

Regional Programme Australia and the Pacific Activities

20

23

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The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation of Germany, with the vision to promote international dialogue, sustainable development, good governance, capacity building and regional integration and enhance understanding of the key drivers of global developments. It is named after the first Chancellor (Prime Minister) of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer, who embodied Christian-social, conservative and liberal traditions. His name represents the democratic rebuilding of Germany, reconciliation with France, the anchoring of German foreign policy in a trans-Atlantic community of values, a vision of European unity and Germany's orientation towards a social market economy.

German political foundations are unique throughout the world. The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung is associated with Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party. Not many other organisations provide the same expertise in the field of democracy building and dialogue. Although each foundation is affiliated with a political party, they are organizationally, legally and financially independent and they are funded by the German Government. Their international work is closely aligned with Germany's foreign policy goals.

Through its international activities and projects carried out in collaboration with local partners, KAS makes a substantial contribution to international cooperation, ensuring that Germany lives up to its growing responsibility in the world. Particularly in development policy, the aim of our work is to motivate and enable (young) people to shape their own future by strengthening democracy, the rule of law and promote the principles of a just social market economy. This includes capacity building in the areas of creating sustainable democratic structures, constitutional reform, as well as the support of human rights and peace processes. To this end, we collaborate with government institutions, policy-makers, political centre parties, civil society organisations, academia and the media sector.

A further pillar underpinning the political work is research and consultancy. This is more than just giving advice on current political affairs. We conduct research on the implications of political developments and seek to inform the policy-making process to contribute towards the development of far-sighted, sustainable policies that can help prevent crises.

Worldwide work and Activities in Australia and the Pacific

Currently KAS is present in around 120 countries, with over 100 offices on six continents. With our worldwide networks and long-term partner structures, we aim to contribute to knowledge exchange and policy development in line with our values and goals. Especially across the Asia-Pacific region, the work of KAS is reflective of Germany's commitment to an order based on rules, cooperation and responsible, concerted leadership.

As current global developments – such as a volatile security environment – underscore the common interests of Europe and Australia, KAS' Regional Programme for Australia and the Pacific seeks to foster durable collaboration through dialogue among parliamentarians, representatives of government departments and leading academic/think tank experts, as well as political analysis and consultancy. For the European Union in general and Germany in particular, dialogues with Australia and New Zealand are of special relevance due to our history of strong bilateral and regional relations. Given our shared values and common interests in shaping the rules-based order, there are manifold opportunities for this partnership. Our programmes are dedicated to collaboration and knowledge-sharing to strengthen our collective resilience and ability to find solutions to the pressing problems of our time.



A Word from the Director

Dear friends of the KAS AUS and the Pacific,

Another year is drawing to a close and my colleagues and I are very happy and feel privileged to have spent time and interacted with you over the course of this year. You, representing “political Canberra” from Ministries, Embassies, Parliaments and NGOs to Academia, but also simply as individuals who are interested in our work and without whom we could not do this work, which, in essence, is about bringing people together promoting democracy, peace and international cooperation.

Our year was busy and filled with numerous activities around our main topics of foreign and security policy, counter terrorism and cyber security, the rule of law and development policy. **Highlights** of this year were again our **KAS Lecture**, with former President of Kiribati Anote Tong, our well-attended **Security Conference**, another visit from our most important foreign policy politician in Brussels, **David McAllister**, and two delegation visits to Berlin and Brussels respectively. As our planning continues for next year, we aim at maintaining our cornerstone events but try to be as active as possible in the Pacific Island States as well. Unfortunately, I cannot spare you a rather grim outlook on the surrounding circumstances in this world in which we want to make an impact in promoting the right way of politics and international cooperation.

The Middle-East is in trouble yet again. The unprecedented, hideous terrorist attack by Hamas on innocent Israelis on October 7 was essentially an act of war by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The theocratic and authoritarian Mullah-

regime is Russia’s closest war ally, and, with its financial and material aide, its Palestinian proxy force Hamas conducted this brutal heist cold-blooded like. The barbaric actions of these Palestinian murder squads, their indiscriminate killing, mistreatment and abduction of civilians, are horribly reminiscent of the massacres carried out by the Russian invasion troops in Ukraine in places like Bucha and Irpin. And Hamas’ massive continuous rocket terror against the Israeli civilian population also shows what Ukrainians still must endure daily.

It is about time that we, the Western liberal democracies, finally realize that the various incidents of war and conflict that are being opened up around the globe, only serve one purpose: namely to destroy the rules-based international order. It is a major global offensive and coordinated attack of the anti-Western despotic states against the democratic world and its liberal values.

Therefore, at the moment, all our solidarity must be with the Israeli people, who have been brutally attacked and are confronted with the terribly traumatizing, unprecedented experience of an anti-Jewish pogrom on the very territory of the Jewish state. However, we must not allow ourselves to be distracted by the unabated Russian war of annihilation against Ukraine and other alarming events. For such a diffusion of our attention is part of the calculation that the anti-civilizational axis of evil – stretching from Moscow via Baku, Theran and Pyongyang to Beijing – is pursuing with its warlike pinpricks against the free world.

Russia, which until recently staged itself as a peace-keeper in the Caucasus, has coldly abandoned its supposed protégé Armenia because it has embraced democracy too strongly. The fact that it has instead given the Azerbaijani – and Moscow-schooled – autocrat Aliyev permission to yet again stage a war in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabach is ample proof that Moscow’s strategic aim is to suppress any attempts at democratization in its neighbourhood.

But its immediate neighbourhood is not the only region of undue Russian influence. Even in other continents Putin’s regime is stepping up its destructive activities. In Latin America, it is keeping the autocracies of Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba in power, while in Africa – by deployment of mercenaries, disinformation, election interference, support for coups, and arms for resources deals – it is active in removing democratic structures in countries such as Niger, in the Sahel Zone and the Central African Republic, to name but a few. This low-cost, high influence strategy seeks to advance a very different world order than the rules-based, democratic political system. The outcomes from Russia’s interventions in Africa, therefore, will have far reaching implications for governance norms and security on the continent.

In Europe’s politically most unstable region, the Balkan, Russia’s influence is deteriorating the already worrisome situation even more. Russia’s ideological junior partner Serbia is apparently flirting with the violent reconquest of Kosovo.

The fact that NATO has categorically declared a priori that it will under no circumstances take direct action against the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine seems to fill the Serbian autocrat, Alexander Vucic, with confidence that the Western alliance will also shy away from a military confrontation in Kosovo – despite its contingent stationed there. An EU-future for Serbia has therefore become totally illusionary in the recent past.

For Putin, the growing Serbian willingness to aggression offers the opportunity to further test NATO’s will to defend itself and force it to withdraw resources that are to be used for the benefit of Ukraine. And the destabilizing effect of Russia’s global warlike activities is entirely in the interests of China. A weakened West is not an attractive partner for the “Global South”, countries that China wants to win as its allies in order to increase its global influence. And, in addition, China might itself be waiting for the right moment to militarily annex democratic Taiwan.

The instability created in these places is designed to divert US attention and resources away from the war in Ukraine. Only recently did the US withdraw large stockpiles of ammunitions stored in Israel and transferred them to Ukraine. If this war escalates further, as it may well, they will need to be replaced with stocks that would otherwise be earmarked for Ukraine to use against Russia. And we have not even mentioned the lack of political will in large parts of Washington to continue the support for Ukraine amidst a massive budget crisis and a looming confrontational presidential election year.

Just as Russia used Iran to supply large numbers of drones to attack Ukrainian civilians, it is now using Iran to encourage and enable the attacks in Israel. Iran, of course, is a more than willing partner whose leaders have repeatedly sworn death to Israel and America; as have their proxies in Gaza and also in Lebanon. Iran has long directed, trained, financed and supplied weapons to Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza, Judea and Samaria and the West Bank. Moscow also maintains and develops links with Palestinian terrorist groups and individual extremists that go back to the Soviet era.

Hamas leaders have repeatedly made visits to Moscow since the start of the Ukraine war and met with high-ranking government officials. The same holds true for their terrorist companions from Gaza, the Islamic Jihad. The leaders of another Iranian proxy, the Lebanese Hezbollah, are also welcome guests in Moscow. Hezbollah terrorists fought side by side with Russian troops in Syria and have since been involved in helping Moscow evade sanctions and may even have received weapons in return. And in the South, another Iranian proxy, the Huhti militia in Jemen, is a potential threat for a multi-front war for Israel.

It is for this that Israel should take a clear stand on the side of Ukraine by supplying weapons: The only acute existential threat to Israel is posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and its proxy forces in the region. This is an enormous threat, and it would therefore be even more absurd if Israel were to permanently bind itself to the benevolence of Russia as the very power that acts as the most powerful supporter and protector of Iran and its eliminatory anti-Semitic regime.

Of course Israel has a high interest to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia on the Syrian battlefield. So far, they were able to conduct air strikes against Iranian targets in Syria without coming into conflict with the massive Russian military presence there. However, with Iran's de facto entry into the war on the Russian side, the question increasingly arises as to how reliable such pledges by the now wildly aggressive Russian state still are.

This is not to say that Putinist Russia, as is the case with Iran and Hamas, is intent on wiping out Israel. But it suits the Kremlin if the region sinks into new bloody conflicts, in the face of which the Russian war of annihilation against Ukraine could then appear to the world public almost like a secondary "normality".

Israel now needs the full backing of the democratic world as it advances into Gaza under its right of self-defence to destroy Hamas' ability to continue its murderous attacks. Incidentally, this right to attack the aggressor's territory in self-defence is also available to Ukraine but

is effectively denied to it by leading Western governments – by denying it weapons systems that would enable it to carry out such operations.

The West can no longer afford to view the various current flashpoints, whether in Ukraine, the Caucasus, Africa or the Middle East, as isolated, "regional" phenomena. They are all part of a developing world war against the entire democratic civilization, which is being driven forward massively and at high speed by their united authoritarian state adversaries. Ukraine and Israel therefore not only need to withstand their enemies with our help, but they must win with our help. Therefore, Western leaders like the German Chancellor must step up their game and support Ukraine with everything there is – including much needed air support and battle tanks- that will help them win the war. This is not the time for cautious approaches, too much – including the post World War II European peace order – is at stake.

