



A U S T R A L I A - I N D I A F O C U S

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2005 — ISSUE 34



Callum Morton's *Tomorrowland* on show at New Delhi & Chandigarh

Australian artist, Callum Morton's work titled, *Tomorrowland* was adjudged as one among ten best entries from around forty countries participating in the Indian Art Triennale (15 January – 15 February 2005, New Delhi) in their Golden jubilee year. The award included a medal, a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000 (USD 2300).

With some of Morton's work based on the Chandigarh architecture (Le Corbusier), a concurrent exhibition was organised by the Australia-India Council at the Government Museum and Art Gallery at Chandigarh, itself a Le Corbusier building. Morton also made a presentation about his work for students of the local College of Art and Architecture. For the Triennale, Morton made sculptures and digital images which suggest alternative uses for Le Corbusier's key buildings at Chandigarh, such as a car park and a golf driving range, referring to Michael Crichton's film *Westworld* set in a futuristic theme park where the robotic inhabitants revolt.

Tomorrowland suggests a new commercial purpose for Le Corbusier's symbolic architecture, and compares international style architecture to a fun park. Morton says "I am equally drawn to commerce or entertainment as high design. Architecture is just one facet of modernism".

"The work provides a context in which to consider Australia, India and myriad other places where architectural styles have been applied in the name of progress and improvement. Morton's alternative proposals for these buildings suggests an underlying economic imperative for architecture, but also reflects the local, lived experience of this influence", says exhibition curator Stuart Koop.

Prominent Indian artists and art critics, among other key art contacts attended the reception hosted by High Commissioner Mr John McCarthy, to introduce the artist and the curator.



Australian artist, Callum Morton (extreme right) explaining his work to the chief guest, Mr Lalit Sharma and other guests, at the opening of his exhibition *Tomorrowland* at the Government Museum and Art Gallery in Chandigarh on 10 January '05.

India bestows prestigious civilian honour on Australian Gladys Staines

India has bestowed a prestigious civilian honour, the *Padmashree* (India's fourth highest civilian award) on Australian Gladys Staines, for her distinguished social work in India. The *Padmashree* awarded to Staines for "distinguished service to the nation" was one of the 27 awards announced by the Government of India on the occasion of India's Republic Day, 26 January 2005. The awards were presented on 29 March. The Hindu reported: the loudest applause, however, went for Padma Shri recipient Gladys June Staines who "remained steadfast in her devotion to care for people affected by leprosy, despite her personal tragedy".

Mrs Staines is the widow of Australian missionary Graham Staines who was killed by a mob along with the couple's two sons in 1999. Staines, 54, said she was overwhelmed to have been honoured by the Indian government. "This is an honour not for me but for Graham and all the staff at the leprosy home", she said on hearing she had been awarded the *Padmashree*. Staines and her husband Graham had spent more than 30 years working with leprosy patients in Baripada district in the eastern state of Orissa. After her husband's death Staines stayed on in India with her daughter, Esther, overseeing the completion of a hospital for leprosy patients in Orissa. She returned to Australia in 2004.

Australian Studies Resource Centre at JNU

AIC Chairman, Mr Michael Abbott QC and Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Professor G K Chadha, jointly launched an Australian Studies Resource Centre within the Central Library at JNU on 4 February.

The Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Professor G.K.Chadha, congratulated the Australia-India Council, together with academics at JNU including Professor S.K.Sareen and University Librarian, Dr Muttaya Koganuramuth for making the Centre a reality.

Situated in the main University Library, the Australian Studies Resource Centre holds books, journals, videos and a subscription to a valuable electronic database, AustLit: The Australian Literature Resource. [AustLit is the premier resource discovery service for authoritative information on Australian literature. The continuously updated database contains hundreds of thousands of records relating to creative and critical works by more than 78,000 authors and literary organisations from the late 18th century to the present.]

In responding to the Vice-Chancellor's address, Professor Bruce Bennett AO, a member of the AIC with special interests in Australian Studies, applauded JNU's initiative in bringing together a growing collection of materials in Australian literature, history, politics, media and culture that students and scholars can work on. Professor Bennett expressed particular approval of JNU's role in "hosting" an Australian Studies Resource Centre that will be open both to JNU students and staff and to research students and staff from other universities in India.

The Council recognises the growing interest in Australian studies among the Indian academic community and believes that such a centre at JNU will provide a useful Australian studies resource.



Prof G K Chadha, Vice Chancellor, JNU; Mr Michael Abbott QC, Chairman, Australia-India Council; AIC Board members, Prof Bruce Bennett AO and Ms Suzanne Davies at the inauguration of Australian Studies Resource Centre at JNU on 4 February.

