programs and previously Director of the Australian International Food Security Centre (AIFSC) 2012-2016. She leads ACIAR's engagement with global and multilateral fora as well as co-investments alliances in Africa, including 'Cultivate Africa's Future'. Mellissa has a strong interest in improving the adoption of research outputs for food and nutrition security outcomes, with a focus on the roles of public policy and the private sector to facilitate this. Previously, she was Director of Program Development at the Rome-based Global Crop Diversity Trust, working with FAO and CGIAR on the conservation and access of plant genetic resources. In Australia, her past roles include Program Leader, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry where she established the Australian Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis and was Manager, Australia's National Forest Inventory. Mellissa holds a BSc in Resource and Environmental Management and Master in Public Policy in Development and is a member of the AICD.

Professor Karen Charlton

School of Medicine, University of Wollongong

Professor Karen Charlton is an Advanced Accredited Practising dietitian and registered Public Health Nutritionist. She teaches on the Nutrition & Dietetics programmes in the School of Medicine, University of Wollongong. Prof Charlton has extensive international experience in research into successful ageing and translation of research into policy. Her doctoral work in South Africa provided evidence for the country's mandatory regulation for salt target levels in processed foods that was implemented (first country globally) in June 2016 and she continues to evaluate the effectiveness of this food policy. Prof

Charlton's research interests include successful ageing, prevention of non communicable diseases, and nutritional epidemiology. She has published over 170 publications, with co-authors from 16 countries.

Dr Peter Johnston

Climate Impacts Researcher, University of Cape Town (UCT)

Adjunct Assoc Professor, Murdoch University

Dr Peter Johnston is a climate scientist at the University of Cape Town. His research focuses on the applications and impacts of climate variability and change on various user sectors. He specialises in agriculture and water related activities with special emphasis on vulnerability and adaptation options. His interests and involvements have taken him to many African countries to learn from and contribute to other water and agricultural adaptive practices to climate change and variability.

Recent research included the application of models to determine the financial impacts and sustainable adaptation options for agricultural under climate change scenarios for commercial and small scale farmers. Other work is focused on the climate risks and decision-making time frames associated with agriculture and food security for Western Cape Department of Agriculture, and the impact of climate change on the financial vulnerability of maize, grape, wheat and citrus farmers in South Africa.

Currently he is involved in regional capacity building initiatives in Climate Change adaptation, and in developing a research focused African postgraduate cohort dedicated to alternative food security-enhancing crops. This is under the auspices of the AAUN, and involves 8 African and Australian Universities.

He has numerous publications and co-authored the South African chapter of Southern African Agriculture and Climate Change, (IFPRI, 2013). He has delivered many public lectures on climate, water and agricultural issues and is regularly consulted by media for comment on topical weather and climate events.

Professor Wallace Cowling FTSE GAICD

University of Western Australia (UWA)

Professor Cowling is an outstanding contributor and innovator at the interface of technology and commerce in Australian and international agriculture. He has bred and released over 67 crop varieties which have contributed to improved production, profitability and sustainability of the Australian grains industry. His research across the disciplines of animal and plant breeding challenges the status quo and promises major improvements for the future. He trains young plant breeders and early career researchers in the new approach. His research is now having impact in international agriculture through projects in Africa and elsewhere to develop more efficient and productive plant breeding systems.

Professor Prem Ramburuth

University of New South Wales, Sydney

Prem Ramburuth is Professor in International Business in the School of Management, UNSW Sydney. Her leadership positions at UNSW include Immediate Past President of the Academic Board, Associate Dean Education and Undergraduate Programs, Head of School of Management and Foundation Director of the Business School Academic Development Centre. Her research and teaching interests intersect in the areas of Cross-Cultural Management in International Business and Higher Education, with a focus on Emerging Economies (including BRICS and China's Global Growth in Africa), Globalisation

and its impacts, and issues of Diversity and Gender Equity. She is a member of several editorial boards including the International Journal of Emerging Markets, Chinese Management Studies and Journal for Multicultural Education.

