



01 September 2026



ECU City Campus Perth CBD

Kaya and Welcome to Perth!

The Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN) acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we are meeting for the Forum here in Perth (*Boorloo*), and pays respect to their elders past and present. AAUN also acknowledges the traditional owners of all lands on which its member universities are located. We thank and appreciate Barry Winmar for his warm *Welcome to Country* for delegates to Australia-Africa Week 2026 in Perth.

AAUN is delighted to welcome delegates to the AAUN Australia Forum 2026, hosted in Perth by Edith Cowan University at its exciting new CBD campus. AAUN is now a 15-year old flagship international university network currently representing 29 university members across the Australian and African continents. We are pleased to launch at this Forum our *AAUN Strategic Plan 2026-30*, setting out the network's vision, core initiatives, and measurable outcomes for the next five years. The Plan, and all other AAUN and Forum documents, can be accessed via our new AAUN website www.aaun.network, while video and other materials can be accessed via our new AAUN YouTube channel and LinkedIn pages.

Each year, AAUN convenes a major forum in Africa and a major forum in Australia to bring together member institutions and key partners and stakeholders from academia, government, industry and communities. Following the highly successful AAUN Africa Forum, Conference & AGM hosted for the first time by Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha, South Africa, from 8-11 June 2026, the AAUN family is excited to gather again here in Perth during our major annual national Australia-Africa Week 2026.

We have a dynamic full-day forum program with diverse and high-level participation from university leaders, researchers, students, governments, diplomats, industry partners and diaspora communities. Innovations include the launch of the policy report by the Fellows of our AAUN Emerging Leaders in Australia-Africa Diplomacy (ELAAD) Program, entitled *Deepening Australia-Africa Relations to 2040*; the launch of the research report from the Australian Research Council Discovery Project *African Impact in Australia: Understanding Political and Economic Agency in the Diaspora*; and the AAUN Early Career Research (ECR) Hackathon final, themed *Rethink.Reuse.Reimagine: Student Innovation for Circular Economy Solutions*, which will see teams from nine AAUN member universities compete for the prize.

The Forum will also be presented with updates by last year's winning AAUN Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) teams on the progress of their seed-funded research projects, before we announce the winners of our 2026 PRDF research grants. Through our collaborative research, science communication, academic diplomacy, and leadership development of emerging scholars and policy practitioners, AAUN makes a sustained contribution to the deepening of Australia-Africa knowledge partnerships and cooperation.

We would like to sincerely thank and appreciate our host, ECU, for welcoming us to their new campus and supporting this event, as well as our external partners, including the Judith Neilson Foundation, Organisation of African Communities in Western Australia, and Paydirt Media, for their generous support.

We trust you will enjoy the AAUN Australia Forum 2026 and forge new collegial and productive collaborations across the Indian Ocean.

AAUN Co-Chairs, Board Members and Secretariat



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PROGRAM

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
TUESDAY 1 September AAUN Australia Forum 2026 Function Room, Level 7		
08.30	Registration	AAUN Secretary and student volunteers
09.00	Welcome Session	Session Chair: Mr Marko Remes, Dean, International Business Operations, ECU • Hon. Ayor Makur Chuot MLC, Member of the Legislative Council, Parliament of WA • A/Prof. David Mickler, AAUN Co-Chair (Australia), Curtin University • Prof. Francis Petersen, VC University of Pretoria (AAUN Africa) • Mr Nigel Stanier, Assistant Secretary, Africa Branch, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade • H.E. Amb. Joe Tapera Mhishi, Ambassador of Zimbabwe and Dean African Diplomats in Australia • Jemima Schilling, Australian Trade Commissioner for Africa, Austrade



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09.30	Deepening Australia-Africa Relations to 2040 Launch of the AAUN ELAAD Policy Report	Session Chair: A/Prof Kwadwo Adusei-Asante, AAUN Board Member, ECU <i>Launch and presentation of ELAAD Report by Fellows and sponsor</i> • Mr Titus Gwamende, Director of Programs, Africa, Judith Neilson Foundation (ELAAD sponsor) • AAUN ELAAD Fellows ◦ Joel Odota ◦ Victo Nalule ◦ Faith Mulwanda <i>Panel discussion & audience Q&A</i> Moderator: Prof Chris Isike, University of Pretoria • H.E. Minoli Perera, Australian Ambassador to Zimbabwe • H.E. Doris Brese, High Commissioner of Ghana to Australia • Prof Matthew Neuhaus, Australian National University • ELAAD Fellows
10.30	Group photo Extended morning tea & optional guided small-groups walking tour of new ECU City Campus Short video interviews for AAUN YouTube channel	
11.30	African Impact in Australia: Understanding Political and Economic Agency in the Diaspora Launch of Australian Research Council Discovery Project Research Report	Session Chair: Dr Mengesha Ayene Ejigu, President, Bahir Dar University <i>Presentation of report by ARC project team</i> • Prof. Farida Fozdar, Curtin • A/Prof. Sarah Prout Quicke, UWA • A/Prof. Dominic Dagbanja, Curtin • Ruvi Goredema, Curtin • Nothando Ngwenya, Curtin <i>Panel discussion & audience Q&A</i> Moderator: Prof Mathews Nkhoma, AAUN Board Member, RMIT University • A/Prof Gizachew Tessema, Director Research, Organisation of African Communities in WA • Dr Toyosi Craig, WA President, African Professionals Australia • Abby Farirayi, Director, Daraja Impact Hub • Idil Sudi, WA Lead, African Australian Advocacy Centre

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13.00	<i>Group lunch, networking and campus walking tours</i> <i>Short video interviews for AAUN YouTube channel</i>	
14.00	Rethink. Reuse. Reimagine: Student Innovation for Circular Economy Solutions AAUN Early Career Researcher (ECR) Hackathon Final	Session Chair: Prof Mohamed Musa Jibril, President, Amoud University Session moderators: Dr Sashah Mutasa, ECU, and Dr Sean van Elden, UWA. <i>Presentations by nine competing teams led by AAUN ECR representatives:</i> • Curtin University • Edith Cowan University • Murdoch University • Nelson Mandela University • University of Cape Town • University of Nairobi • University of New South Wales • University of Pretoria • University of Western Australia Hackathon Judges • Amit Jain, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore • Wesu Ndilila-Barnes, Water Corp WA • Natalie Roberts, Water Corp WA • Jerome Ofori, Rio Tinto Sponsor Glenton Moses, Pilbara Minerals
15.15	AAUN Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) Grants	Session Chair: Prof Jacqueline Lo, AAUN Board Member, Murdoch University <i>Research project update presentations (7 mins each) by 2025 winning CIs:</i> • Dr Sashah Mutasa, ECU (ECR) • Dr Gloria Odo, MU (ECR) • Dr Deirdre Rule, UCT (ECR) • A/Prof. Manickam Minakshi, MU • A/Prof. Libby Thomas, CU • Dr Nehemiah Latolla, NMU (ECR)

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16.30	Closing Session: AAUN Business & Announcements	Session Chair: Prof Kadambot Siddique, AAUN Board Member, UWA <i>Announcements by AAUN Co-Chairs with AAUN Board Members presenting awards</i> - AAUN Strategic Plan 2026-30 - AAUN Website and YouTube - John Hearn Memorial Lecture 2026 - PRDF 2026 grant winners - ECR Hackathon winning team - Vote of Thanks
17.00	Forum close	

Contact us



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YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@AAUNetwork>



LinkedIn pages ([AAUN](#), [ECR Group](#), [ELAAD Program](#))