

2026 Coral Bell School Annual Lecture on Indigenous Diplomacy

One Ocean, Many Worlds: Vernacular Diplomacy and the Melanesian Pluriverse

Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs
ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Common terms in indigenous diplomacy, such as non-Western, non-state and unofficial, assume a Eurocentric single centre of political practice, with the state at the apex. Recent scholarship challenges this assumption. Focusing on Vanuatu and Melanesia, this lecture examines kastom networks and indigenous systems of authority, which predate, coexist with and adapt to the modern state. It proposes 'vernacular diplomacy', a relational grammar emerging between forms of political authority, and argues that recognising ontological pluralism is central to diplomatic encounters.

Speaker
Dr Anna Naupa, Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat

Details
Wednesday 2 December 2026, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM AEDT
Australian Centre on China in the World Lotus Theatre, ANU

Register

Australian National University

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