Professor Ramburuth is the Academic Lead for Africa at the UNSW Institute for Global Development and delivers transformative development programs in Northern Uganda with a focus on capacity building in teaching, research and academic leadership, and oversees development projects in other disciplinary areas. She is committed to Quality Assurance in Higher Education and is on the Panel of Experts, Australian Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), and is Higher Education Program Assessor for the Fiji National Higher Education Commission. She is Visiting Professor at Gulu University (Uganda), and has been Visiting Professor at VNU Hanoi Business School (Vietnam), University of Colorado (Denver), and University Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia).

Dr Melody Mentz-Coetzee

Senior Researcher, University of Pretoria

Dr Melody Mentz-Coetzee is currently appointed as Senior Researcher at the Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship (CAS), University of Pretoria working on the Peer Learning for Emerging Researchers' Knowledge and Advancement (PERKA) Initiative which aims to identify, document, and share implementation models and partnership approaches for postdoctoral fellowships in Africa.

Dr Mentz-Coetzee is an experienced monitoring and evaluation practitioner, focusing on theory-based mixed-methods approaches and the evaluation of research and capacity development initiatives, with an emphasis on gender. She has worked as an evaluator in multinational contexts, engaged at national, pan-African and international levels. Previously, she was an external member of the evaluation team for the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) programme run in eleven African countries based in Nairobi (Kenya).

Dr Mentz-Coetzee is a co-author on national and international publications on the engagement patterns of undergraduate students and contributed several chapters to a social sciences research methodology textbook tailor-made for developing contexts. Most recently she contributed several papers in a multi-volume special journal edition of Gender and Development on Catalyzing and Evaluating Gender, Women's Leadership and Empowerment in Agricultural Research and Development in Africa.

Lisa Watts

Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director, The Conversation Media Group

Lisa is Chief Executive Officer and an executive Director of The Conversation Media Group. From launch eight years ago she has seen the onsite audience grow to over 13 million a month with teams in eight countries. Previously Lisa was CEO of ArtsHub, CEO of a search marketing firm, and General Manager of online employment for Fairfax Digital. Lisa has been a Director of Vertical Networks Group and Chair of Midsumma Festival. Lisa spend a year living in Nairobi Kenya as an AFS exchange student.

Professor Frans Swanepoel

Director, Strategic International Partnerships, University of Pretoria

Professor Frans Swanepoel is the Director of Strategic International Partnerships and Professor of Agricultural Transformation in Africa at the Centre for Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria and the interim Co-Chair for the Australia Africa

Universities Network (AAUN) Steering Group. He is also a Fellow at the Institute for African Development, Cornell University and visiting fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, University of Western Australia.

Professor Swanepoel has served in executive positions at various leading universities across South Africa. He has served as the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation at the University of the Western Cape, Dean at the University of Free State, Director of the African Doctoral Academy at Stellenbosch University and Director of the Postgraduate School for Agricultural and Rural Development at the University of Pretoria.

Professor Swanepoel has published extensively, with more than 170 scientific journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and reports. He has been chief-editor for three books, including the latest: *Towards Impact and Resilience: Transformative Change in and through Agricultural Education and Training in sub-Saharan Africa*.

Session 4

TEDx SESSION – “Water for Life”: Australia Africa Challenges and Solutions

Chair: – UWA/TEDX Expert Moderator

Professor Greg Leslie

Director of the Global Water Institute, University of New South Wales, Sydney

Professor Greg Leslie is the Director of the Global Water Institute at the University of New South Wales in Sydney Australia. The Global Water Institute represents over 300 water related research and teaching staff in the faculties of Science, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Arts and Social Science. GWI's three thematic programs are “Water Governance and Security”, “Healthy Oceans and Resilient Coastlines” and “Safe Water: Access and Equity for All”. Greg is a Chemical Engineer and was the Director of the UNESCO Centre for Membrane Science and Technology UNSW Sydney. Prior to joining UNSW Sydney, he worked in the public and private sector on water treatment, reuse and desalination projects in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong and the United States.