But I nonetheless dare say: with combined efforts, determination and bold political leadership: we will prevail. KAS Australia is determined to contribute to this process, may we only be a little office of a political foundation with limited means and reach, but with joint forces we will defeat our adversaries and shape a better world for our common peaceful and prosperous future.

Wishing you a successful 2024 and some joyful reading with this report,

Yours sincerely,

Bertil Wenger
 Director
 KAS Australia and the Pacific

2023 Office Visits



1. Visit of the Vice Chancellor of the USP, Prof Pal Ahluwalia.
 2. Visit of the former President of Kiribati, H.E. Anote Tong.

Parliamentary and Political Party Dialogue

International cooperation and multilateral engagement, based on shared principles and common goals, begin with dialogue. Parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary exchanges play an important role in building bridges between countries to enhance peace, democracy and sustainable development.

Less driven by protocol than meetings between ministers and heads of states, exchanges of ideas, experiences and good practices between parliamentarians and party representatives promote a better understanding of shared challenges: by learning from each other to better address challenges, identify avenues for action and drive meaningful change.

Germany, Australia and New Zealand have highly respected parliamentary systems based on a strong democratic tradition. This places them in an excellent position to work together to develop comprehensive and coordinated policies in response to today's challenges. Across the Pacific Islands, the further development of inclusive political parties and the rule of law are paramount to sustainable development.

Parliamentary and political party dialogue therefore constitutes a key pillar of our work in Australia and the Pacific region.

22 March 2023

AHK Canberra Delegation

KAS Australia and the Pacific hosted a luncheon discussion for members of the German-Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in March.

The topic focused on regional connectivity, supply chains and security integration, as international geopolitical events are increasingly driving economic developments in the Indo-Pacific.

Taking a broader perspective, it is important to not only focus on recent outcomes of great power rivalries but also consider what these mean for future security and free trade concerns. As recent events in Europe have highlighted the interconnectedness of the world, with events in one region causing ripple effects to be felt across the globe, effective multilateralism and joint approaches are becoming increasingly important. This applies to all sectors and requires an assessment of existing policies and their effectiveness in terms of resources (material/human capital), capabilities and commitment to cooperation.

The discussions commenced with an input statement by the National Executive Director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA), Dr Bryce Wakefield, who spoke on current developments and trends in the region, sharing insights from his then recent travels to Fiji, Japan and India. The experiences shared in the course of the exchange highlighted that a surprising number of German companies are already quite active in the region, having identified demand and supply gaps that they could fill. One example of such a gap was the need for specialised translation services, covering regional dialects to enable better communication.

This closed-door event formed part of the German-Australian Chamber of Commerce's 'Canberra Delegation', an annual event where members have the opportunity to engage with key policy makers in the 'heart of the nation', Canberra. This year's delegation focused on energy, health and the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations.





23 March 2023

Roundtable with Parliamentary State Secretary Thomas Hitschler

KAS Australia and the Pacific held a roundtable discussion with defence and security experts and Think Tank representatives in Canberra in March.

We were honoured to have a special input statement provided by PStS Thomas Hitschler, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Defence, who spoke on current developments in Germany and the Bundeswehr's efforts to implement the capability overhaul announced by the government in 2022.

Recent events in Europe as well as in the Indo-Pacific region have highlighted just how interconnected the world has become, with events in one region having immediate and tangible consequences for another. From climate-related challenges to geo-political power struggles and energy security, global developments increasingly require even more sustained cooperation between like-minded, trusted partners on the basis of common principles. Australia and Germany have advanced their cooperation over the past few years, with Germany increasingly participating in Australian and multilateral defence exercises and the exploration of opportunities for further joint projects, including on energy security.

In view of these developments, a particular focus of the discussion was on the German 'Zeitenwende' and German-Australian Defence Cooperation in the Context of International Security Developments.



23 July – 3 August 2023

Dialogue Programme New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji

Following his KAS Lecture in 2022, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) had the pleasure to welcome David McAllister – Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the EU Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee on the region again this year. The dialogue programme took the former *Ministerpräsident* (Premier) of the German State of Lower Saxony to New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji.

In **Wellington**, the MEP had the opportunity to meet various representatives from the National Party of New Zealand (including its President Sylvia Wood and the then Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Gerry Brownlee), the then governing Labour Party (including the Hon Damien O’Conner – former Minister for Trade and Export Growth), the diplomatic corps (including the German Ambassador HE Nina Menzenbach, the (now former) EU Ambassador to New Zealand, HE Nina Obermaier, and the High Commissioner of the Cook Islands, HE Kairangi Samuela). He also gave a Lecture in cooperation with the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs (NZIIA) at the University of Wellington on “Development, Trade and Security in the Pacific – A European Perspective”. The topic was timely given the recent conclusions of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and New Zealand. A Dinner Discussion in cooperation with the Centre for Strategic Studies enabled the MEP to discuss current foreign and security challenges and hear more about New Zealand’s Pacific strategy.

In **Auckland**, the MEP briefly addressed and participated in the Te Taumata – Maori Trade Body Meeting. There was a lot of interest from Maori business representatives in the EU-NZ Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which includes a Chapter on “Maori and Trade Cooperation”. The Chapter acknowledges the Treaty of Waitangi as a foundational document of constitutional importance to New Zealand and aims to enhance the ability for Māori enterprises to benefit from the Agreement’s trade and investment opportunities, strengthen links between EU and Māori enterprises (with a particular emphasis on SMEs), support science, research and innovation links, and cooperate on geographical indications. His visit of New Zealand’s most populous city coincided with the Auckland Chamber of Commerce’s EU-NZ Business Summit, where the MEP gave a keynote address on the FTA and its practical benefits as well as the war in Ukraine and its implications.





In **Nuku'alofa**, the delegation was warmly welcomed and accompanied by the German Honorary Consul, Carl Sanft. Our arrival coincided with the departure of US State Secretary Antony Blinken, who was there to open the new US Embassy, and the arrival of the Chinese hospital ship Daishan Dao, there to provide free basic medical assistance. The delegation had the pleasure and the privilege to meet the Prime Minister of Tonga, the Hon Hu'akavameiliku, with whom we had an open and frank exchange about his country's current domestic and external challenges (including climate change, natural disasters, brain drain, and geopolitical competition). At a Luncheon Discussion with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the delegation was able to learn more about current foreign affairs and defence challenges such as the prevention of illegal fishing in the country's exclusive economic zone and the protection of the undersea cables crucial for its communication. The delegation called on the Hon Aisake Valu Eke, an Independent Member of the Legislative Assembly, who inter alia outlined the peculiarities of the Tongan electoral system (a constitutional monarchy) and enabled the delegation to visit the temporary parliamentary building used since the destruction of the actual parliamentary building by the recent tsunami following a volcanic eruption.



In **Suva**, the MEP had lively exchanges with the Hon Biman Prasad – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance (eg about non-cooperation in tax matters), the Hon Pio Tikoduadua – Minister for Home Affairs (eg about visa-free travel for Fijians to the EU), the Hon Lenora Qereqeretabua – Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Ratu Naiqama Lalabaluva – Speaker of the Parliament (eg about the challenge of multilingual parliaments). From the diplomatic corps, the delegation had the opportunity to meet the new German Ambassador to Fiji, HE Dr Andreas Prothman, and the (outgoing) EU Ambassador to Fiji, HE Sujiro Seam. In a meeting with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the delegation was able to hear from the then Acting Secretary General, Esala Nayasi, on the regional bodies priorities, including the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific and the ongoing consultations on its Implementation Plan. The MEP also held a Lecture at the University of the South Pacific on "Germany's Agenda in the Pacific and how it complements that of the European Union". The Lecture attracted participants from academia, students and the public at large, and was complemented by an interview with FBC News.



A field trip organised by the EU Delegation to Fiji gave us the opportunity to inspect the EU funded KIWA (Sigatoka Sand Dunes) project aiming to foster local and national environmental capacities to build climate resilience in the Pacific.



11-15 September 2023

German Delegation Visit to Australia

As part of our 2nd KAS Australia and the Pacific Security Conference, we were honoured to welcome a German delegation to Australia.

Long-term friend of Australia Volkmar Klein MP, Spokesperson on Economic Cooperation and Development of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group and Deputy Chair of the German-Pacific Parliamentary Friendship Group, Prof Timo Kob, Head of the Federal Working Group 'Cyber Security' at the CDU Economic Council and CEO at HiSolutions AG, and Dr Christian Forneck, Senior Foreign Policy Adviser CDU/CSU, visited Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane. They engaged in a series of bilateral meetings and roundtables on foreign, security, economic and cyber policy related issues.

Meeting partners included: the Hon James Griffin MP, NSW Shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change, representatives of the Lowy Institute and the Australian-German Chamber of Commerce in Sydney; the Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry, International Development and the Pacific, the Hon Tim Watts, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, members of the Coalition Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and DFAT representatives in Canberra; and the Hon David Janetzki, QLD Shadow Minister for Investment and Trade in Brisbane.

During the discussions, it became apparent that Germany and Australia, both important actors in their respective regions, not only share common concerns but each also has unique experiences in specific areas the other could benefit from. For example, while Germany only recently became aware of the potential risks associated with its business sector being closely intertwined with Chinese markets, Australia has extensive experience with Chinese tactics that could inform German policymaking. Meanwhile, Germany's progress and knowledge regarding energy transition and onshore processing of resources could assist Australia's efforts to rebuild its national manufacturing sector and become less reliant on other states.

The delegation concluded their programme with a visit to the Rheinmetall Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence (MILVEHCOE) in Redbank and the Australian Army's 7th Brigade in Enoggera, where they received an introduction to and a demonstration of the capabilities of the Boxer CRV and heavy weapon carrier vehicle.



8-14 October 2023

German-Australian Parliamentary Dialogue on current challenges in Foreign and Security Policy as well as Economic and Social Policy

In October, KAS Australia continued its high-level German – Australian Parliamentary Dialogue with a visitors' program to Berlin and Brussels, focusing on Foreign, Security, Economic and Social Policy. Joining the program from the Australian, Liberal Party side were Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Zoe McKenzie MP, Deputy Chairwoman of the Australian-German Parliamentary Friendship Group, and Rachael Thompson, Chief of Staff to Senator Birmingham. The group was accompanied by Director Bertil Wenger.

