



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

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Australia-India Council visit to India

The Deputy Chair of the Australia-India Council, Betty Churcher AO, and board members Darren Gribble, Suzanne Crowe and Sandy Hollway AO travelled to India in November to review current council projects and identify new ones in areas of mutual interest to both countries. Visits of this kind also serve to underline the continuing priority Australia attaches to the India relationship.



Opening Session of Volunteering Dialogue. L to R: Betty Churcher AO, Sandy Hollway AO, H.E Penny Wensley AO and Mr R K Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs

Centrepiece of the visit was a series of seminars on volunteering conducted by the council jointly with Indian partners, the Confederation of Indian Industry, the Sports Authority of India and Dignity Foundation in New Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

Sandy Hollway AO and the CEO of Volunteering NSW, Marie Fox, drew on their experience to address the seminars on motivating and recruiting volunteers, volunteer resource centres and corporate volunteering.



Ms Marie Fox presenting at the India -Australia Dialogue on Volunteering

In New Delhi, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Mumbai, the delegation met a wide range of stakeholders from government, business, cultural organisations, NGOs, Australian agencies based in India and the media. These discussions identified possible new projects in health, biotechnology, volunteering, the arts including film, Australian studies and sport. In selecting projects, the council gives priority to activities where there are natural and genuine partnerships of interest, effort and advantage to both countries.

The delegation also held meetings with Dayanand College in Ajmer and Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi in preparation for Australian studies conferences at these two institutions in January 2004. Dayanand College launched its Australian studies newsletter during the visit.



Cultural contacts: OP Jain, Sanskriti, Darren Gribble, Suzanne Crowe and Mr SK Misra, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

The visit coincided with Dr Jamshed Irani's appointment as the new Chairman of the India-Australia Council, the council's counterpart body. Dr Irani retired as Managing Director of Tata Iron and Steel in 2001 but continues as a director on the board of Tata Steel. Council board members met Dr Irani during the visit. He will visit Melbourne in December for his daughter's graduation and will be guest-of-honour at the council's last board meeting for the year.

India-ASEAN Summit

The Second India-ASEAN Summit, held in Bali, Indonesia on 8 October 2003, set the achievement of free trade goals in a range of products by 2016. It has been hailed in India as a significant foreign policy achievement and a consolidation of India's "Look East" policy.

The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation provides for the establishment of an Indian-ASEAN Regional Trade and Investment Area with a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in goods, services and investment. Tariffs will be reduced or eliminated on a range of products between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2011 for the "ASEAN 6 minus the Philippines" and India. All other ASEAN nations – the Philippines, Cambodia, Burma, Laos and Vietnam – are to achieve this goal by 2016.

The goal for two-way trade is US\$30 billion in four years, a projected two hundred per cent increase over current levels. As part of this, India concluded a Framework Agreement for Establishing a Free Trade Area with Thailand, and is pursuing a similar bilateral agreement with Singapore.

New Delhi and Mumbai international airports to be privatised

On 11 September 2003 the Indian Government announced measures to privatise New Delhi and Mumbai international airports. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been authorised to enter into joint ventures with private, including foreign, investors, with the latter permitted to control up to 74 per cent of the equity in each airport. AAI currently controls 124 airports in India, but 70 per cent of its net profits are reportedly generated by New Delhi and Mumbai international airports.

Privatisation (known in India as 'disinvestment') of the two airports is being handled by a steering committee comprising the Ministers of Civil Aviation, Law, Finance and Disinvestment. Announcement of a financial adviser and an independent global technical adviser on airport modernisation is expected shortly. The steering committee will then establish the broad terms of the draft joint venture, shortlist prospective bidders based on technical and financial criteria, and approve the bid evaluation criteria. Prime Minister Vajpayee has set a deadline of 30 May 2004 for privatisation of the two airports to be completed. For further details contact the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) in New Delhi - Email : indialink@austrade.gov.au

Gangtok and Shillong Urban Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Projects

Australia will provide technical assistance to help the Governments of Meghalaya and Sikkim to plan for and deliver improved water and sanitation services, particularly to poor communities under an agreement signed on 30 October. By improving basic services like water and sanitation, Australia is helping lay the groundwork for ensuring the poor can improve their economic prospects and participate more fully in society. It is particularly appropriate the seven-year, A\$39.4 million project is commencing in the United Nations International Year of Freshwater, which recognises the vital importance of water to sustain life.