Professor Basant Maheshwari

School of Science and Health, Western Sydney University

Professor Basant Maheshwari has wide-ranging research experience in surface and groundwater management, urban and peri-urban water planning and environmental sustainability. Over the past 10 years, his work has involved transdisciplinary approach to water research and has focussed on understanding how water, landscape and people interact and influence the environment and sustainability urban and rural water security. His work in recent years focussed on modelling and analysing the surface and groundwater resources for long-term water resource planning at regional level and examining the implications of social, economic, cultural, policy and institutional aspects of water resources management. He has over 220 publications, including more than 100 journal articles in peer-reviewed, international journals. He was recipient of the 2010 Collaboration and Leadership Award from CRC for Irrigation Futures, the 2018 Vice Chancellor's Excellence Award for Interdisciplinary Research and the fellow of ISA

Abstracts of Presentations

Opening Session 1 – Knowledge diplomacy: opportunities and obstacles

Professor John Hearn

Co-Chair, Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN)

Each year, the annual AAUN Forums in Australia and Africa provide an opportunity to tune our priorities and focus with changing policy and capacity developments. The meetings are a vital way to incorporate research and education advances, and to align with the ambitions and capacities of our members. International cooperation is not easy, but with over 53 programs and equal partnerships between our 20 member Universities, we now have established fit-for-purpose scholarly communities who are creating relevant new knowledge and impact. Around this core of seed-funded programs in environment and food security, nutrition and health, education and economic development, we are building an Australia Africa information portal, exchange programs with options for established and emerging researchers, and support for the advancement of women in higher education. This team effort includes our knowledge partners DFAT, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the National Research Foundation of South Africa. We are extending our networks to build further reach and capacity. Together we can achieve much more than is possible by individuals or single institutions. At a time of dynamic geopolitics, we can be instruments of enduring knowledge diplomacy in the Indo Pacific region – addressing challenges for Australia and Africa.

Professor Dawn Freshwater, BA Manc, PhD Nott, FRCN, RN, RNT

Vice-Chancellor, University of Western Australia (UWA)

Building a stronger relationship with the peoples of Africa is a vital part of UWA 2030, a vision for The University Western Australia's future which is firmly based upon an outlook which reaches beyond our neighbours, right across the Indian Ocean.

It's an ocean we share. Its issues are our issues. We are already working with Africa in the critical areas of the environment, food security, education and economic development. We want to build a future together. The grand challenges of Africa are the grand challenges which concern us too.

Professor Maano Ramutsindela

Dean of Science, University of Cape Town

This talk presents the edited volume on Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and focuses on the themes and debates on the SDGs within the African

contexts and conditions. These themes include the relationship between SDGs and other development agendas and strategies on the continent; the conditions necessary for using natural resources to achieve the SDGs on the continent; the organisational structures of scholarly networks required to assist higher education institutions to play their roles in African development; and the implications of changing global environments on the SDGs on the continent. These networks are crucial for the realisation of SDG 17, which seeks to 'strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for development'. The talk also draws insights from chapters in the volume to highlight opportunities and constraints related to the SDGs in Africa. It concludes by posing questions for further debates on SDGs.

Book launch, *Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Springer 2019.

<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030148560>.

Maano Ramutsindela and David Mickler (eds)

The book draws upon the expertise and international research collaborations forged by the Worldwide Universities Network Global Africa Group to critically engage with the intersection, in theory and practice, of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's development agendas and needs. Further, it argues that – and demonstrates how – the SDGs should be understood as an aspirational blueprint for development with multiple meanings that are situated in dynamic and contested terrains. As the SDGs have substantial implications for development policy and resourcing at both the macro and micro levels, their relevance is not only context-specific but should also be assessed in terms of the aspirations and needs of ordinary citizens across the continent. Drawing on analyses and evidence from both the natural and social sciences, the book demonstrates that progress towards the SDGs must meet demands for improving human well-being under diverse and challenging socio-economic, political and environmental conditions. Examples include those from the mining industry, public health, employment and the media. In closing, it highlights how international collaboration in the form of research networks can enhance the production of critical knowledge on and engagement with the SDGs in Africa.

Book launch: *Australia and Africa. A New Friend From the South?*

Dr Nikola Pijović, Lecturer Queen's University Belfast; Research Fellow, AfREC UWA

Australia and Africa. A New Friend From the South? is the first study of Australia's historical and contemporary engagement with the African continent. It tells the story of Australia's engagement with Africa from its earliest days to the present, placing the country in the context of other 'new' actors engaging with Africa.