Meetings started in Brussels with an introductory briefing by our KAS colleagues Olaf Wientzek and Jonas Nitschke. The next day saw an interesting meeting with Germany's new Military Representative to NATO Brigadier General Gerhard Klaffus. Klaffus provided worrisome news from the Ukrainian-Russian war, signalling a Ukrainian exhaustion regarding personnel and material, minimal Ukrainian front line progress, and the looming danger of yet another Russian onslaught – amidst a massive increase of military and ammunition industrial production - once wintertime would provide for frozen grounds, making it easier for vehicles to proceed. It became apparent that Ukraine will need much more support – including fighter airplanes – to not only withstand Russia but to win a war that has become a war of attrition.

Further meetings were conducted with representatives from the European Council and the European External Action Service focusing on the functioning mechanism of these institutions, Enlargement, Civil Protection and the growing importance of the EU's Asia-Pacific relations. An evening debate with high-ranking representatives of the EU's Political and Security Committee saw a heated debate about the right way forward in supporting Ukraine and saving the European peace order. A visit to NATO HQ comprised discussions about NATO and its Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, the current NATO Agenda, and its approach to EDT and innovation.

The Brussels visit was concluded by meetings with party friends from the EP's CDU/CSU group and the CDU's international secretary. David McAllister MEP, a frequent visitor to Australia and the Pacific, Axel Voss MEP, and Christian Kremer from the CDU gave an outlook on Germany, the Party, and the EU before the June 2024 elections. It became apparent, that times would likely not be easy for the big political groups of the EPP and the Social Democrats, with populists – especially on the right – winning more voters.

The ensuing visit to Berlin encompassed discussions with our KAS International and European Department Leadership – Thank you Christian Echle and Caroline Kanter -, and high-ranking members of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group, among them honourable- "Aussie" Volkmar Klein, Spokesman on Development Policy, Jürgen Hardt, Spokesman on Foreign Affairs, and the Deputy Chairman of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group, Johann Wadephul, to name but a few. A wonderful reception at the Australian Embassy was followed on the last day by meetings with Minister of State at the Foreign Office Tobias Lindner, former Federal Minister for Transport Andreas Scheuer, and a dinner discussion with Heribert Dieter, Senior Associate of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

In the current geo-political turmoil and political systems competition this visit was very important in aligning key political players over the vast geographical distance between Germany and Australia to strengthen understanding and cooperation between two prominent Western Liberal Democracies. Many thanks to our colleagues in the department "Inlandsprogramme" who worked very hard on an amazing program.



Foreign and Security Policy

“Although oceans may separate us, Germany and Australia have a common understanding of the enormous challenges we face. [...] Cooperation amplifies our voice, unity multiplies our power.”

Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, Lowy Institute Address

Recent years have highlighted how quickly established systems and common norms of engagement can be challenged and changed by individual actors refusing to adhere to a rules-based international order.

Global developments such as Russia’s continued war in Ukraine, China’s assertions in the South China Sea and the acceleration of smaller conflicts arising from these are only a few examples of the increase in systemic rivalries characterising the current geopolitical landscape of our time.

To avoid being caught off-guard, political decision-makers are forced to think ahead even further to develop strategies that can adapt at short notice to a wider array of increasingly non-traditional threats. From military expansion and information warfare to coercive tactics and economic pressure, the wide range of new security threats are forcing international actors like Germany, Europe, Australia and New Zealand to anticipate challenges on a much broader spectrum. Thus, causing the dilemma of creating an environment that can only be managed by increased cooperation while at the same time making it necessary for nations to become less dependent on others. Therefore, as debates about greater resilience, autonomy, diversification and decoupling were intensified, there has also been a continued resolve to uphold a rules-based international order in a concerted effort with like-minded partners.

Both Australia and Europe have been seeking to strengthen their security cooperations with value-partners, diversify supply-chains and economic partnerships and solidify their liberal democratic structures.

In this environment of geopolitical power struggles, the Indo-Pacific Region has frequently found itself being caught in the middle, often resembling a microcosmos that mirrors global developments. Having realised that events in this region have consequences reaching beyond its own borders, many nations have increased their engagement in the region, some aiming to expand their sphere of influence, others in an effort to uphold the rules-based order that ensures continued stability, security and prosperity.

In this context, the overarching aim of our foreign and security policy analysis is a fine-grained understanding of present geopolitical challenges, through addressing a variety of topics from various perspectives – to identify future challenges and highlight opportunities for cooperation.



8 June 2023

NZIIA Annual Conference, Auckland/New Zealand

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) was pleased to support for the first time the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs' (NZIIA) Annual Conference.

Entitled 'International Solutions: Aotearoa New Zealand's Place in a Troubled World', the Conference provided a platform for experts from Government, business, academia, and non-Government organisations both from New Zealand and overseas to discuss the most important international affairs issues of our times. Keynote speakers included the Hon Nanaia Mahuta – the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Sitiveni Rabuka – Prime Minister of Fiji, and the US Assistant Secretary of State, Daniel Kritenbrink. The presenters covered a wide range of topics, including 1A Indo-Pacific competition, confrontation or collaboration?, 1B improving public understanding of international affairs, 2A enabling international commerce, 2B addressing indigenous rights on an international scale, 3A Pacific solutions for the climate crisis, 3B digital transformations in international affairs, 4A new strategies for defence and security in the Pacific, and 4B where to next for multilateral and regional institutions. As intended by the host, there was a clear focus on solutions in international affairs rather than just detailing the global challenges.

Website

[CONFERENCE: International Solutions: Aotearoa New Zealand's Place in a Troubled World » NZIIA – New Zealand Institute of International Affairs](#)



22 June 2023

6th Konrad Adenauer Lecture

KAS Australia and the Pacific and the ANU Centre for European Studies were delighted to hold the 6th KAS Lecture in Canberra in June.

This year's keynote was kindly delivered by former President of the Republic of Kiribati and advocate for climate action and ocean conservation H.E. Anote Tong, with concluding remarks provided by the German Special Envoy for the Pacific Islands States, H.E. Beate Grzeski.

The growing geo-political importance of the Indo-Pacific has not only influenced European and Australian foreign and security policy strategies but has also posed new challenges for the island states situated in the region. In addition to climate-related challenges, Pacific nations have increasingly found themselves caught in the middle of great power struggles and the often-re-iterated mantra of a 'friends to all and enemies to none' neutrality has become harder to maintain. This has had implications for their own relations to major actors like the EU, the USA and China. In view of these developments, it is ever more important for these major actors to actively listen to Pacific partners and engage in solution-oriented dialogue based on common principles and joint interests, on an equal footing.

In his address on the topic of 'Security Issues for the Pacific Region', Mr Tong stressed that the greatest threat to Pacific nations is climate change. He continued by explaining that, although the international community was still hoping that it was possible to change the predicted dire future outcomes of climate related problems, these outcomes were already a tangible reality for most Pacific nations. Rising sea-levels and the change in weather patterns, leading to more catastrophic climate disasters, could already be witnessed in the region and would ultimately lead to unprecedented migration flows the rest of the world would not be able to ignore. He therefore appealed to the international community to take more and bolder action with more urgency.

We were honoured to have H.E. Anote Tong and the Special Envoy share their insightful presentations and are looking forward to continuing these very important discussions in the future.

The Konrad Adenauer Lecture Series is dedicated to enhancing understanding of Europe and Germany in Australia and the wider region. With the Indo-Pacific quickly gaining geo-political importance, it is vital in reciprocity to enhance understanding of the region to European stakeholders as well. The initiative is the culmination of a longstanding partnership between the ANU Centre for European Studies and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, a German political foundation with a regional representation in Canberra, covering Australia, New Zealand and 13 Pacific Island States.







1-2 July 2023

57th Otago Foreign Policy School

'Populism and Global Politics'

The 2023 Otago Foreign Policy School at Otago University in Dunedin, New Zealand, brought together academics, journalists, diplomats and members of the public interested in the nexus between populism and global politics.

KAS Australia and the Pacific was proud to yet again be a sponsor of this important event. The conference circled around the question that, while the national electoral success of populist politicians like Trump and Bolsonaro has been the subject of significant coverage, the international and transnational aspects of this phenomenon have received much less attention.

The sessions of the conference were intended to examine today's "global rise of populism" which cannot be fully understood without systematically exploring its international and transnational dimensions. Two of the more important findings of the event were that populist movements and leaders identify with one another and often support each other in election campaigns (as Nigel Farage demonstrated in his solidarity with Donald Trump in the 2016 and 2020 elections). Second, it became evident that many of the demands voiced by populist parties and leaders have a foreign policy or international component.

The event, in 2023 a joint venture between the University of Otago and Kiel University, sought to address this anomaly by considering four inter-related themes: the common language and narratives of populism; the recurrent causes and drivers of populism (Islamophobia after 9/11, the impact of the 2008-09 global financial crisis, burgeoning inequality, and the effects of the digital revolution, including the rise of social media). Several case studies illustrated the populist experience in India, Brazil, USA, Japan, Germany and New Zealand and took a close look at the uneasy relationship between populism and the international rules-based order. An attempt to formulate a basic common political and philosophical belief of populists around the world did not find general agreement among the attendees.

The high-ranking speakers of the event of mostly academic background were led by the **Hon. Nanaia Mahuta**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, who in her speech reassured the auditorium of the uncompromised no-nuclear stance of the Hipkins Labour administration amidst a starting debate on a possible membership of New Zealand in the AUKUS defence alliance.



5 July 2023

'Polar Cousins: Comparing Antarctic and Arctic Geostrategic Futures' Expert Discussion

KAS Australia and the Pacific, in cooperation with Dr Christian Leuprecht, was delighted to host an expert discussion with defence, security and polar experts in Canberra at the beginning of July, celebrating the official launch of the *'Polar Cousins: Comparing Antarctic and Arctic Geostrategic Futures'* book.

In an exchange moderated by Dr Roger Bradbury (Lead, Strategy and Statecraft in Cyberspace research program NSC, ANU), Dr Christian Leuprecht (Queen's University, CAN), Dr Tony Press (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania), Associate Prof. Joanna Vince (Politics and International Relations Program, University of Tasmania) and Claire Young (Lecturer on Antarctic Geo-strategy) examined the geopolitical, social and ecological challenges for national and international security strategies in the Arctic and Antarctic polar regions.