South Asia Specialists Link with Australian Professionals Working in the Region

The Australian Research Council's (ARC) new "Asia-Pacific Futures Research Network" (APFRN) took its first innovative step to link academic specialists with professional organizations when the South Asia "node" of APFRN met at the University of New South Wales on 21 and 22 February.

All eight members of the APFRN advisory board - LAWASIA, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Public Health Association of Australia, AusAID, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation - made presentations at the meetings. Their representatives interacted throughout the second day with the more than 30 academic specialists on South Asia who had come from all over Australia. On the first day, the academic specialists heard more than a dozen papers covering a sweep of current research interests.

"One of the goals of the APFRN idea is to bridge the gap in Australia - more than in other places - between professionals in industry and government and specialists in the universities," said Professor Robin Jeffrey of La Trobe University, a member of the APFRN managing committee and coordinator of the South Asia node. "These meetings made a start, from which we intend regular consultations will follow."

The APFRN is one of the networks funded under the ARC's networks program, which began last year. South Asia is one of seven nodes of the APFRN (China; Japan and northeast Asia; Southeast Asia; Pacific; Central, West Asia and Islam; Australia and Asia).

As well as speakers from the eight professional bodies on the advisory board, delegates heard presentations on research needs from speakers including Neville Roach, Chairman of the Australia-India Business Council, Anthony Zwi, professor of public health at the University of New South Wales, and Jackie Menzies of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The APFRN will promote collaborative research that crosses geographic, discipline and professional boundaries. Contacts: APFRN director - Louise Edwards, louise.edwards@anu.edu.au; South Asia node coordinator - Robin Jeffrey, R.Jeffrey@latrobe.edu.au

Victoria's Opening Doors to Export Plan focuses on India

The Victorian Government is building a new export culture in Victoria, matching its strengths to capitalise on emerging market opportunities to ensure continuing job growth and prosperity for the long term. To continue to drive export, the Victorian Government has developed the *Opening Doors to Export Plan*. The Plan includes promoting exports in three regions that offer opportunity for growth: North Asia, India and the Middle East. A Special Trade Envoy works in each of these regions.

The most recent mission to India - a Building, Infrastructure and Related Services Industry Capability Mission to New Delhi and Chennai - was led by Darren Gribble, Special Trade Envoy for India. A major focus of the mission was the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in 2010. Eleven companies participated, promoting their expertise and services in project and event management, engineering, environment services, water treatment, infrastructure and other specialised services that are in demand in the Indian market. In New Delhi and Chennai, the participants met with key public sector organisations and a number of private sector companies. Participants were well received and are hopeful that potential export opportunities will flow with Indian organisations and companies, in particular in the area of infrastructure and related services.

Regional Development Victoria which is part of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, sponsored this mission and worked with the Indian Consul General, Australian Industry Group, the Australia India Business Council and Austrade to make it a success.

For further information contact: Mr Don Fitzgerald, Industry Specialist, Building Products and Furniture, Tel: 03 9651 8127, Fax: 03 9651 7652, www.rdv.vic.gov.au

Roads infrastructure officials visit Australia

The Government of India is pursuing a USD 30 billion rural roads program to connect all Indian villages to India's major roads. The Rural Roads Program, together with the National Highway Development Program, will implement the Government of India's key roads infrastructure objectives. Key rural roads officials from India's national and state governments visited Australia to assess Australian best practice in policy formulation, planning and management of rural road networks, information technology adoption, and technical issues. The delegation to Australia comprised National Rural Roads Development Agency officials responsible for policy and high-level management of India's rural roads programs and officials from state implementing agencies.

The visit was hosted and organised by RMIT University. Participants held working dialogue with the federal Department of Transport and Regional Services, state and local government agencies (Vic Roads, NSW Road Transport Authority, Austroads and Shoalhaven Council), and private sector engineering consultancy companies.

The visit "exceeded expectations" according to Mr Sushant Baliga, a Director of India's National Rural Roads Development Agency. "As a result of the visit we plan to explore with our Australian colleagues a more extensive use of GIS systems, as well as the development of a comprehensive maintenance policy and asset management system for rural roads." Mr Baliga expressed his appreciation to Mr David Jellie of RMIT University, Ms Harriet Richards and Mr Suresh Iyer of Indialink Australia.



Mr David Jellie of RMIT University, with officials from the National Rural Roads Development Agency and State implementing agencies.

Australian International Education Conference 2005

The challenging environment for education exports will be discussed at the Australian International Education Conference (AIEC 2005). Hosted by IDP Education Australia, with the support of Australian Education International, the conference will take place in the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre, Queensland, Australia, 11-14 October 2005.

