

## **The Center for Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Studies at Georgetown University**

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### Introduction

The Center for Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Studies (CANZPS) in the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University brings together the study of Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands. CANZPS paired with the Center for Australian and New Zealand Studies at the University of Texas at Austin is the face of Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies in the United States of America (USA). CANZPS promotes research, education, and policy discussions related to politics, history, culture, and international relations.

Today, there is far greater attention in the USA on Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Pacific. Driving this interest at Georgetown University has been the increased attention on strategic competition across the Pacific. It is the nature of the School of Foreign Service that international relations will have an outsized impact on student and faculty interests.

### Origins and Objectives

Established in 1995, CANZPS was supported by the governments of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to enhance academic engagement with the Pacific region. It

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<sup>1</sup> I am extremely thankful to the Editor-in-chief of this journal, Dr. Jatinder Mann for his helpful feedback and suggestions.

grew out of the passion for Australian studies shared by Fr. Jeffery von Arx, S. J. and Fr. John Eddy, S. J. The Jesuit scholars – von Arx from the USA and Eddy from Australia – campaigned to bring Australian studies to Washington, D.C. The Center emerged from a growing recognition of the Asia-Pacific's importance in global geopolitics and the need to strengthen diplomatic and cultural ties between the USA, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand. Later, in the new millennium, the Pacific Islands were added to the center's remit.

CANZPS's primary objectives include:

1. Promoting interdisciplinary scholarship on the political, economic, and social dynamics of Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Pacific.
2. Hosting visiting scholars, policymakers, and diplomats to discuss contemporary issues affecting the region.
3. Supporting students and researchers through academic programs, fellowships, and conferences.
4. Enhancing public understanding of the region's strategic importance in global affairs.

CANZPS plays a vital role in teaching and research focused on the region. It offers courses and programs at Georgetown's Walsh School of Foreign Service, allowing students to develop expertise in regional studies. Undergraduate students can enrol in the Certificate in Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Studies. A small number of center courses may be taken by both undergraduate and graduate students alike.

### Courses and Curriculum

Courses affiliated with CANZPS cover a wide range of topics. A key feature of center courses is the combination of country-focused units alongside thematic ones. Some titles include Peoples and Politics Down Under, the Australian-American Alliance, Geostrategic Competition in the Pacific, the Politics of Marine Conservation, Trade in the Asia Pacific, and Smaller States and Peacemaking.

Students have also undertaken internships with the Australian and New Zealand embassies, the Australia Institute, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and the USA State Department.

In addition, students can access study abroad programs and research opportunities that enhance their regional knowledge, particularly through partnerships with Antipodean universities such as the Australian National University, the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, the University of New South Wales, the University of Auckland, and Otago University.

In 2022, CANZPS partnered with UT-Austin's Center for Australian and New Zealand Studies to offer the Politics of Marine Conservation. Students from both universities travelled to Townsville, Queensland, participating in a multi-week study abroad course. This included snorkeling the Great Barrier Reef and site visits throughout Townsville and nearby environs to examine the ways in which both the private and public sectors collaborated to manage the marine resources.

### Research and Policy Engagement

One of the Center's defining features is its strong emphasis on policy engagement.

CANZPS has organized seminars, conferences, and roundtables featuring academics, diplomats, and policymakers who discuss pressing regional issues.

Key areas of research include:

- The USA-Australia alliance and regional security partnerships.
- Aotearoa New Zealand's role in international organizations and multilateral diplomacy.
- China's expanding influence in the Pacific and its implications.
- Geopolitical challenges in the South Pacific, including territorial disputes and resource governance.

Scholarly collaboration characterizes much of the center's work. Recent collaborations include work with the Lowy Institute, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, the University of Adelaide, and the United States Institute of Peace. Reflecting this are two recent edited volumes: *Power and Influence in the Pacific Islands: Understanding Statecraftiness* and *Land, Indigenous People and Conflict*.

Through collaborations with think tanks, embassies, and government agencies, CANZPS ensures that its research contributes to real-world policy decisions.

#### Influence on USA Foreign Policy

CANZPS has served as a bridge between policymakers and scholars who shape USA engagement with the Indo-Pacific. The Center's work intersects:

- Relations between the USA, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Pacific Island countries.

- Multilateral efforts in the Pacific Islands, including humanitarian aid and climate initiatives.
- Defense and security collaborations.

CANZPS faculty have advised USA government agencies, legislators, and others on issues relevant to the region.

### Public Outreach and Cultural Programs

Beyond academia and policy, CANZPS actively engages in public education. It sponsors events celebrating the region's cultural diversity with Australian and Pacific literature, music, and film. CANZPS also works closely with embassies and think tanks in Washington, D.C., to promote contemporary perspectives and commentary.

Recently, CANZPS hosted former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd, who talked about his most recent book, *On Xi Jinping*. Aotearoa New Zealand Ambassador Rosemary Banks stopped by to talk about small-state peacemaking initiatives, and Allan Behm from the Australia Institute presented his most recent book, *The Odd Couple: the Australia-America Relationship*.

In 2020 and 2021, CANZPS collaborated with the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Center for Pacific Island Studies to host the Blue Pacific Futures series. Guests of this Zoom-based occasional program included Tommy Remengesau, President of Palau, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa, and Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum. Other initiatives have included:

- Guest lectures by prominent Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Island scholars and officials.

- Roundtable discussions focused on small-state interests.
- Film presentations.

### Challenges and Future Directions

Despite its successes and increasing interest in the region, CANZPS confronts its most significant challenge in institutional matters. Like all universities, sustaining funding, expanding outreach, and adapting to changing landscapes remain ongoing trials.

Looking forward, CANZPS can enhance collaborations with universities throughout the region and deepen its engagement with emerging contemporary issues.

### Conclusion

CANZPS at Georgetown University is crucial in enhancing academic and policy engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. It contributes to a deeper understanding of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands through its teaching, research, and public outreach. As global dynamics shift, the Center's role will remain essential in fostering stronger trans-Pacific ties and greater regional awareness.