



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

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Australian Stories: Wide Horizons ~ Tour of India by Australian Authors

Award-winning Australian authors Tim Winton, Kate Grenville and Peter Goldsworthy will be touring India over 15 to 26 November to promote Australian literature. A major highlight of the Asialink organised *Australian Stories: Wide Horizons* tour is the publication by Penguin India of three titles – one by each of the authors – to coincide with the tour: *Three Dog Night* by Peter Goldsworthy, *The Idea of Perfection*, by Kate Grenville, and Tim Winton's modern Australian classic, *Cloudstreet*.

The rupee editions of these titles will ensure sales and promotion to a wide readership – India is the third largest English language book market in the world. Furthermore, the release of these titles will tap into the growing number of Indian students who are studying Australian literature. The ten-day tour includes an official reception at the Australian High Commission in New Delhi, hosted by High Commissioner Penny Wensley AO; seminars with university students in New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai (including at the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi); and literary events organised by Penguin India and Austrade.



Australian author Tim Winton. Photo: Quentin Jones



L to R: Authors Kate Grenville and Peter Goldsworthy

Kate Grenville reflected on her previous travel to India, “25 years ago I was in India with a documentary crew – it was a life-changing experience... Many of the Indians we met didn’t have the luxury of hankering after perfection, instead they made life and even joy out of the humble materials at hand. To go back to India, with a novel that was written out of some of what I learned there, will be a real privilege.”

Peter Goldsworthy is yet to travel to India, but his experience with Indian arts and culture has raised his expectations, “From *The Jungle Book* and *Kim* as a boy, through the stories of R.K Narayan as an adolescent, to Roy and Rushdie and Bollywood, a fascination with India has been inescapable. To visit India for the first time promoting a novel of my own seems so unlikely, I must be inhabiting a parallel universe. But perhaps the exotic world of my Adelaide desert will be as appealing to Indian readers as their exotic world has long been to me.”

Peter Goldsworthy has won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize and the Australian Bicentennial Literary Prize for Poetry. *Three Dog Night* was shortlisted for the 2004 Miles Franklin Award. Kate Grenville won the Australia/Vogel Award in 1986 for *Lillian’s Story*, and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award in 1995 for *Dark Places*. Her novel *The Idea of Perfection* won the prestigious Orange Prize for Fiction in 2001. Tim Winton won the Australia/Vogel Prize in 1981 for *An Open Swimmer*. He has won Australia’s most prestigious literary award – the Miles Franklin – three times, for *Shallows* in 1984, *Cloudstreet* in 1992 and for *Dirt Music* in 2002. Both *The Riders* (1995) and *Dirt Music* (2002) were shortlisted for the Booker Prize and the *The Riders* was awarded the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize.

The *Australian Stories: Wide Horizons* author tour is organised by Asialink and the major sponsors are the Australia Council and the Australia-India Council. Support is also provided by Austrade, the NSW Ministry for the Arts, the Australian High Commission in India, Penguin India, and the participating authors.

Biotechnology Memorandum of Understanding ~ Australia – India

Australia and India's two peak biotechnology industry bodies - AusBiotech and the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) respectively - formalised institutional linkages through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 12 October 2004. The MoU will open further biotechnology partnering and collaborative opportunities between India and Australia.

A recent visit to India by Mr John Grace, an AusBiotech Corporate Member, revealed a strong, growing biotechnology industry, which offered significant opportunities for Australian biotechnology companies wishing to form partnerships in India. Mr Grace's visit was initiated and funded by the Australia-India Council (AIC).

The AIC's key objective is to strengthen bilateral relations with India in a raft of areas including the arts, health, sport, law, and science and technology, and it is in the latter sector that this MoU represents a positive outcome for the AIC and for Australia-India relations.

Dr Tony Coulepis, Executive Director of AusBiotech, said "We are delighted to strengthen such an important relationship with one of the most rapidly developing and important markets for biotechnology in the future. India is emerging as the new destination for building a globally competitive biotech industry. The MoU will assist Australian biotech companies access a new and growing market, which is anticipated to reach 50% in size of the USA within the next 20 years".

Combining India's development and market potential across several biotechnology sectors with the Australian industry's capacity in new discoveries, should result in commercial benefit to companies in both nations. "India and Australia are joined by history, language and an equally strong interest in cricket. These associations are strong drivers in facilitating commercial interactions," said Dr Coulepis.