Polar Cousins: Comparing Antarctic and Arctic Geostrategic Futures features contributions from international defence experts, scientists, academics, policymakers, and decision makers, offering insights into the unique challenges posed to the polar regions by climate change and the geopolitics of our times. Although they seem remote, the Arctic and Antarctic regions are *'strategically central to geopolitical rivalry'*, facing *'unprecedented challenges for governance, environmental protection, and maritime operations'* caused by the rapidly changing environmental and political systems.

If you are interested in delving a bit deeper into the topics discussed, the complete 'Polar Cousins' book can be accessed for free here: <https://ucp.manifoldapp.org/projects/9781773853895>.





12-13 September 2023

2nd KAS Australia and the Pacific Security Conference

'Zeitenwende' and Beyond

After a successful first iteration in 2022, we held the *2nd KAS Australia Security Conference* on German-Indo-Pacific common security concerns in September. The aim is to continue to grow the conference and establish it as an important platform for multilateral exchange on all matters defence, security and foreign policy. This year, KAS Australia and the Pacific was supported by the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the National Security College.

The conference brought together parliamentarians, experts, practitioners and representatives from relevant government institutions and the diplomatic corps, for open, policy-relevant exchanges and discussions on common security concerns, potential areas of future cooperation and effective strategies for dealing with the current international security environment. Hereby, it took a holistic approach to the current challenges facing like-minded nations in the European and Australian-Pacific regions.

Day one consisted of an open-to-the-public conference with panel discussions, covering topics such as *Foreign and Security Policy Current Affairs, Security, Resilience and Preparedness – Current Challenges for A Modern Defence Force, Cybersecurity – Current Threats and Active Cyber Defence* and *Predictions for Future Security Developments*.

During the discussions, which included lively Q&A sessions with the audience, it became apparent that there are many areas of potential future cooperation between our two regions, where we can learn from each other and work together more closely to develop solutions to common problems. This, for example, includes practical considerations such as identifying each other's 'blind spots' regarding cybersecurity, a more effective coordination of the respective engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, and the continued cooperation on issues pertaining to defence.

Day two was structured as a half-day Chatham House rule roundtable exchange, facilitating confidential and frank in-depth discussions of issues raised during the debates of the previous day.

Given the current geopolitical climate and recent developments, our panellists' specific expertise and experience presented a valuable addition to current debates on international security.

We were especially delighted to welcome Member of the German Bundestag MdB Volkmar Klein, Deputy Chair of the German-Pacific Parliamentary Friendship Group, Prof Timo Kob, Head of the Federal Working Group 'Cyber Security' at the CDU Economic Council and CEO at HiSolutions AG, and Dr Christian Forneck, Senior Foreign Policy Adviser CDU/ CSU, to Australia for the occasion, as well as members of the Australian Parliament and high-level experts.

We thank our partners and our magnificent expert speakers for sharing their insights and for their ongoing support, and are already looking forward to next year's conference.



13 November 2023

AIIA National Conference

KAS Australia was proud to support the Australian Institute of International Affairs' Annual National Conference.

Under the heading 'Navigating the Perfect Storm – Australian Foreign Policy and the Polycrisis' the conference brought together some of Australia's most prominent experts in the field to examine new developments in international affairs and the place of Australian foreign policy in them.

This year, the conference included a special focus on the Pacific region, looking at the in some cases already devastating impacts of climate change and the long-lasting effects of the recent Covid-19 crisis that continue to impact many of the Pacific nations. As the AIIA sums it up:

"Our world," said United Nations Secretary General António Guterres earlier this year, "is plagued by a perfect storm on a number of fronts." An economic crisis is exacerbating global inequality. Russia has unleashed a tempest in Eastern Europe, while the clouds of strategic tension darken shores in our own region. This year has seen the hottest average global temperatures recorded, yet global carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels show no sign of decrease. Many nations are still dealing with the costs of COVID-19, yet we are nowhere near prepared for pandemics to come. It is not the role of serious thinkers and policymakers to sugarcoat this "polycrisis" but to confront it head on. But what are the solutions to these myriad problems, and how can Australia steer a course that best preserves its national unity, prosperity, and security, while contributing to regional stability?"

Image Source: AIIA National Conference – property of the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA)



Cybersecurity

December 2023

The 2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy

Global developments have highlighted that cyber-attacks are accelerating at an ever-increasing pace and that targeting critical infrastructure has become a major part of conflict operations worldwide.

In Russia's war on Ukraine, for example, malicious cyber actors have repeatedly targeted critical communications, energy, health, and transport infrastructure to disrupt systems and destroy supply chains. This included attacks on Ukraine-allied partners like the EU and the US.

As a result, in December 2022, the Australian Government announced its intention to make Australia *'the world's most cyber secure nation by 2030'*, with a new comprehensive *2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy* said to be implemented the following year. The strategy was released on 22 November, a week after the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) released its *Cyber Threat Report 2022–23*.

Based on the ASD's threat report, nearly 94,000 reports of cybercrime have been reported in 2022–23, meaning an increase of 23% from the previous year. The average cost of these attacks to small, large, and medium businesses hereby increased by 14%.

The key security trends listed in the report are data theft and disruption of business by state actors focussed on critical infrastructure, with an increase of attacks on Australian infrastructure via interconnected systems. One in five critical vulnerabilities were reportedly exploited within 48 hours, highlighting the need for fast-response mechanisms to patch cyber security gaps.

The report further states that within the top ten reporting sectors, federal government recorded the highest incident rate at 30.7%, followed by state and local government at 12.9%.

The government's newly released strategy aims to address these and other problem areas and anticipate future cyber security needs. According to Minister for Cyber Security Clare O'Neil, the strategy will be a game-changer for Australia's cyber security, boldly and ambitiously offering a *'clear vision for both domestic and international cyber security for the first time'*.

To implement the strategy, the Australian government intends to spend more than \$586.9 million all up. This will be in addition to the \$2.3 billion already being invested in existing cyber security projects. The majority of funds will go towards the protection of businesses and citizens (\$290.8m), the defence of critical infrastructure (\$143.6m) and building cyber resilience in the region (\$129.7m).

The strategy is built around 'six shields' of cybersecurity: strong businesses and citizens, safe technology, world-class threat sharing and blocking, protected critical infrastructure, sovereign capabilities, and a resilient region and global leadership.

In order to achieve these objectives, the government, among other things, intends to fund civil society cyber awareness programmes and expand its Digital-ID programme to reduce the risk to individuals online. To increase the resilience of businesses, it plans to create a *'ransomware playbook'* for reference (rather than straight up banning companies from making ransomware payments) and establish a compulsory *'no-fault reporting scheme'*.

The latter is aimed at building trust, as, despite significant breaches at major Australian companies over the last few years, the government is still *'struggling to overcome resistance by many Australian companies facing a cyber-attack to work with the [signals] directorate to help defeat intrusions'*. This is mainly due to the companies' fear of damage to their reputation as well as fears of possible fines or customer class action. To establish trust between businesses and government agencies such as the ASD, the government proposes to establish a 'safe harbour' regime. This, according to Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, would *'deliver the world-class capabilities of the Australian Signals Directorate to the affected company'* as well as *'shield companies from further legal action by the government'* as long as they complied with the regulation. To make government-industry cooperation more effective, the government further announced the release of a Consultation Paper on intended cooperation with industry to supplement the strategy. The consultation period will last until March 2024, with the paper aiming to be released later that year.

Further measures outlined by the strategy include increased efforts to attract more highly skilled migrants – by means of migration reforms and a new global outreach program – and working more closely with international partners for more effective threat sharing and blocking mechanisms. This includes joint Quad initiatives. In addition to a global outreach, the strategy further stresses the necessity to build up Australia's sovereign capabilities.

Another important change mentioned is the re-classification of telecommunication as 'critical infrastructure'. This means operators will need to report on their cyber security measures in the same way as hospitals, energy providers and ports.

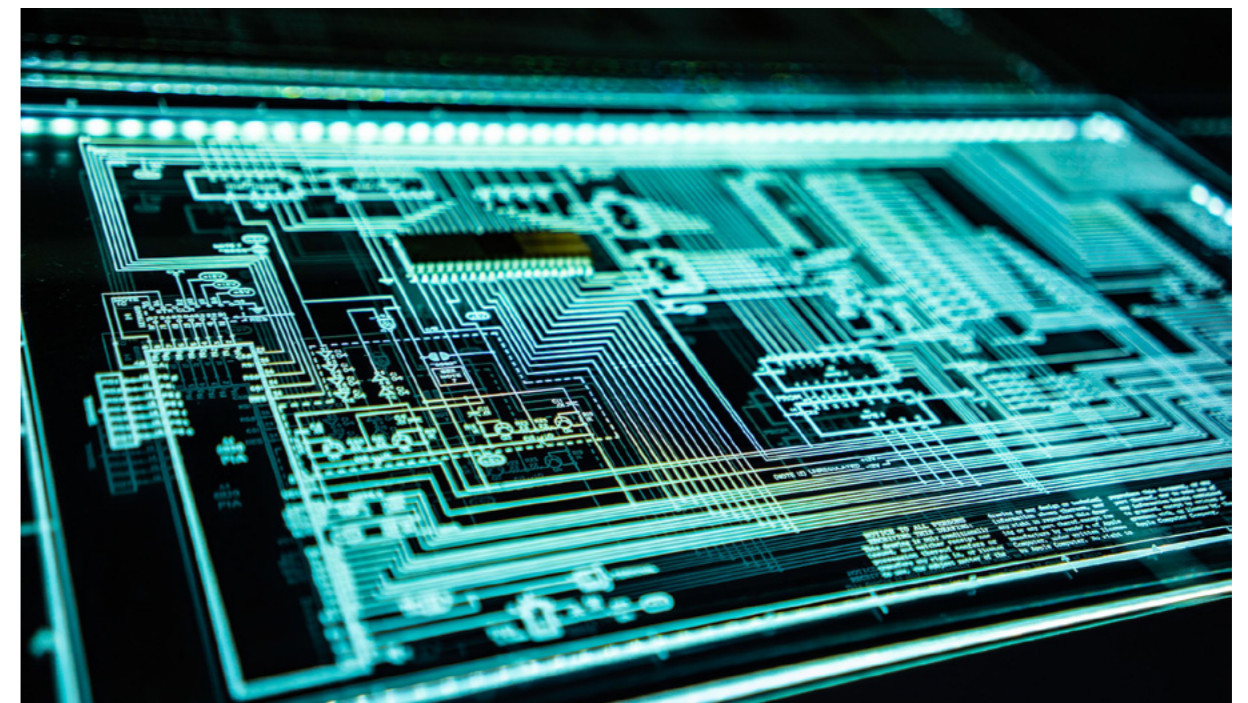
The strategy will be implemented in three stages. Horizon 1, from 2023–25, will focus on the strengthening of foundations, i.e. addressing gaps, building up protection for the most vulnerable groups, and supporting a more general *'cyber maturity uplift'*.