Reflecting the theme "Opportunities in a Challenging Environment" this important forum will get back to basics by addressing the serious challenges facing the international education industry and defining the opportunities that a constantly changing environment can present. The call for proposals for sessions, presentations and workshops for the conference is now open. To submit a proposal or to register your interest in attending the conference, visit the website www.idp.com/conference for more information. The closing date for session abstracts is 18 April 2005.

The Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs recently released overseas student visa statistics for the period January to December 2004. IDP Education Australia's analysis of statistics from the top 20 source countries indicates that Australian education exports remain attractive to Indian students.

The countries granted the greatest number of visas were China (15,182), USA (10,894), India (9,580), Republic of Korea (7,788) and Malaysia (6,856). Of the top 20 source countries, Brazil (+39%), India (+28%) and Canada (+18%) experienced the greatest rates of growth. The total number of visas issued offshore for all visa classes between January and December 2004 was 110 307, representing a marginal decline of -0.3% (-335) compared with the number of visas issued in the previous year.

AIBC—Queensland Government Business Breakfast



Mr Stan Sielaff presented on the recent Queensland Government Mining Trade Mission to India

Over 70 people attended the first breakfast briefing for 2005. Speakers included Griffith University, Australian Mining Consultants (AMC) and Queensland Government Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms Cecily Pearson and Mr Michael Jeh described the successful Queensland Universities cricket tour of India and Sri Lanka and the use of cultural interests to create awareness of Queensland's capabilities in a market of a billion people.

Mr Peter Christensen discussed the enormous opportunities in the Indian mining sector and outlined the challenges faced and strategies adopted by AMC for their successful market entry to India.

Mr Stan Sielaff led the recent Queensland Government Mining Trade Mission to India and discussed the Queensland Government's initiatives to facilitate the export of mining equipment and services to India for 2005.

The next Queensland Government AIBC breakfast is scheduled for Thursday 12 May at the Inchholm Hotel in Brisbane. Guest speakers include Lyle Jackson, CEO of Union Switch and Signal and John Hogan, Managing Director of Superior Jetties. Both companies are actively exporting to India and will discuss their experiences in the engineering and tourism infrastructure sectors.

The Global Foundation Mission to India

The Global Foundation led its inaugural mission to India from 16-23 March. This landmark mission comprising twenty delegates from a wide variety of backgrounds was led by Mr David Murray, Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Mr David Miles, Chairman of the Foundation. In conjunction with the Indian and Australian Governments and with the active support of the respective High Commissioners, the Foundation devised a comprehensive program of engagement and interaction with the most senior levels of Indian society.

The program included several structured roundtable discussions between Indian and Australian counterparts in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi. In addition, the delegation met with a number of senior representatives from the Indian Government and major institutions. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) each played a key role in the programming and conduct of the mission.

Above Right: Mr David Murray, CEO Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Mr David Miles, Chairman The Global Foundation with Finance Minister Mr Chidambaram

Right: Mr Steve Howard, Secretary, The Global Foundation and HE Mr John McCarthy, Australian High Commissioner to India with Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission



“Australia and India: Convergences and Divergences” Conference 2006

The Indian Association for the Study of Australia (IASA) will hold its third international conference “Australia and India: Convergences and Divergences” in Pune on 9-11 January, 2006. The Australia-India Council would encourage Australian academics to participate in the conference.

Last date for submission of abstracts: 15 June, 2005. Acceptances will be communicated by 1 August, 2005. Full papers to be submitted by 1 November, 2005. Abstracts may be mailed to Professor Santosh Sareen, Centre of Linguistics & English, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, JNU, New Delhi-110067, India. E-mail: sareen@vsnl.com

Conference Themes:

SOCIETY: Integration and Differentiation; Religious and Racial Issues; Indigenous People: India and Australia; Education in Nation State; Dialogue Among Civilizations; Multiculturalism

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS: Nation and Literature; Diasporic Writings; Subaltern Writing; Cross-Cultural Images; Performing Arts; Film; Englishes

POLITICS: Policy Towards Indigenous Population; Protective Discrimination/Affirmative Action; Federalism; Democratization of Political Processes; Governance; Globalization; Media and Agenda Setting; Role of Pressure and Interest Groups

ECONOMY: Liberalization and Economic Reforms; Privatization and the Role of State; Offshoring and Outsourcing; Economic Paradigms in Bilateral Relations; Perspectives on WTO; Trade Union Movement; Economic Protectionism