The progress made through the MoU will be reinforced in November at the AusBiotech 2004 National Conference, with the attendance of a significant business delegation from India.

Australia-India Council Grant Funding ~Australian Visit by Nabateena Dev Sen

Eminent India poet and literary theorist, Ms Nababeeta Dev Sen, will be travelling to Australia over 3 to 15 November 2004 at the invitation of the Institute of Postcolonial Studies (IPS) in Melbourne. Professor Dev Sen is a leading member of the Calcutta and West Bengal literary and intellectual community, and one of the most influential writers in the Bengali language in India today. While in Australia, Professor Dev Sen will attend a reception in her honour, provide a public lecture at IPS, and attend speaking engagements at the University of Sydney and Macquarie University. She will also give a public reading of her work and attend IPS working groups.

Ms Dev Sen was born in 1928 in Calcutta into a family of well-known poets. She has published widely, both in Bengal and English. Until recently, she was Professor of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University in Calcutta, and also founded the Indian National Comparative Literature Association. She was honoured with the *Sahitya Akademi Award* from India's National Academy of Letters and with one of India's highest civilian honours, the *Padmashree*. She was formally married to Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, with whom she has two daughters.

Her visit to Australia was made possible by a funding grant provided by the Australia-India Council (AIC), and through additional support from *Bangla Sahita Sansad* (a Melbourne-based Bengali literary group).

18th IDP Australian International Education Conference

The 18th IDP Australian International Education Conference at the Sydney Convention Centre was a major success, breaking all attendance records with 1,235 delegates from 43 countries. Over 200 expert speakers offered their insights into this conference's theme, International Education: The Path to Cultural Understanding and Development, with a particular focus on the Middle East and Gulf region. Local and international delegates heard industry leaders in over 70 seminars discuss quality and access to education, the divide between local and foreign students, as well as the soaring costs of studying in Australia. At Wednesday's Opening Plenary, Sir John Daniel, Director of the Commonwealth of Learning, and Lyutha Al Mughairy, of the United Nations, reminded delegates of unequal access to education in the developing world. "Should we not be asking why one in three children in the developing world is deprived of basic education?" asked Ms Al Mughairy.

The Conference Dinner was held at Hordern Pavilion, Fox Studios, with a colourful Bollywood theme. The space was decorated to a bright Indian-theme and included a lively 30-minute performance by Indian dancers. The evening was a chance for staff to relax with clients. The 2005 Conference will be held on Queensland's Gold Coast in conjunction with AEI.



Bollywood themed dancers at the IDP Conference Dinner

On the opening day of the IDP Conference, the Australia India Business Council's Education chapter ran an India Education Policy lunch, hosted by IDP Education. The Consul General of India Mr M Ganapathi outlined India's Education policy framework and updated members of the AIBC Education Chapter on recent developments in India's education policy. Ms Lindy Hyam, CEO of IDP Education and head of the AIBC Education chapter commented on the dynamic market for Australian education services in India, and outlined recent successes for IDP Education including the establishment of Learning Centres across India. The Education Chapter of the AIBC includes eighteen Australian universities from six states and territories. Members also include higher education institutes and education professionals. Chairman of the AIBC Mr Neville Roach encouraged Australian universities to continue to consider research collaboration with Indian Institutes.

Border-Gavaskar Trophy Series

Cricketing contests between Australia and India have always been of a high intensity. Indeed, the truly competitive nature of test series' between the two countries in recent times (India was the country that brought Australia's 16-test match winning streak to an end in 2001, and held Australia to a draw – in Australia – in the 2003 – 04 Border-Gavaskar series), has led many cricket fans to consider the Border-Gavaskar trophy a more prestigious cricketing prize than the Ashes. As Ricky Ponting recently wrote in an article for the Indian Magazine Outlook, "The Indians always seem to perform above their level when they are up against us, which is why the Border-Gavaskar trophy is one of the most important pieces of silverware in cricket. It also is the only one that is not in our cabinet right now."

The importance of the series is also fuelled by the Australian desire to defeat India in India in a Test match series – a feat that has not been achieved by the Aussies since 1969. The Border-Gavaskar trophy (named after the cricketing legends Allan Border and Sunil Gavaskar) was inaugurated in the 1996/97 season, and has been won by Australia only once (with India winning three, and one match drawn). At the time of writing, Australia looked to be in the best position it has been for some time in a test series in India, leading India 1 – nil in the series, with one game drawn, and two to play. The Australia-India Council provided funding to the Australian Cricket Board towards the costs of creating a redesigned Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The new trophy was publicly unveiled by Alan Border and Sunil Gavaskar at the Adelaide Cricket Ground on 10 December 1999, and was presented to the then victorious Australian side in early 2000.