Notwithstanding its long history of engagement with Africa, contemporary Australia has largely neglected Africa because it does not know what it wants there: it is unable to assess its strategic and long-term interests on the continent. This is influenced by Australia's largely unacknowledged 'flawed' historical engagement

with Africa (participation in the colonization of Africa, and sympathy with racism and apartheid), as well as the political partisanship driving its fickle, parochial, and short-term approaches to engaging African states.

All of this makes Australia a rather unique emerging player in Africa: while other 'new' actors engage with Africa more strategically (desiring to secure resources and counter the influence of geopolitical rivals), Australia engages with Africa more episodically and is 'punching below its weight' in Africa.

HE Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk
High Commissioner of South Africa to Australia

As outlined in Agenda 2063 – the 50-year action plan and vision of the African Union – Africa needs to promote education in order to create employment and provide the skills required for a productive workforce that will be of benefit to the continent. To achieve this objective, civil society institutions and networks need to become more self-reliant.

The education we strive for should be able to produce visionary and strong leadership that will not only contribute to the eradication of poverty and inequality but also ensure the full realization of Africa's ambition to be stable, prosperous and competitive in global trade, investment and tourism. In order to make meaningful progress, proper alignment between national governments, international institutions and civil society is a pre-requisite.

The continent's education systems need to support the rapidly changing demands of African economies in order to create skilled Africans and to empower them to participate in and contribute to a changing global economic order.

Practical Strategies and Actions in building links with business and industry (along with Govt and Universities) to build better and more sustainable outcomes

Mr Ian Halliday, Australian Consul General Dubai, Australian Consulate-General Dubai; General Manager Middle East and Africa, Austrade

Resources, whether that be people or financial, are under increasing scrutiny and everyone is being asked to do more with less. This is placing organisations under pressure to better prioritise initiatives and deliver better outcomes. The AAUN has had some wonderful successes since inception. However, the AAUN should endeavour to seek out more quality research around mutual challenges with a strong linkage to business and local communities to build more opportunities for innovation and economic development. The importance to engage early in project design and development with key stakeholders, including local communities, governments and industry, and to maintain that engagement through the life of a project, is critically important to ensure successful and sustainable outcomes and ongoing support for new initiatives.

Session 2

Strengthening University Relationships – what works and what does not?

Chair: Prof Dawn Freshwater, Vice Chancellor, UWA

Partnership Priorities for Impact

Professor Ebenezer Owusu, Vice Chancellor University of Ghana

Partnership thrives on impact which must be driven by the priorities enshrined in the agreement or the relationship between the parties. This presentation would examine key priorities partnership must have for sustainability and impact. Priorities required by all parties irrespective of strength but on mutual respect and equity would be discussed.

Furthermore, the presentation would cover soft and hard partnership priorities and actions required to promote the impact of partnership. The African perspective and new paradigms would be shared as well as best practices which had led to some of the success stories on partnerships.

Focusing on the issue of collaboration

Prof Eeva Leinonen, Vice Chancellor and President Murdoch University

Murdoch University's collaboration with African Universities leads to publications with a higher than university average field weighted citation index. Quite simply, we are stronger (and better) together. In our resource-constrained university environment where Australia's current appetite for funding African-Australian collaboration is low, there are significant challenges to grow our partnerships and collaborations. We need to focus our respective strengths and work together to keep the positive association going. One way forward is to look at global research challenges and not just African or Australian ones. By working together, we can deliver research outputs that speak to global problems increasing the "export" of knowledge for the benefit of all.

Session 3

Australia Africa Teamwork – AAUN innovation programs, Communications

Chair: Mellissa Wood, General Manager Global Programs, ACIAR

Strategies to reduce blood pressure: An example from South Africa

Prof Karen E Charlton, School of Medicine, University of Wollongong

Introduction: This study evaluates whether the mandatory legislation to limit maximum sodium levels in a range of foods in South Africa (2016) resulted in reduced salt intakes.

Methods: Participants recruited from the World Health Organization Study on global AGEing and adult health (WHO-SAGE) South Africa Wave 2 (W2; 2015-16) and Wave 3 (W3; 2018-19) cohorts provided 24-hour urine samples, for analysis of creatinine, sodium and potassium excretion.