Horizon 2, from 2026-28, will focus on industry, increasing investment and growing the cyber workforce. Horizon 3, 2029-30, will focus on future resilience and *'advancing the global frontier'*. This includes the development of emerging technologies to be able to adapt to new risks.

The Home Affairs website states that the government is *'delivering tangible action on the cyber security issues that matter most to Australian communities and businesses'*, *'shifting cyber from a technical topic to whole-of-nation endeavour'*. However, in a first statement on the strategy, Shadow Cyber Security Minister James Paterson criticised it as a *'major flop'* that contained *'nothing radical or revolutionary [...] nor anything that will substantially shift the dial on cyber security'*. The Greens meanwhile released a media statement labelling the strategy as *'disappointing'* and *'lacking on specific actions'*.

Regarding the latter comment, it needs to be noted that the strategy is supplemented by the *'Cyber Security Strategy Action Plan'*, outlining the key initiatives commencing in the Horizon 1 phase. This includes accountabilities for each measure and identifies the respective agencies in lead and supporting roles. At the same time, the strategy not being radical might mean that its objectives and targets are more achievable.

Professor Johanna Weaver, founding Director of the Tech Policy Design Centre at the Australian National University, labelled the strategy an *'ambitious plan'* that was *'very comprehensive and much needed'*. The strategy is certainly comprehensive, but some argue that, unless legislation follows the strategy, there remains a lack of *'mandated standards and enforcement mechanisms'*. Ultimately, as with any strategy, a conclusive verdict will depend on the strategy's implementation.



Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism

“Foreign-related extremism also poses a threat to domestic security in this country. Conflicts between individual groups can be transferred from their respective home countries to Germany and lead to violence among supporters here.”

Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution

With the recent focus in Europe and the Australian region on the Russia-Ukraine war, China’s growing assertiveness in the Pacific, and growing concerns regarding an increase in threats emanating from online-scapes, Counter-Terrorism has moved to the background of political debates.

Traditional warfare and cybersecurity have come to dominate the security discussions, together with a focus on overall capabilities build-up. In this context, sadly, the renewed acceleration of the Hamas-Israel conflict and the attack on Swedish football fans in Belgium have been a wake-up-call that reignited the public CT debate. The expectation being that the conflict in the Middle East might be a catalyst triggering a renewed wave of lone actor attacks. This example highlights the continued importance for policymakers to remain vigilant in all security areas to avoid the danger of becoming complacent.

Apart from the renewed awareness of the real danger emanating from more ‘traditional’ terrorism, the public debates in Europe and Australia in recent years have largely shifted to a focus on the online sphere and discussions about Right Wing Extremism and conspiracy narratives post Covid-19. As the modus operandi within the extremist branches of these communities differs from more traditional terrorism acts, this shift led to the realisation that the strategies implemented for terrorism responses are no longer sufficient. Having originally been designed

for a concept of terrorism/violent extremism perpetrated by members of a group with clear organisational and leadership structures, these strategies are not applicable to the now predominant lone-actor attack scenarios. With lone actors often being self-motivated, self-activated, radicalised online and without official ties to any specific group, it is much harder to identify and keep track of individuals. As a result, countermeasures tend to be mostly reactive rather than anticipatory, raising the question of how to amend strategies to include prevention and pre-empt attacks.

Our analysis of terrorism centres around the key topics of the contemporary threat landscape, such as emerging forms of extremism and their underlying narratives, the renewed momentum of ideologically motivated terrorist acts and the fusion of online and offline radicalisation that has become more frequent in recent years.

16–20 October 2023

9th KAS Australia-Europe Counter-Terrorism Dialogue

KAS Australia and the Pacific, in cooperation with the KAS offices in Brussels and Berlin, was pleased to be holding its *9th KAS Australia-Europe Counter-Terrorism Dialogue* in October.

With last year's dialogue taking place in Australia, the 2023 dialogue took the form of a week-long expert exchange program in Europe, including meetings and roundtables with key stakeholders in Berlin and Brussels.

Under the title of 'Strategies for New Challenges in CT', the aim of the dialogue was to facilitate policy-relevant debates on effective strategies against current extremist and terrorist threats to democratic societies, in continuation of the 2022 dialogue on strategies for resilience. A special focus hereby was on CT, CVE and PVE in the current age of great power competition and geostrategic uncertainty, disinformation, Far-Right Extremism, and conspiracy narratives.

This year, KAS Australia invited Australian experts Peta Lowe, Specialist Consultant CVE for the Commonwealth Secretariat, and Dr Levi West, Director of Terrorism Studies at Charles Sturt University, to Germany and Belgium, to share their expertise and insights from an Australian perspective and discuss the challenges concerning their European counterparts. These included, among other issues, Germany's experience with the 'Reichsbürger' movement, Belgium's experience with returned foreign fighters, and the conundrum of 'awful' vs 'lawful', relating to statements made by right-leaning parties and institutions that are not against the law but controversial from a moral point of view. Current developments of topical interest, such as the acceleration of the Hamas-Israel conflict and the attack on Swedish football fans in Brussels, were also included in the agenda.

The discussions highlighted a variety of common concerns and areas of CT with scope for increased German/European-Australian cooperation, especially in the space of information and intelligence sharing. We are looking forward to continuing the discussions in Australia in 2024.



Rule of Law

According to the United Nations, the rule of law is fundamental to international peace, security, and political stability, to achieve economic and social progress and development, and to protect people's rights and fundamental freedoms. Rule of law and development are strongly interlinked, and strong rule of law-based societies should be aimed at as an outcome of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The rule of law requires the separation of powers, an independent judiciary, and open and transparent law-making by elected representatives. Its principles enable people to openly criticise the law and administration and to assemble freely. They mean that the law is applied equally and fairly and accessible for everyone. The principles also prohibit arbitrary treatment and torture, assume that people are innocent until proven guilty, may remain silent when being interrogated and are not required to incriminate themselves. In addition, they prevent civil or criminal prosecution for an offence unknown to the law when committed, and prohibit people to be adversely subjected to a retrospective change of the law. While the rule of law may be more or less well established in some countries, the principles are non-existent or fall short of the required standard in others. And, even if they are well established in a country, they are nothing that may be taken for granted.

Rather, their implementation must be actively monitored, be discussed and be recalibrated, if and when necessary. The importance of the rule of law has become particularly obvious during the coronavirus pandemic. Governments did not always "get it right". Courts held some of their actions to be disproportionate, and ordered remedies where available. Another situation in which the rule of law is of particular importance is in the context of general elections, as evidenced for example by the 2021 general elections in Samoa.

By way of its Rule of Law Dialogue, KAS Australia aims to connect Germany and the European Union with Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Our objective is to increase the mutual understanding of these countries and regions, to foster idea and knowledge sharing and thus to contribute to the ongoing rule of law debate.

29 May – 2 June 2023

Roadshow Rule of Law

Rule of Law and Development Port Vila/Vanuatu

The 2nd KAS-ANUCES Roadshow Rule of Law was held from 29 May to 2 June 2023 in Port Vila/Vanuatu. The Roadshow was implemented again in cooperation with the Centre for European Studies of the Australian National University (ANUCES).

As a local partner, we were pleased to have the support of the School of Law of the University of the South Pacific (USP). The focus of the event was on the rule of law and development, more precisely, the rule of law as a driver of development.

KAS Australia took a delegation of Australian, New Zealand and German experts to Vanuatu to discuss current challenges to the rule of law and possible approaches to them. Topics of the one-day seminar included Vanuatu's citizenship scheme (including its implications for its relations with the EU), human rights and immigration issues (including the deportation of Chinese nationals), the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture legislation, the unconstitutionality of the foreign service amendment bill (a constitutional court case), and capacity development. The country's bid for a Resolution from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) calling for an Advisory Opinion on Climate Change from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was also debated.

Further, the delegation had the opportunity to discuss current challenges to the rule of law and development with representatives from the New Zealand High Commission, the Vanuatu Australia Policing and Justice Programme (Palladium Group) (including access to and delivery of justice in remote areas), an independent journalist (about the status quo of the media), the Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (PACLI), and other stakeholders.





3-5 July 2023

9th ICON-S Annual Conference

**Islands and Oceans: Public Law in a Plural World
Wellington**

For the first time since its inception, the ICON-S Annual Meeting took place in Oceania.

The International Society of Public Law is an international learned society with members from all around the globe. Members include scholars in all fields of law and beyond to the humanities and social sciences, and at all levels of seniority, from students to emeritus faculty. Each year, the ICON-S conference attracts hundreds of delegates from around the globe, in all fields of public law and related subjects.

The theme of the 9th ICON-S Annual Meeting was “Islands and Ocean: Public Law in a Plural World”. The plenary panels were focussed on issues of special relevance to the Pacific region:

- Pluralism and Change in Unwritten Constitutions
- Pluralism in Indigenous Rights and Self-Governance
- Plural Responses to the Climate Crisis

The Meeting was opened with a welcome by the New Zealand Minister for Justice, and attended by more than 600 domestic, regional and international participants. KAS Australia took the opportunity to support this important event in the field of public law, and to facilitate the debate of current geopolitical, economic and rule of law challenges.

For more information about the event:

[Law Conference](#) | [ICON-S Annual Conference](#) | [ICON-S \(icon-society.org\)](#)



23-24 November 2023

IALS Symposium, Canberra

“Climate change and technological developments are presenting challenges to settled principles of property law both personal/moveable and real/immoveable.”

