

# *The Annual AAUN*

## *John Hearn Memorial Lecture*

### **“No Ordinary Partnership – the AAUN and Why It Matters”**

Inaugural lecture to be delivered by

*Professor Cheryl de la Rey*

Vice-Chancellor University of Canterbury  
and AAUN Co-Founder

**6-8pm, Monday 3 November 2025**

**Council Chambers, Chancellery Building  
University of New South Wales, Sydney**

Please register your in-person or virtual  
attendance [via this link](#). Places are limited  
and registration is essential.

For more information on AAUN, please see  
[www.aaun.edu.au](http://www.aaun.edu.au)



## **About AAUN**

The Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN), established in 2012, is the flagship network of 26 universities from across Australia and the African continent who collaborate through equal partnership on research, capacity-building and academic diplomacy. Key programs include the AAUN Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) research seed grants, the AAUN Early Career Researchers (ECR) Group, the Annual AAUN John Hearn-Cheryl de la Rey ECR Prize, the AAUN Emerging Leaders in Australia-Africa Diplomacy (ELAAD) Program, the Annual AAUN John Hearn Memorial Lecture, and the two annual high-level AAUN Forums, one in Africa and one in Australia.

## **About Professor John Hearn**

The late Professor John Hearn (1943-2024) co-founded the Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN) in 2012 with Professor Cheryl de la Rey, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria. He served as the inaugural AAUN Co-Chair (Australia) until his passing on 1 November 2024.

Professor Hearn served in senior university leadership positions at the Australian National University and the University of Sydney and as Executive Director of the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), under which he established the WUN Global Africa Group. Professor Hearn also served on the Australian Foreign Minister's Advisory Group on Australia-Africa Relations (AGAAR). As a reproductive and developmental physiologist, he remained a highly active global scholar and academic diplomat right up until his passing, regularly traveling to Europe, Asia and Africa.

Professor Hearn was a pioneer and champion of Australia-Africa collaboration in higher education and research, and through his academic diplomacy, servant leadership and commitment to the principle of equal partnership, he built enduring and impactful international networks and collaborations that brought together universities, scholars, students, ministers, diplomats, international agencies, business leaders and communities across the Global North and Global South.

## **The Annual AAUN John Hearn Memorial Lecture**

The Annual AAUN John Hearn Memorial Lecture was established by AAUN to recognise and celebrate the life and work of the late Professor John Hearn and to continuing his impactful legacy. The Lecture serves as a special occasion to engage with distinguished thought leaders and knowledge partners on themes relating to Professor Hearn's passion for advancing Australia-Africa higher education and research partnerships.

The inaugural Annual AAUN John Hearn Memorial Lecture is hosted by the University of New South Wales, where Professor Hearn and the AAUN Secretariat were housed in the latter years of his life. The inaugural lecture will be delivered by Professor Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and Co-Founder of AAUN.

## **The Distinguished Keynote Speaker: Professor Cheryl de la Rey**

Professor Cheryl de la Rey is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canterbury since 2019.



Prior to her current position Cheryl held a number of leadership positions in tertiary education in South Africa including being Chief Executive of the Council of Higher Education and Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria for just under a decade.

She has served on several boards; most recently the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and is currently the Chairperson of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the Universities NZ Education Committee. Her field of academic specialisation is Social Psychology and she has published widely in the broad area of intergroup relations.

She is currently serving as a member of the International Union of Psychological Science Presidential Task Force on Psychological Science Diplomacy.

Time (AEDST)	Program
17:30	<b>Arrival and registration</b>
18:00	<b>Welcome remarks</b>  Co-Hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate Professor Janet Dzator, University of Newcastle and AAUN Deputy Co-Chair (Australia)</li> <li>• Associate Professor Andrew Dansie, UNSW, AAUN Board Member</li> </ul> Welcome to Country  Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emeritus Professor Prem Ramburuth FRSN, GAICD, School of Management and Governance, UNSW Business School</li> <li>• Associate Professor David Mickler, AAUN Co-Chair (Australia), Dean Global, Africa, Curtin University</li> <li>• Professor Aldo Stroebe, AAUN Co-Chair (Africa), Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Internationalisation, University of Mpumalanga</li> </ul>
18:20	<b>Memorial Lecture</b>  Professor Cheryl de la Rey Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and Co-Founder, AAUN
18:50	<b>Panel discussion and reflections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Government representative (tbc)</li> <li>• African Head of Mission in Australia (tbc)</li> <li>• Emeritus Professor Prem Ramburuth, UNSW</li> <li>• Associate Professor Grace Liu, AAUN General Manager</li> <li>• Honorary Professor Matthew Neuhaus, ANU</li> </ul>
19:20	<b>Special recognition of outstanding service to AAUN</b>  <i>Presented by AAUN Co-Chairs</i>
19:30	<b>Opening of nominations: Annual AAUN John Hearn-Cheryl de la Rey ECR Prize</b>  <i>Announced by event Co-Hosts</i>
19:40	<b>Closing remarks and appreciation</b>  Professor Adrian Hearn, University of Melbourne
<b>Reception</b>	