

Distinguished Professor Glenn Adrian Banks (Massey University)

Nominated and cited by Professor Regina Scheyvens, Manawatu branch, and Professor John Overton, Wellington branch.



Photo: Prof. Glenn Banks (right) doing collaborative work in Papua New Guinea

Citation

Professor Glenn Banks is a born-and-bred Aotearoa NZ geographer who has contributed to the discipline in NZ (and Australia), has achieved international standing due, in particular, to his publications on large-scale mining and aid policy. He is also renowned for the application of his research into regionally significant policy and practice.

Canterbury University's Department of Geography nurtured Glenn's early passion for the subject, and he stayed on here for both his BSc (Hons) and Masters degrees. He said farewell to the Southern Alps where he loved to tramp and climb when it came to his PhD, however, heading to Canberra in 1992 to join the team in the Department of Human Geography, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, at Australian National University. Glenn's thesis here was titled *'Mountain of Desire: Mining Company and Local Community at the Porgera Gold Mine, Papua New Guinea,'* indicating a subject area he has pursued and excelled in for the past three decades. Glenn remained in Canberra between 1996-2007 with a lectureship then senior lectureship at the School of Geography and Oceanography, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales. He was eventually attracted back to NZ in 2008 to join Development Studies at Massey University.

Since the award of his doctorate in 1997, Glenn has been one of the most noteworthy academic researchers on the social, cultural, political and economic effects of large-scale mining in Papua New Guinea and the geography of resource extraction more generally. Three related publications since 2010 have had 100-200 citations – *Development on whose terms? CSR discourse and social realities in PNG's extractive industries sector; The private sector and the SDGs;* and *The Ok Tedi settlement: Issues, outcomes and implications.* The extractives sector underpins several of the larger economies in the Pacific

region and is experiencing rapid growth, and Glenn is centrally placed as a researcher and policy advisor on this industry. Accordingly in the past decade, Glenn's role and status in terms of the effects of large-scale mining has broadened to also being a leading commentator and policy advisor on extractive industries across the Pacific, with invitations to work with multilateral institutions and governments on mineral policy and legislative reform in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji.

Major achievements related to his expertise in mineral resources and development in the Pacific include being lead author and editor of the 2014 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Papua New Guinea Human Development Report (HDR) (one of only 12 National HDR produced globally in 2014), and leading two recent contracted research reports on the social effects of large-scale mining in PNG for corporate clients, worth \$450,000 (he has completed 15 of these over his career). Glenn is also one of the architects of a recent initiative to establish (within the South Pacific Commission, with support from the Pacific Islands Forum) a Pacific Centre for Socially Responsible Natural Resource Management. In addition, Glenn has been a true public scholar, giving talks to Rotary and other general interest groups, providing commentaries in the media, blogs and other public sites on Pacific development issues (including print, radio and television in NZ, Australia and PNG).

Glenn's research calibre is also indicated by his success in securing Marsden funding. He co-lead a Marsden project from 2012-16 (worth \$890,000) on corporate forms of community development in the Pacific, building directly on his work in the minerals sector. In addition to several publications, he was able to support two PhD students through this funding. This funding helped to position Glenn as a key academic and commentator on the role of the private sector in development and Pacific development issues. Glenn also helped to secure a second Marsden research grant worth \$780,000 for work carried out from 2017-2020. This project, titled 'The Land has eyes and teeth: customary land and engagements with capitalism in the Pacific,' sought to challenge the negative narratives around customary land in the Pacific and show how it could be an enabler of economic development. Two Pacific PhD scholars were supported through this funding and they were central to a Symposium held at University of the South Pacific in 2019 to showcase examples of successful economic development on customary land. This initiative helped to re-set thinking about possibilities for locally-driven development in the Pacific. Glenn thus is an integral part of research teams which are changing thinking and practice in the region.

There are also three other important strands to Glenn's research: aid policy and modalities, impact assessment methodologies, and the geography of wine. In all of these areas he has an established international research profile and well-cited outputs. In developing this research, Glenn has also built extensive international networks and collaborations with geographers and other scholars in PNG, the UK (Cambridge, Durham and East Anglia), USA (EWC, Hawaii; Clark), Thailand (Mahidol University), and New Caledonia (IRD) that have led to joint publications and research projects.