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) had the pleasure to support the International Association for Legal Sciences’ (IALS) Symposium this year. Established in 1950 and operating under the auspices of UNESCO and of the International Science Council, IALS aims to promote the development of legal science throughout the world by using, in particular, the comparative method.

The Symposium was themed “Property Law, Climate Change and Technological Disruption”. These topics were addressed from three perspectives: (i) Real Property, Climate Change and Sustainability, (ii) Personal Property and Digital Assets, and (iii) Property Law and the Rights of Nature. The event featured prominent guest speakers, including Dr Egils Levits, former President of the Republic of Latvia and former Judge of the European Court of Justice and of the European Court of Human Rights, who spoke to the development of climate change litigation. Other speakers included Prof Rebecca Monson from the Australian National University, who presented her research on “Land, Law and Politics in the Solomon Islands” and Cynthia Houniuh, the President of the Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC) who spoke to Vanuatu’s successful bid for a UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on State obligations and legal consequences related to climate change. There was also a Roundtable on “Strengthening Regional Interdisciplinary and Transnational Research: A Possible Agenda for the IALS and the ILS Focal Points. Participants welcomed the recent establishment of a Pacific Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and discussed the challenges faced by the University of the South Pacific (USP) in general and the USP’s School of Law in particular, as well as possible ways to increase interdisciplinary and transnational cooperation.

For more information:

[IALS Annual Symposium: Property Law, Climate Change, Tech Disruption | ANU Centre for European Studies](#)



Development Policy

The South Pacific Island States have rather diverse political systems and populations. Their developmental stages vary greatly. Nonetheless, they face similar challenges, including human and state security, natural disasters and resource scarcity.

The Boe Declaration on Regional Security issued by the Pacific Islands Forum leaders' meeting in 2018 reaffirms that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the region. There is also rising strategic competition for supremacy by major powers. China's growing influence has triggered the United States and its regional allies Australia, New Zealand and Japan to develop closer ties with the region. Likewise, the German Government announced its intent to strengthen its engagement with the Indo-Pacific (including Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific). Under the 2020 Policy Guidelines for the IndoPacific, Germany inter alia seeks to intensify its cooperation with regional institutions. To this end, the German Government has committed to send high-level representatives to summit meetings and to promote additional projects as a dialogue partner of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

An exchange of government and non-government actors in the region may help to understand the complex dynamics. However, it cannot substitute the sustainable dialogue with the Pacific Island States themselves. Sustainable development and security is impossible without stable democracies, which, in turn, are impossible without the rule of law.

KAS Australia therefore seeks to address a range of development policy issues with a focus on the United Nations' sustainable development goals (Agenda 2030), in particular, peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16). More precisely, we seek to promote good governance, institution and capacity building and regional integration as well as the development of inclusive political parties and the rule of law throughout the region.



6-11 February 2023

Study tour Fiji post-elections

“Fiji needs to re-learn what is normal”

Following the general elections held in Fiji in December 2022, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) in cooperation with the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) has organised a study tour.

From 6 to 11 February 2023, a delegation of representatives from KAS Australia, the AIIA, the Australian National University (ANU) and the Victoria University Wellington (VUW) travelled to Fiji with the objective both to gain a better understanding of the challenges that the Pacific Island State is facing after the elections, and to provide local and regional stakeholders with a forum to discuss these challenges.

The main events included a **luncheon discussion** with representatives from the University of the South Pacific and a local non-government organisation on **strong institutions**. The representatives from the university made it clear that the elections marked a historic moment for the Pacific Island State, and that the democratic transition was going to be a rocky road after 16 years under the rule of former Prime Minister Bainimarama’s Fiji First Party. A **rule of law seminar** in cooperation with the Institute of Small States included a keynote speech by former Attorney General of Samoa Brenda Heather-Latu on “Lessons learnt from Samoa’s 2021 general elections”, complemented by a presentation by the renowned Suva based lawyer Richard Naidu on “The Rule of law: Lessons from Fiji’s last 16 years” as well as presentations on media law, electoral law and judicial diversity. The experts inter alia agreed that Fiji needs a freedom of information law, a code of conduct for public officials, an overhaul of the media legislation, and more judicial diversity. As far as the proposed review of the constitution is concerned, one of the experts suggested that the government may need to look into the lawful adoption of the constitution itself. The main events also included a **roundtable** in cooperation with Tourism Fiji and the Pacific Travel Organisation (SPTO) on **current challenges to Fiji and the Pacific region’s tourism sector**. According to the CEO of Tourism Fiji, Brent Hill, Fiji’s tourism sector was bouncing back – good news for a country that depends on revenues from this sector.

In addition, the delegation had the opportunity to meet representatives from the National Federation Party of Fiji (NFP), the PIF Secretariat, the Fiji Australian Business Council, the Australian High Commission, the New Zealand High Commission, and other stakeholders.



13–15 June 2023

Pacific Update – Suva/Fiji

The Pacific Update, an annual conference dubbed the premier forum for the discussion of matters of concern to the Pacific region, has taken place again with KAS Australia’s support.

Co-organised by the Centre for Development Policy (Devpol) of the Australian National University (ANU) and the School of Economics of the University of the South Pacific (USP), the event was held from 13 to 15 June in the capital of Fiji. Keynote speakers included the Hon Prof Biman Prasad – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance of the Government of Fiji, Prof Pal Ahluwalia – Vice Chancellor of USP, and Stuart Watts, Chargé d’affaires of the Australian High Commission in Fiji (on behalf of the Hon Pat Conroy – Minister for International Development and the Pacific of the Australian Government).

Transmitted live to all of USP’s locations in the region, the conference covered a variety of topics, including gender and family violence (Panel 1a), tourism and human development (Panel 1b), foreign aid (Panel 2a), gender transformative practice (Panel 2b), educational exchange (Panel 3a), climate change and environment (Panel 3b), politics and governance (Panel 4a), private sector and economic development (Panel 4b), Fiji care economy (Panel 5a), economic resilience (Panel 5b), Fiji economy (Panel 6a), and Indigenous community empowerment (Panel 6b). The third day of the conference was dedicated to Pacific migration, within and beyond the Pacific region. There were panels on the economic impacts at home and abroad (Panel 7), reflections on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme (Panel 8), Australia’s Pacific Engagement Visa (Panel 9), and regional perspectives on labour mobility in the Pacific (Panel 10).

The conference dinner hosted by KAS Australia provided the participants with the opportunity to continue their discussions in an informal setting. Themes included Fiji and the Pacific region’s ongoing economic recovery after the pandemic. Likewise, climate change, rising sea levels and the rising number of cyclones and other natural disasters were at the core of the conversations, as were the implications of “brain drain” for the seasonal workers’ home countries, and ongoing gender and family violence for regional development.

For more information and a recording of the event:

[Pacific Update | Development Policy Centre \(anu.edu.au\)](https://www.anu.edu.au/development-policy-centre/pacific-update)





4–6 July 2023

5th PIURN Conference – Cook Islands

This year KAS Australia has for the first time supported the Pacific Islands Universities Research Network's (PIURN) bi-annual conference. The 5th PIURN Annual Conference was held from 4 to 6 July 2023 in the Cook Islands.

PIURN is a consortium of 14 universities in the Pacific region established in 2012 to enable closer and meaningful collaboration among researchers with the view to identify and address through research, development and innovation social priorities, economic growth and environmental challenges for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The consortium has identified four main strategic research themes in line with the UN's sustainable development goals, including health and food security, climate change and biodiversity, capacity building and data & statistics, as well as social development, education and gender equality.

The Conference was themed "Exploring the Sea of Islands" and aimed to investigate different sub-themes reflecting the strategic priorities of the region, such as food security, climate change, protection of biodiversity, aspects related to languages, cultures and identities of the Pacific. Notably, the event was jointly opened in a solemn ceremony by the Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, Prof Pal Ahluwalia, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Mark Brown, as well as the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Henry Puna. There were a range of speakers from the (anglophone and francophone) Pacific Islands, Australia, New Zealand, and other parts of the world. Participants could choose from a vast number of panels, including panels on "politics & institutions in Oceania" and "political issues in Oceania".

There was one topic in particular that was not only debated during the sessions but also on the sidelines, namely that of greater Pacific and indigenous agency, be it in the context of the latest Independence Referendum held in New Caledonia, the Voice Referendum in Australia (held on 14 October), and the role of Maori in New Zealand.

For more information on the event:

[Exploring this sea of islands: 5th Pacific Islands Universities Network Conference – Sciencesconf.org.](https://sciencesconf.org)