FOREIGN POLICY / NATIONAL SECURITY: Asia-Pacific Security; Security of Small States; Terrorism; Changing Contours of Foreign Policy; WMD Proliferation; Peace and Stability in Indian Ocean; Managing International Crime, Drug Trafficking and Piracy; Defence and Strategic Studies

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Science and Society; Environmental Protection; Information Technology; Biotechnology and Human Health; Bioethics; Science Policy

India's first chain of internationally branded economy hotels

InterGlobe Enterprises, India's leading travel and technology management company and Accor, AIBC member and one of the world's largest hotel and tourism enterprises, entered into a joint venture agreement in March to invest in and develop a minimum of 25 'Ibis' brand economy hotels across India and South Asia over the next 10-12 years. The venture envisages an investment of over Rs. 850 Cr (approximately US\$200 million) over this period.

InterGlobe's joint venture with Accor, acknowledged as the world leader in economy and mid-priced hotels, has a vision to redefine the economy hotel sector in India, positioning Ibis hotels as the preferred 'best value international hotels' across the region. With over 650 hotels and close to 70,000 rooms in 36 countries, Ibis hotels are renowned the world over for their quality, simplicity and unbeatable value-for-money. Development activity for Ibis hotels is already underway in Bangalore and Gurgaon. Sites have also been identified in Pune and Jaipur. Together these hotels will have over 700 rooms. Target cities for future development are Mumbai, the National Capital Region, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Mr. Michael Issenberg, Managing Director, Accor Asia Pacific headquartered in Australia, said, "We could not have chosen a better partner for the sub-continent than InterGlobe, with its diversified interests in travel management, distribution and technology and with its established track record of working with leading international companies in the travel business. We are confident and excited about establishing our dominant presence in the world's fastest growing travel market. We look to introduce our other major brands - Sofitel, Novotel, and Mercure - when the appropriate projects become available."

Miss India Australia 2004

K. Balachander, the doyen of Indian cinema, has signed AIBC Youth Ambassador and Miss India Australia Vimala Raman, for his next film in Tamil. Vimala Raman, was crowned the Miss India Australia 2004 and AIBC Youth Ambassador at a pageant held in Sydney last October. Vimala then represented Australia in the Miss India Worldwide pageant held in Mumbai in January 2005.

Vimala will play the lead female role in the K. Balachander film, with shooting set to commence in April 2005 in India and in Sri Lanka. The Padmashri award winner, K. Balachander, has written, directed and produced more than 90 films in Tamil, Telegu and Hindi including super hits Ek Duuje Ke Liye and Roja. Duet films of Prakash Raj will produce the upcoming film casting Vimala in the lead role. Since winning the Miss India Australia title Vimala has completed a series of commercial and print ads for Indian companies in Mumbai and Chennai.

Courtesy Miss India Australia, www.missindia.com.au



Ms Vimala Raman represented Australia in the top five at the Miss India World awards held in Mumbai in January 2005

India 2005-06 Budget - Points of Interest to Australian Business

- Australian companies earning royalty income and technical services fees from India may benefit from increased business following a reduction from 20 to 10 per cent of the withholding tax paid by Indian companies for these services. This only applies to agreements entered into on or after 1 June 2005.
- Exporters of non-agricultural products to India will benefit from a reduction in the peak duty rate from 20 to 15 per cent. As in previous years, there was no duty reduction on major agricultural products.
- Tariff reductions to 15 per cent were announced on the following products of interest to Australian exporters: Wool tops (effective rate, inclusive of countervailing duty and education levy 24.38 per cent); Solar heaters (effective rate 34.44 per cent); Plastic layflat tubing (effective rate 25.09 per cent); Plastic film (effective rate 34.44 per cent); Packing machinery and relevant spare parts (effective rate 34.44 per cent); Vaccine inputs (effective rate 15.3 per cent).
- The duty on coking coal with an ash content of 12 per cent or more was reduced from 15 to 5 per cent (effective rate 5.1 per cent). Exporters will welcome the maintenance of zero import duty on low ash content coal, the mainstay of Australian coal exports. Tariffs on aluminium, copper and zinc have been reduced from 15 to 10 per cent. The effective duty on these metals is now 28.51 per cent.
- Introduction of a unified Value Added Tax (VAT) from 1 April 2005.
- Australian companies keen to invest in India will welcome the announcement that 100 per cent foreign ownership will be permitted in the construction and development of townships, housing, commercial premises, hotels, resorts, hospitals, educational institutions, recreational facilities, and city and regional level infrastructure.
- Insurance companies and mutual funds are expected to gain additional business from tax incentives introduced to encourage personal savings growth. The proposed introduction of a Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the imposition of a tax on cash withdrawals from banks are likely to have an effect on business operating costs.
- A services tax of 10 per cent will be levied on services rendered outside India where the recipient of the services is situated in India.