Australia-India Security Roundtable

The third Australia-India Security Roundtable was held in Chandigarh, India on 7-8 October 2003 and brought together 14 senior security and defence analysts from both countries. As the third successful discussion at "second track" level, it illustrates the significant value of dialogue and cooperation between the two countries on defence and security matters.

Australia was represented by Mr Hugh White, Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute; Professor Ross Babbage, Australian National University; Admiral Chris Barrie (ret); Ms Jenelle Bonnor, Consultant (*Convenor*); Professor William Maley, Australian National University; Dr Claude Rakisits, Department of Defence; Dr Elsin Wainwright, Australian Strategic Policy Institute and Mr Michael Abbott QC, Chairman, Australia-India Council. India was represented by Dr Sanjay Chaturvedi, Panjab University; Mr Salman Haidar, former Foreign Secretary; Dr Manoj Joshi, Political Editor and Chief of Bureau, *The Times of India*; Major General Afsir Karim (retd); Air Chief Marshall S K Mehra (retd); Dr Rajesh Rajagopalan, Observer Research Foundation and Professor Varun Sahni, Jawaharlal Nehru University (*Convenor*).

As with previous roundtables, its deliberations will feed into government-level talks between the two countries by considering issues that are key to the future of the bilateral relationship and broader national security in each country. The roundtable was held against the background of international attempts to combat terrorism, concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, efforts to bring stability to Iraq and other states in transition, and initiatives to reopen dialogue with Pakistan. The participants expressed their sincere thanks for the generous financial and other support provided by the Australia-India Council, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and the Australian High Commission, New Delhi.

First Official Indo-Australian Film, Arts, Media and Entertainment Organisation announced

Chairman of the Australia India Business Council (AIBC), Mr Neville Roach (AO) has announced the launch of a special chapter that will focus on the development of stronger links between Australia and India in the Film, Arts, Media, and Entertainment ('FAME') industries. To be known as the Australia-India FAME Council, it will be headed by Sydney based film-maker, Anupam Sharma.

In his address at an AIBC seminar in Melbourne on 'Business Opportunities in India', Mr. Roach spoke extensively on the rapidly accelerating growth of business and trade between India and Australia. He highlighted the huge opportunity for mutually beneficial collaboration in film and media, industries in which both countries have achieved global success.

Speaking at the seminar, Mr. Anupam Sharma highlighted the exponential growth in Indian-Australian film links and said that "he was honoured to head the first organisation to tap into the potential of Australia-India film trade".

The Australia-India FAME Council will have reciprocal links with a similar body in India under the auspices of AIBC's counterpart, the India Australia Joint Business Council, which is a member of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI).

Ms Caroline Pitcher, General Manager of the Melbourne Film Office, was present at the launch and welcomed the announcement. Ms Trisha Rothkrans, CEO, AusFILM also congratulated AIBC on the announcement of the Australia-India FAME Council and said "We have observed and supported the growth of Australian Indian film links over the last five years and look forward to working with the new council in attracting more of Bollywood to Australia".

The Australia-India FAME Council will include the following in its ambitious list of aims and objectives.

- A platform providing cohesion to various Australian government and private initiatives that taps into the business potential of the Indian film industry for Australians and vice versa;
- Promotion of a two-way film and media trade between India and Australia;
- Contact point for various Australian and Indian private and official organization looking for information and possibility of business between the two film industries;
- Actively lobbying for the establishment of an MOU between India and Australia as the prelude to a co-production treaty between the two countries;
- Consultation and liaison with various departments such as DIMIA, MEAA, ASDA, and SPAA to facilitate growth of Indian off shore productions in Australia;
- Consultation and liaison with various state film bodies and AUSFILM to further promote the Australian film industry in India, and Indian film opportunities for Australian film professionals;
- An Australian delegation of film professionals to visit India as a part of 'Frames 2004' Conference in Mumbai in March of next year. The delegation has already received support from Indian Tourist Office. This will also involve numerous high level industry meetings and a selective location and facilities survey in India. The trip will expose the Australian film industry to the potential and benefits of working in conjunction with the Indian film industry;
- A similar delegation of Indian producers to visit Australia in 2004;
- An annual Indian film festival in Australia, and vice versa, as well as relevant themed film seminars in both countries;
- Exchange of film professionals through various programs;
- Inception of awards and festivals to promote the multicultural film fraternity in Australia;