23 November 2023

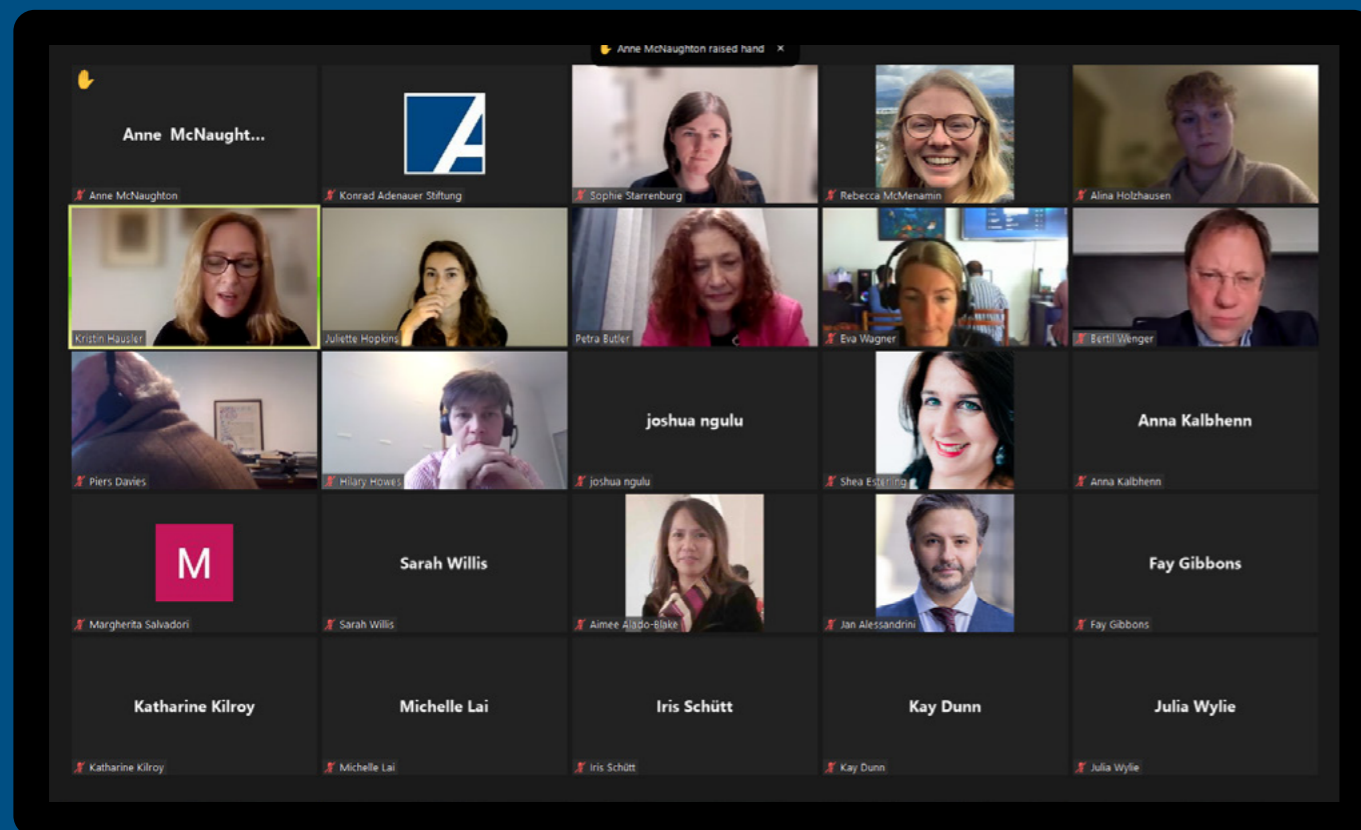
2nd Pacific Meet & Greet in Canberra

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) was pleased to host the second iteration of its Pacific Meet & Greet in November in Canberra.

The networking event (by invitation only) serves as a forum for Pacific representatives and other stakeholders from the region to meet in an informal environment their German and European counterparts as well as representatives from other like-minded countries. The aim is to augment our understanding of and to complement our activities in the Pacific region. We also aim to provide our guests with the opportunity to find out more about Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), its Canberra based Regional Programme for Australia and the Pacific (KAS Australia), the work we do worldwide and in particular in this region, as well as the principles and values that we stand for.

This year, we were pleased to welcome Prof Pal Ahluwalia, the Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, as speaker of honour. In conversation, our Director, Mr Bertil Wenger, the VC provided our guests with an insightful overview of the university's unique role as a tertiary education provider in the Pacific region, where it maintains campuses in 12 countries. The VC also addressed current challenges, including the assurance of academic freedom, free from both domestic and foreign interference, and funding for the institution.





Cultural Heritage & Climate Change in the Pacific Region

Webinar (Zoom)

Following the publication of its first Periscope Special Edition on “Intangible Cultural Heritage within the Laws and Policies of South Pacific Small Island States in the Climate Crisis”, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) has organised a webinar in cooperation with the Institute of Small and Micro States (ISMS) and the British Institute for International Comparative Law (BIICL) on the nexus of cultural heritage & climate change in the Pacific region. The event featured several experts in the field, including a representative of UNESCO and the authors of the aforementioned research report.

Juliette Hopkins – Associate Programme Specialist in the Secretariat for UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage gave a presentation on “Living Heritage and Climate Change in the Framework of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”. Kristin Hausler – Dorset Senior Research Fellow for Public International Law and Director, Centre for International Law, British Institute of International Comparative Law, spoke about “Cultural heritage as a tool for climate adaptation in the Pacific and beyond?”. Alina Holzhausen – Researcher in Environmental and Climate Change Law, BIICL, talked about “The Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Environmental, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Disaster Risk Management Laws and Policies”. The subsequent general discussion was moderated by Prof Petra Butler, the Director of ISMS and Professor of Law at the Victoria University of Wellington, who was recently appointed as the future Dean of Law of the University of Canterbury in Christchurch.

Download a free copy of the publication:

[SPECIAL EDITION 2023 • Periscope \(periscopekasaustralia.com.au\)](https://periscopekasaustralia.com.au)

Watch a recording of the webinar: <https://vimeo.com/885537631>

Periscope Paper



5-7 December 2023

Australasian Aid Conference – Canberra

The Australasian Aid Conference (AAC) of the Australian National University (ANU) was held with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia)'s support again this year.

Hosted from 5 to 7 December 2023 at ANU in Canberra, the development conference brought together researchers from across Australia, the Pacific, Asia and beyond who are working on aid and international development policy (the AID in the conference acronym) to share insights, promote collaboration, and support development within the research community. There were more than 600 registered attendees again this year, leaving no doubt that the AAC has established itself as Australia's premier aid and development conference. The Opening Address was held by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance of Fiji, the Hon Prof Biman Prasad, showing the importance of the conference to the Pacific region. One of the main topics was Australia's new development policy, including the new Pacific Engagement Visa, Australia's climate and migration agreement with Tuvalu, alongside aid effectiveness and other pressing issues in the development sector.

For more information and recordings of the event, please go to:

[2023 Australasian AID Conference | Development Policy Centre \(anu.edu.au\)](https://www.anu.edu.au/development-policy-centre/2023-australasian-aid-conference)



25-27 August 2023

Coastwatchers 2.0

Seminar on Pacific resilience against undue foreign interference – Brisbane

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) was pleased to support Coastwatchers 2.0.

The project is a multiannual project organised with the objective to increase Pacific Island states' awareness of and resilience against undue foreign interference. In the course of a seminar (tok stori / talanoa) held for various stakeholders from the Solomon Islands, the participants were able to discuss the global and local security situation, the state of bilateral and multilateral relations between Pacific Island states and external players, the risk posed by undue foreign interference, and possible ways to approach these challenges. There was a collective reasoning process, short presentations, with guided discussions, interspersed by a simulation exercise.

Other Highlights



Review & Outlook on 2024



15 November 2023

Samoa (post-Cotonou) Partnership Agreement – Apia/Samoa

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) had the pleasure to witness as an observer the Samoa (post-Cotonou) Agreement signing ceremony held on 15 November in Apia. The Agreement serves as an overarching legal framework for the European Union's (EU) relations with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) for the next twenty years. The 79 Members of OACPS include 47 African, 16 Caribbean and 15 Pacific countries as well as the Maldives. Together with the 27 EU Member States, they represent around 2 billion people and more than half of the seats at the United Nations. The Agreement aims to better equip its parties to address emerging needs and global challenges, such as climate change, ocean governance, migration, health, peace and security. Accordingly, the Agreement covers subjects such as sustainable development and growth, human rights and peace and security. The Agreement lays down common principles and covers the following priority areas:

- human rights, democracy and governance
- peace and security
- human and social development
- inclusive, sustainable economic growth and development
- environmental sustainability and climate change
- migration and mobility

There is a common foundation included in the Agreement which applies to all Parties, combined with three regional protocols for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific with a focus on the specific needs of each region. The denomination of the Agreement took place during the 46th Session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers held immediately prior to the signing ceremony. 35 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries did not sign the Agreement. Tonga, for example, did not sign the agreement because its domestic requirements were not met at that time. Jamaica decided not to sign the Agreement after a local Christian Group, the Jamaica Coalition for a Healthy Society (JCHS), raised concerns that it would reintroduce the rejected Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum back into Jamaican classrooms and undermine Jamaicans' fundamental rights and freedoms. Likewise, Namibia decided not to sign the Agreement, purportedly because of "interpretative issues". The Agreement (just like its predecessor the Cotonou Agreement) grants the European Investment Bank (EIB) a licence to operate in ACP countries. Therefore, the EIB would be unable to operate in (sign new loans with) any country that does not sign the Agreement by the end of the year.

The Agreement will be provisionally applied as of 1 January 2024, and will enter into force upon consent by the European Parliament and ratification by the Parties, ie all EU Member States and at least two thirds of the OACPS Members.

Background

RELEASE: Forum SG Puna welcomes "milestone" Samoa Agreement Signing – Pacific Islands Forum (forumsec.org)



4-10 December 2023

AIIA NextGen Study Tour Taiwan Taipei and Kinmen Island

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Australia) was pleased to be part of the Australian Institute of International Affairs' (AIIA) NextGen Study Tour Taiwan this year. The Tour was organised by AIIA in cooperation with the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Canberra/Australia. Led by Prof Rebecca (Bec) Strating – Director, La Trobe Asia, and accompanied by a representative from TECO, the delegation included:

- Dr Bryce Wakefield – National Executive Director, AIIA
- Anna Saunders – Communications Assistant, AIIA
- Connor Clarke – Senior Policy Officer, DPMC Western Australia and Board Member, AIIA Western Australia
- Roxanne Donohue – Project Consultant, Department of Education, Northern Territory and Board Member, AIIA Northern Territory
- Dr Caitlin Abbott – Associate, Mandala
- Sophie Mayo – Research Associate, United States Studies Centre
- Alice Nason – Research Associate, United States Studies Centre
- Eva Wagner – Senior Programme Coordinator, KAS Australia

The visit could not have been any timelier given Taiwan is heading to the polls on 13 January next year. In Taipei, the delegation had the opportunity to meet with representatives from all 3 major parties, namely the governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) led by the incumbent (outgoing) President Tsai Ing-wen, the (National Policy Foundation affiliated with the) Kuomintang Party (KMT) led by its Chairman Eric Chu, and the Taiwan People's Party (TPP) led by its founder Ko Wen-je. The discussions with the respective party representatives left no doubt that the cross-strait relations with China (PRC) remain on top of their election campaign agenda, followed by domestic issues such as resources and energy security, an ageing and shrinking population (and labour shortage caused by it) as well as rising costs of living. The delegation also had the opportunity to discuss current affairs with various think tanks, including the Prospect Foundation, the Institute for National Policy Research, and the Institute for National Defence and Security Research. Topics included Taiwan's cross-strait relations with China (currently KMT only maintains an open communications channel with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the proposed increase of its defence spending (from 2,5% to 3% of GDP), and AUKUS. In terms of domestic issues, the delegation inter alia learnt that Taiwan needs to diversify its economy, encourage family planning and foster skilled migration, and do more to ensure its energy security (eg through the further extension of its offshore wind farms). The rights of minorities such as Taiwan's indigenous people (about 2.5% of the population) and its LGBTIQ community were also raised. The Australian Office highlighted similarities and differences between Australia and Taiwan, as well as areas of current and potential future cooperation. A day trip to Kinmen Island and visits of the National Palace Museum, the 228 Memorial Museum as well as the National Human Rights Museum provided the delegation with historic insights about Taiwan and the region.