IMD Group establishes branch office in Mumbai

IMD Group Ltd, an AIBC member company that recently listed on the Australia Stock Exchange has established a branch office of subsidiary Bio Medical Operations Australia Pty Ltd in Mumbai following approval by the Reserve Bank of India. IMD Group specialises in the development, manufacturing and distribution of medical consumables and safety products. The Mumbai office will serve as regional headquarters for India & Sub Continent, Africa, Middle East and CIS countries.

The office will be managed by Raj Kaul who has had 10 years experience working with and promoting Australian healthcare and medical equipment companies in the growing Indian market. Last year IMD was awarded a contract to supply 14,000 BMDI Nomoresharps Needle Disposal Systems to PATH (Program for Appropriate Technologies in Health) for supply to the Ministry of Health Government of Andhra Pradesh.

AIBC Victoria—Election of Management Committee

At a Special General Meeting for the Australia India Business Council Victoria, held in February, the following members were elected as Office Bearers of the Management Committee, AIBC Victoria: Harish Rao - President ; Richard Cameron - Vice President; Vinay Sharma - Secretary; Nihal Shah - Treasurer. Other Management Committee members are Leanne Keifer, Mark Lobo, Stephen Manallack, Sandeep Chadha, Vijay Susarla and Dia Ram Sharma.

Appointment of Mr Brian Hayes QC as Vice Chairman of AIBC South Australia

Mr Brian Hayes QC has been co-opted to the National Executive Committee of the AIBC and has agreed to head the AIBC Chapter in South Australia. Brian is Immediate Past President of the South Australian Bar Association and an internationally renowned environmentalist with strong connections with the South Australian Government and the business community. Brian is Indian-born and has maintained close links to India. He accompanied Premier Rann on his visit to India in 2004 and is consulted by the Premier and the SA Government on India-related matters.

“Given the strong interest in India that is being shown by the SA Government and business, I am sure that, with Brian's leadership, the SA AIBC Chapter will grow significantly in numbers and develop a rich programme of activities for the benefit of its members and both South Australia and India” said Neville Roach, Chairman of the AIBC.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST—AUSTRALIA

- AIBC and South East Melbourne Manufacturer's Alliance “India—Opportunities in this Emerging World Market”. Tuesday 12 April 2005; 7.15—9am, The Dandenong Club, 1579 Heatherton Rd Dandenong. Email: info@aicc.com.au
- Queensland Government AIBC breakfast. Guest speakers include Lyle Jackson, CEO of Union Switch and Signal and John Hogan, Managing Director of Superior Jetties Thursday 12 May at the Inchholm Hotel in Brisbane. Email: aibc@fastmail.com.au
- IMA Asia “Engaging India and its domestic market” Adit Jain, IMA India. Sydney 2 June, Melbourne 3 June. Email: Catherine.Bell@imaasia.com

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST—INDIA

- For events in India, please refer to the website of the Indian Consulate General (Sydney) www.indianconsulatesydney.org/Programme_of_Events_India.pdf; and the High Commission of India (Canberra) www.highcommissionofindiaaustralia.org/Impevents_pg.htm

Australia-India Focus

The Australia-India Focus newsletter is produced bi-monthly by the Australia-India Council and the Australia India Business Council.

Australia-India Focus aims to inform our readers on the range of cultural and business activities occurring between Australia and India.

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Australia-India Focus is also available from the Australia India Business Council's website at www.aibc.org.au/newsletter/htm and the Australia-India Council's website at www.dfat.gov.au/aic



The Australia-India Council (AIC) was established in 1992 in response to a recommendation by the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, following an inquiry into Australia's relations with India.

The Council initiates or supports a range of activities designed to promote a greater awareness of Australia in India and a greater awareness of India in Australia, including visits and exchanges between the two countries, development of institutional links, and support of studies in each country of the other.

The Council offers support, in the form of funding, for projects likely to contribute to the development of the relationship, within the context of AIC objectives and guidelines.

For more information, visit www.dfat.gov.au/aic

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The AIBC is a national NGO and is recognised by the Australian government as the peak body for promoting business links between Australia and India.

The AIBC is the first point of contact by government and business representatives from both countries seeking access to industry, business and government leaders of both countries.

The AIBC maintains close relationships with strategic government agencies, the diplomatic corps and industry bodies, and also has an affiliated counterpart in India, the India Australia Joint Business Council.

The AIBC has representatives and members across all states and territories in Australia, and has three different membership categories available.

For more information, visit www.aibc.org.au

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