Glenn's scholarly publications are on an upward trajectory: since 2010 he has published 27 international peer-reviewed journal papers in a range of fields including Geography, Development, Anthropology and Economics, along with seven book chapters. Three papers published since 2010 have over 100 citations, many in top journals, and he has over 2,815 citations over his career. The

impact of this work is also evidenced by invitations to present at international conferences, success in securing international consultancies, and invitations/ requests to participate in international collaborations and research teams.

Teaching is another area in which Glenn has made a sustained and significant contribution. While in his early years of teaching at UNSW his work focused on undergraduate teaching of human geography, regional geography, GIS and natural resources courses, since coming to Massey his work has mainly been at the postgraduate level, leading – and helping to transform - courses on sustainable development and globalization, and contributing to a number of others on environmental issues, development theory and practice. Notably, he recently spearheaded the development of an innovative cross-disciplinary qualification – the Master of Sustainable Development Goals. Underpinning his approach to teaching is an emphasis on engagement. Glenn has experimented with and developed a range of techniques to actively involve distance students, in particular, with his courses. He also fosters a learning environment that provides the opportunities for students to challenge existing beliefs, practices and systems ('active citizenship'). Feedback on his teaching has been universally positive, with students appreciating that he can draw on his rich field research experience in class: *'I liked the practical/theoretical mix – kept it real but rigorous'; 'His frequent examples of the Pacific enabled some lively discussions'; 'Thoughtful, clear good cases studies... approachable and supportive, encourages class participation'*. He has also made a substantial contribution in terms of supervision, overseeing 20 Master's theses and research reports. He has supported 10 PhD completions (including three Pasifika and two other ESOL), and has another four on-going PhD students. He is a popular supervisor, and is known to be a supportive and inspiring mentor to his PhDs, both during and after their studies.

Glenn has been a champion of Geography at Massey University. Through his role as Head of the School of People, Environment and Planning (which encompasses Human Geography and a range of social science disciplines), a position he has held since 2016, Glenn has for example helped to rebuild GIS capacity by making a new appointment and supporting efforts to redevelop the subject at Massey. At a time when Geography as a subject has sometimes been under threat, Glenn has also played a major leadership role in advocating for the importance of Geography majors within both the BA and BSc degrees. In 2019, he worked hard to represent the interests of the Physical Geography team when a refreshed BSc was being developed at Massey; and in 2014-2015, he convened working groups that designed and developed a 'refreshed' Massey BA degree.

In terms of other contributions to the discipline of Geography, Glenn can count the following among his achievements. He was Secretary of the Institute of Australian Geographers from 2000-2004. This involved being the IAG representative in 2002 at the Regional IGU Conference in Durban, South Africa at which a combined NZ/Australian pitch was made for the next IGU Regional Conference to be held in our region. This was successful. He also helped to organise the IAG Conference in Canberra 2002. Since returning to NZ, he has been President of the Manawatu branch of the NZGS since 2012, he was on the organising committee of the 2012 NZGS conference and ran a half day field trip, he regularly referees submissions for top Geography journals, and he has examined a number of Geography Master's and PhD theses from NZ and abroad. Between 2008 and 2016 he was also part of the editorial team (one of three) that took *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint* – a New Zealand-based regionally-focused journal of over 50 years – from a

solid but limited international standing (Impact Factor 0.5) to an ISI-listed journal with an IF of 1.2 (in 2016). He is also on the Editorial Board of three international peer-reviewed journals.

All who know Glenn in a professional capacity see him as a geographer of integrity, a good humoured colleague, very supportive of others (especially junior staff and postgraduate students), and humble, belying his great range of achievements. He is very highly regarded throughout the community of NZ geographers as someone who values and promotes collegiality, a love for Geography and deep-seated respect for, and commitment to, our partners in the Pacific. His contributions to understanding aid and development in the Pacific, especially in relation to natural resource extraction, have been substantial – both in scholarly and policy fields. It is thus of no surprise that he is held in high regard for his work regionally and internationally.