Results: Median salt intake indicated a slight downward trend between W2 and W3 (6.6 (6.1) (n = 408) vs 6.3 (5.4) g salt/day (n = 392); P = 0.0924), with a third meeting

the salt target of <5g/day. In younger people (18 - 49y), salt intake was 8.5 (9.9) g/day in W2 (n = 149) and 8.5 (6.6) g salt/day (n = 66) (P = 0.4015) in W3. In older adults (50+y), median salt intake was 5.9 (4.5) g/day (n = 259) in W2, and 6.0 (4.7) g/day (n = 326) in W3 (P = 0.8436). In both waves, median urinary potassium excretion remained very low (34.3 (41.2) vs 30.8 (24.3) mmol/day, respectively; P = 0.0008).

Conclusions: High use of salt added to foods at the table and during cooking may have limited the effectiveness of the salt legislation. Alternatively, food products may have been reformulated prior to the June 2016 implementation date.

Climate, Environment and Food security

Dr Peter Johnston, Climate Impacts Researcher, UCT

Various development challenges prevent African farmers from upscaling to larger sustainable and commercial enterprises that are resilient to variations in economic and climatic conditions. A viable agricultural sector requires a comprehensive network of research and other support structures including meteorological agencies, farmer consultative groups, and social services.

Innovations such as access to climate information and sustainable farming advances, have the capability of increasing food and nutritional security (especially with regard to alternative crops) Only by understanding the linkages between climate, environment and health does one have the potential to build up Africa's agricultural sector to one where food and nutritional sufficiency is accompanied by financial success. Maize, rice and wheat make up 60% of the global food energy intake, and are energy and water demanding, while 50,000 edible plants under-utilised or not used at all. Many of these are climate resilient and highly nutritious (in not least protein, which could replace a good proportion of animal protein).

A Nature paper suggests that while global agriculture has destroyed forests and biodiversity, squandered water and released one-quarter of global greenhouse-gas emissions, it is significant that one third of food is wasted, 800 million people remain undernourished, 2 billion are deficient in micronutrients, and obesity is on the rise.

They suggest that what is needed are strategies for managing land-use and food systems together. These would consider links between agriculture, water, pollution, biodiversity, diets and greenhouse-gas emissions.

The Question is posed: How can a sophisticated, highly mechanised agricultural sector in a country like Australia work with less developed agricultural systems in many African countries to increase sustainable solutions to food security issues in both locations?

Plant breeding for improved nutrition in African women and children

Prof Wallace Cowling, University of Western Australia

The common bean is a staple food in Africa, and a vital source of protein, iron and zinc for African women and children. Beans typically have a long cooking time, up to two hours, which limits their consumption at the village level where they are needed most. Fuel for cooking is scarce or expensive. A project was initiated in 2019 in east Africa to breed rapid-cooking beans with higher iron and zinc content. The project

uses affordable technology that is readily implemented by African bean breeders. Annual cycles of recurrent selection are forecast to reduce cooking time by at least 30%, and increase Fe content by 15% and Zn by 10% over current varieties in 5 years.

Empowerment in the Workplace: Women in Africa

Prof Prem Ramburuth, University of New South Wales, Sydney

This presentation seeks to share insights into a study of the roles, status and experiences of women in the workplace in a sample of countries and employment sectors in Africa. The study investigates issues that include levels of participation and conditions of employment; attitudes to gender equity and the extent of workplace inclusion/exclusion; opportunities to contribute knowledge and expertise, incentives for advancement, and provision of training and development; and, importantly, barriers to be overcome. It explores attitudes to women's empowerment in the workplace, and the extent to which they are able to assert their rights to gender equity and equal employment opportunities, and take their rightful place at work, and in the community and society.

Discussion of this AAUN PRDF funded project will include the collaborative approach of the research team from Australian and African universities, in knowledge sharing and exchange, and in seeking solutions to the marginalisation of women in the workplace in Africa. Discussion will also incorporate the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the need to address issues of gender equity, in particular Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The currency of the research topic, the growing interest and potential for further engagement, the challenges, as well as intended outcomes will be explored.