Foreign Direct Investment Limit in Domestic Aviation Rises

The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance Cabinet decided on 20 October to raise the limit for foreign direct investment (FDI) in domestic airlines from 40 to 49 per cent. By raising the FDI cap, the domestic scheduled and non-scheduled airlines will have greater opportunity to receive more equity from foreign investors. Also, foreign investments in domestic airlines will no longer have to be cleared by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board. However, foreign airline companies are still barred from holding any equity in Indian private airline companies.

Dual Citizenship - Registration as Overseas Indian Citizens

Under the provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 (No.6 of 2004) and the Citizenship (Second Amendment) Rules 2004, the Consulate General of India, Sydney and the High Commission of India, Canberra will start accepting applications from November 1, 2004 for registration as Overseas Citizen of India from Persons of Indian Origin holding Australian passports. Details of the scheme have been posted on the websites of the Consulate General of India, Sydney at www.indianconsulatesydney.org and the High Commission of India, Canberra at www.hcindia-au.org.

Exporting to India: Riding the Elephant

Mr. Mike Moignard, Senior Trade Commissioner (Austrade) in New Delhi, spoke in Canberra on 1 October on "Exporting to India: Riding the Elephant". His highly successful presentation attracted some seventy entrepreneurs from SMEs located in the ACT and in neighbouring environs. Mr. Moignard specifically acknowledged the value of the newly established Canberra Chapter of the Australia India Business Council in promoting opportunities for local business in India. Austrade also facilitated for AIBC Vice-Chairman (ACT), Rakesh Ahuja, to discuss issues on doing business in India with members of the audience.

The seminar in Canberra was one of a series of seminars conducted by Austrade throughout Australia, to encourage and assist new exporters to the Indian market.

Adit Jain advises regional managers on India Strategy

In October, Managing Director of IMA India, Mr Adit Jain delivered India strategy presentations to Asia regional managers in Sydney and Melbourne. Mr Jain travelled to Australia as a guest of International Market Assessment Asia to lead discussion on operating issues in India.

The areas of discussion covered in the peer group meeting included: lessons for multinational corporations in India, key factors spurring growth in Indian markets, and business challenges. Mr Jain, who advises over 200 CEOs and CFOs of foreign multinationals in India, reported that investment and demand remain strong, with growth in automotives, pharmaceuticals, information technology, telecommunications, consumer durables, banking and retail credit.

Mr Jain reported that recent client research has found that policy reforms, considered by managers to be the most important element promoting growth last year, has fallen to third place this year. The key factors expected to spur growth this year are an increase in domestic demand, followed by greater domestic investment. Revenue growth outpaced expectations for over forty percent of respondents, in 2003-04.

IMA India is the Indian Associate of the Economist Corporate Network (ECN). Led by Economist Corporate Network and regional experts, ECN Peer Group Briefings bring together top management of Asian operations to discuss country and region-wide strategic management issues. Australian Associate IMA Asia, will update its quarterly outlook for Indian markets and key strategic considerations for multinationals in December 2004. For details, contact Catherine Bell: Catherine.Bell@imaasia.com

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST—AUSTRALIA

- Australia India Chamber Commerce & Australia India Business Council Cruise - Yarra and Port Phillip Bay, Friday 12 November, Email Harish Rao harishrao@aicc.com.au
- AIBC hosts Sabeer Bhatia, founder of Hotmail, November 10 2004, Sydney
Email Glen Robinson glen.robinson@aseanfocus.com
- India Update Seminar 2004, University of Canberra and Monash Asialink Institute. Supported by the AIBC.
Email: Auriol.Weigold@canberra.edu.au

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST—INDIA

- The Premier of NSW, Hon Bob Carr, will lead a trade visit to India from 1-5 November 2004. The Premier's program includes several events in New Delhi and Mumbai, in which delegates from companies that have an interest in India may consider participating. These include events organised by National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and a reception in Mumbai hosted by the Premier in conjunction with the Australian Consulate General (Mumbai).
- For further 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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