Publications

Publications are an important part of KAS Australia's activities in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. They ensure that the research we commission and carry out is made available to a greater audience, and may be used for future reference. Contributions cover the topics on which we are focussed, namely foreign and security policy, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, rule of law, energy and development policy, as well as related socio-economic matters. They are published independently, in support of, or following specific projects.

Periscope is not only the name of our complimentary website but also the title of our serial publications issued in two formats. Our Periscope Paper Series includes either longer analyses or several analysis briefs on associated issues, whereas we use our Periscope Brief Series to publish individual analysis briefs.

Periscope
periscopekasaustralia.com.au

Digital Snapshot is a regular digest that offers a panorama view and analysis of media and think tank articles on current affairs in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region.

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Podcasts

The Periscope Podcast Series complements our Digital Snapshots, and is published alternatively or in addition to them. There are also special podcast editions outside the scope of our Periscope Podcast Series.

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Special Reports are published on an ad hoc basis, often to cover important events such as general elections.

Cooperation Partners' Publications

Finally, we also support research and distribute publications by our esteemed cooperation partners that are of relevance to this region and Germany as well as the European Union.

Periscope Briefs



The Fiji election of 14 December 2022 was the third held under the 2013 Constitution. It resulted in a narrow victory for the opposition parties, which together obtained 29 of the 55 seats. The election brought to an end 16 years of semi-authoritarian rule by the military-backed government that assumed office in the wake of the December 2006 coup.

Dr Duke Mataka is Tonga's sole ophthalmologist and provides specialist eye care services. With such a vast area, many rely on visiting health professionals for everything from primary health care to sight-restoring surgeries.



Speaking Softly & Carrying a Big Stethoscope: Universal Health Care for Pacific Island Nations

Dr Duke Mataka is Tonga's sole ophthalmologist and provides specialist eye care services, including to local communities in remote parts of his country. The Kingdom of Tonga has a population of over 100,000 across 44 inhabited islands – composed of 170,000 square kilometres of ocean. With such a small population spread across such a vast area, many rely on visiting health professionals for everything from primary health care to sight-restoring surgeries.



This brief examines the surge in lone actor offenders communicating their grievances and ideology by way of online messaging and manifestos. The resurgence in contemporary manifestos conveying political or ideological rhetoric escalated after Anders Breivik's 1500-page tract was emailed and uploaded to YouTube, outlining his motivation for the Norway attacks that killed 77 people in 2011.

Podcast Series

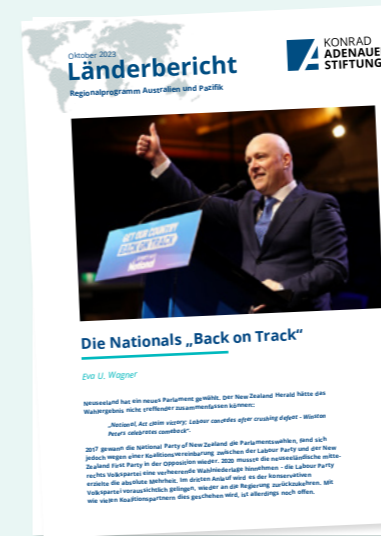
This podcast series was created to raise awareness and broaden understanding of current affairs in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Delivered in the format of '3 questions, 3 answers', we quiz experts in their field.



Select Periscope Podcast Series

<https://periscopekasaustralia.com.au/periscope-podcast-series-3-23/>

Other Publications



Länderbericht: Regional Programm Australien und Pazifik

June 2023

New Zealand held general elections on 14 October 2023, resulting in a changeover from a Labour led government into a coalition government between the National Party led by Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, the ACT Party led by the Minister for Regulation, David Seymour, and the NZ First Party, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Racing, Winston Peters. KAS Australia had the pleasure to observe the elections and attend the National Party's election function in Auckland. The Ministerial List is available from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's websites: [Ministerial List](#) | [Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#). For further information and an analysis of the (preliminary) election results, you may wish to refer to our country report/election report (available in German only): <https://www.kas.de/en/web/australien/laenderberichte/detail/-/content/parliamentary-elections-in-new-zealand>.

2023 Digital Snapshot Index

periscopekasaustralia.com.au/digital-lens

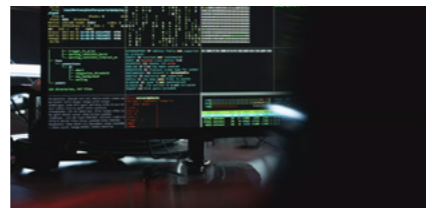
1/23 'Stability and Renewal'? – Prime Minister Changeover in New Zealand

In a press conference on 19 January, New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, announced her resignation.



2/23 Australia's Cyber Security Overhaul

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security Clare O'Neil hosted a special roundtable on cyber security, promising an overhaul of the \$1.7b cyber security plan.



3/23 Defining Australia's Security Landscape – The Director-General's Annual Threat Assessment 2023

On 21 February, Head of Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) Mike Burgess delivered the *Director-General's Annual Threat Assessment* in Canberra.



4/23 Understanding the AUKUS Submarine Deal

In a joint statement this week, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak officially announced the pathway to achieving the first major initiative.



5/23 Pivots and Shake-Ups – The Australian Defence Strategic Review

On Monday, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Defence Minister Richard Marles delivered the Defence Strategic Review (DSR) Announcement.



6/23 NEW ZEALAND – National Party Conference

The National Party of New Zealand held its 87th Annual Conference from 23 to 25 June in Wellington



7/23 'Advancing Australia's Interests with Germany and NATO'...

...Was the title of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's pre-travel media release for his recent Europe visit.



8/23 Foreign Interference Through Social Media

In November 2022, the Australian Senate established the Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media to examine the risk of foreign actors using social media platforms to interfere with democratic processes.



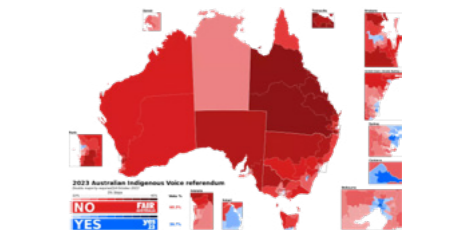
9/23 New Zealand "Back on Track"?

New Zealand has held general elections on 14 October.



10/23 Australia's 'No' Vote Is More Nuanced Than It Appears

It has been two weeks since Australia voted on the Voice to Parliament in what has been described by some as the *'most important vote since federation'*.



11/23 Ensuring a stable and productive relationship?

'Before the election, we said to the Australian people we would work to stabilise the relationship with China without compromising our sovereign interests. And that's what we've done.' – Foreign Minister Penny Wong



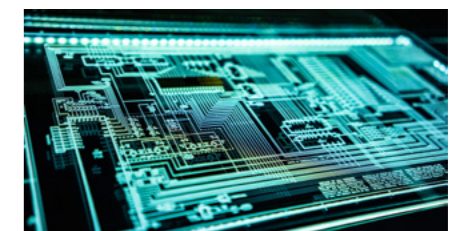
12/23 Pacific Leaders United in Diversity

The 52nd Pacific Islands Forum 2023 (PIFLM52) was themed "Our Voices, Our Choices, Our Pacific Way: Promote, Partner, Prosper" and comprised two sessions: the Plenary.



13/23 The 2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy

Global developments have highlighted that cyber-attacks are accelerating at an ever-increasing pace and that targeting critical infrastructure has become a major part of conflict operations worldwide.



Meet the team



Bertil Wenger

Director Regional Programme Australia and the Pacific

“Having had a long experience in international party politics, always in close cooperation with KAS in Berlin, heading the regional office Australia and the Pacific provides a great opportunity for me to work in a geopolitically evermore important region and on a fascinating continent with its great people.”



Eva U Wagner

Senior Programme Coordinator Rule of Law, Energy and Development Policy

“Having a background in law, KAS Australia provides me with the opportunity to see the world from a broader viewpoint. It is exciting to work at the intersection of law and politics, and rewarding to foster collaboration between the two countries and regions that I call home.”



Juliane Strache

Office, Events and Communications Manager

“With extensive experience in hospitality and events management my focus is on delivering successful events through the planning and execution of various programmes. Having been with KAS Australia for over a year, I enjoy being part of such a versatile and proactive team and thoroughly enjoy the various projects I can be part of.”



Klaudia Simon

Administration Officer

I recently joined KAS, where I offer administrative support to the team. With significant experience in legal administration and hospitality across diverse international settings, I am excited to be part of KAS's projects and look forward to contributing to an environment that fosters relations between Germany, Europe, Australia and the Pacific in the future.



Sophia Brook

Programme Coordinator Foreign and Security Policy, Counter-Terrorism and Cybersecurity

“My background is in international relations, with a focus on Australian foreign and security policy and German-Australian relations. My work at KAS offers me the opportunity to lead a variety of engaging projects that enhance our understanding of great power competition and geostrategic interests in the Indo-Pacific and what this means for Australian, German and European relations.”



Geniebel Gacusan

Financial and Administration Manager

“I have worked with not for profit organisation focused with community service before joining KAS.

Having an accounting background, I am responsible with the financial management side and any accounting related matters to support the team in completing the KAS yearly measures.

It is a great opportunity to be part of KAS and to see all the contributions they bring in Australia, the Pacific Region and Worldwide.”



Foreign and Liaison Offices of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

CP = Country Programme
RP = Regional Sector Programme
LO = Liaison Office





See the world from a different viewpoint

Foreign and Security Policy

Cybersecurity

Terrorism / Counter-Terrorism

Energy Policy

Rule of Law

Development Policy


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