Dr Melody Mentz-Coetzee

Senior Researcher, University of Pretoria

The urgency of preparing the next generation of academics in Africa has been well-documented, as have many of the challenges facing early career researchers. Significant focus has been placed on developing programmes and initiatives to increase the number of PhD graduates and several approaches for achieving this have been implemented, including leveraging international partnerships and networks.

Increasing the number of PhDs is one component of the challenge. Retaining qualified human resource capital within African universities is another. Attrition during and immediately after the PhD or postdoctoral fellowship period contributes to continued low capacity within African institutions. The reasons for this attrition are multifaceted but are not limited to lack of financial resources or infrastructure. Socio-cultural as well as intra- and interpersonal factors play important role in creating enabling environments for retaining early career researchers.

There are practical strategies that members of university networks, such as AAUN, can adopt to strengthen not only capacity development, but talent retention – including holistic programme design, providing peer- and senior mentorship,

leveraging technology for monitoring and early intervention, and creating space for sharing good practice and resources. Research on the career pathways of early career scientists is also an area of opportunity for the AAUN.

Lisa Watts

Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director, The Conversation Media Group

The Conversation is a global not-for-profit, educational charity providing the public with an independent channel of expert analysis and breaking research and scientific news. Professional editors unlock the value of research by translating it into readily understood language for business, government and the wider public.

The Conversation aims to make a practical difference by expanding engagement with those communities on the front line of the challenges and opportunities associated with issues like green technology, water reform, oceans, food security, infectious diseases and biotechnology.

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The Conversation Africa launched in 2015, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A newsroom was established in Johannesburg followed by Nairobi. Efforts to set up operations in West Africa are underway.

Articles published by The Conversation Africa are featured on sister sites in Australia, the UK, the US, France, Indonesia, Canada and Spain. Lisa will talk about the impact and highlight connections built between Australia and Africa since the Africa site launched four years ago.

[Session 4](#)

[TEDx SESSION – “Water for Life”: Australia Africa Challenges and Solutions](#)

[Chair: – UWA/TEDX Expert Moderator](#)

The importance of partnerships and local leadership in achieving SDG 6

Prof Greg Leslie, Director of the Global Water Institute, UNSW Sydney

Many features of water challenges facing African nations also occur in Australia. This presentation will focus on a suite of local water projects in Uganda, Botswana and Kenya that teach the importance of forming meaningful and lasting partnerships to deliver outcomes that support Sustainable Development Goal Number 6. Capacity for research and education at Australian and African universities can initiate and deliver new approaches for drinking water treatment, efficient irrigation and increased productivity while protecting the environment through effective water management. The key for universities is to recognise the need to build partnerships and work with community leaders to make a contribution to achieving results at a meaningful scale.

Urbanisation, Water and Food Security

Professor Basant Maheshwari, Western Sydney University

Rapidly increasing population and urban migration across different regions of the world in general and Africa in particular are creating new and complex challenges. In view of these changes, it is now increasingly being realised that we need to rebalance the way we plan and manage land and water resources to address these problems. Water security, the capacity to provide and protect sustainable access to water, is increasingly an issue of concern at a local, national, and transboundary scale. One major challenge is the ability for both rural and urban Africans to access a clean water supply for drinking and water for food production. Water in Africa, as a limited resource, must be carefully managed for the benefit of all people and the environment to ensure food security in the present and into the future. Rapid growth of urban areas, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, has led to large volumes of water being extracted from existing surface and groundwater sources. As such, this could seriously impact on the sustainable development goals of the UN.

Achieving and maintaining sustainability, liveability and productivity of African regions must address several key goals which include adaptation to new water and food security challenges created by urbanisation and climate change. This complex and 'wicked' problem manifests itself more dramatically in urban and peri-urban areas, as these undergo faster land use changes, productive land taken out of agriculture and experience greater population pressures. There are many environmental, economic, political and social challenges if the goals of achieving sustainable, liveable and productive urban regions are to be achieved. The concept of sustainable development and water and food security symbolise the big visionary ideas for balanced urban development but implementation of these popular visions can encounter a host of conflicts due to a range of interests and stakeholders involved. Three key questions to be explored in this presentation include (i) Will we have enough water in the future for different needs (including the environment) in urban and peri-urban areas for drinking, food production and other uses around African cities? (ii) If not, what options do we have? and (iii) will those options work sustainably and deliver the goods?