The AIBC encourages and welcomes participation by various Australian film organizations, companies, and professionals in Australia-India FAME Council. This is the first and only platform of its kind for professionals interested in the exponentially growing Indian film industry and Indo-Australian film links. The new chapter is in its infancy, so participation at such an early stage will be very beneficial to both the chapter, and to the industry.

The Australia-India FAME Council will also announce its yearly calendar of activities shortly. Queries can be directed to Email: FAMEC@usa.net



Indian superstars Amisha Patel and Hrithik Roshan filming a song and dance sequence in Australia

Fashion event celebrates expanding Australia-India wool partnership

The Australian High Commission and the Woolmark Company celebrated the success of the wool partnership between Australia and India at a fashion evening, Wool 2004, in New Delhi on 8 October 2003.

Wool is Australia's largest agricultural export to India, and the demand for Australian wool has been steadily growing in the Indian market, where wool imports have seen very large growth over the past ten years. India is consistently among the top five markets in the world for Australian wool, with Australian merino wool a key input for India's woollen textiles and garment production.

Congratulating Indian manufacturers for their role in this Australia-India success story, Australian High Commissioner to India, Ms Penny Wensley AO said, "Australia provides India with approximately 60 per cent of its imported wool and almost all of this wool is used for the manufacture of quality clothing".

The India-Australia wool partnership is creating a valuable 'wool route' enabling both countries to reach third-country markets, Ms Wensley said.

The High Commissioner also said that following the meeting of the Australia-India Joint Business Group on Natural Fibres and Textiles this year, the Australian and Indian governments were proposing the establishment of a "wool innovation centre" in Mumbai which would conduct research and development on the use of wool in textiles to increase its consumption. The centre would be jointly set up by National Institute of Fashion Technology in India and Wool Innovation of Australia. It would also look at blending wool with other fibres to create new fabrics.

Furthermore, the possibility of a Business-2-Business trading exchange for natural fibres is also being reviewed. The exchange, which would be set up in Australia, would be developed on the lines of already functioning international commodity exchanges, and would commence with wool and then include other natural fibres.

Australian Minister's visit strengthens education and science links with India

Australia's education, science and training relationships with India have been strengthened, with the signing of two agreements creating significant new opportunities for exchange and collaboration.

Australian Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP visited India in late October 2003, meeting Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister for Human Resource Development and signing the first Education Exchange Program agreement between the Governments of India and Australia. Australia and India also renewed their Memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology.

These agreements will provide a framework for strengthening the bilateral relationship in education, including the reform of technical education, increased institution-to-institution linkages and research partnerships, and open the door for broader collaboration in science and technology.

Dr Nelson led a delegation of senior Australian educators to India that included the Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training, the President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, the Chair of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, and a representative of TAFE Directors Australia, the peak body for government technical education institutions.

Dr Nelson addressed an audience invited by the University Grants Commission and the Australian High Commission on "Engaging the World through Education".

During his visit to New Delhi, Dr Nelson and his delegation met with senior officials of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and visited Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), meeting with its Vice Chancellor, senior faculty and students.

India is a significant partner country for Australia in terms of international education, with 12,000 Indian higher education students currently studying in Australia, mainly in post-graduate studies.

Australian Studies Fellowships for Indian Scholars

Following the success of the inaugural Australian studies fellowships in 2003, the Australia-India Council (AIC) is pleased to announce that fellowships will be available in 2004 as part of the Australian studies program of the AIC.

The fellowships will consolidate the education and research relationship between the two countries and will build further links between Australian and Indian universities with a view to increasing teaching and research on Australia.

Six fellowships will be awarded in 2004. Applications are encouraged to focus on areas such as Australian literature, politics and history, environment and health, tourism, film, media communication and the performing arts, gender issues, multiculturalism and indigenous issues. The fellowships are aimed at both established Indian academics and post-graduate students from Indian tertiary institutions with a strong interest in Australian studies.

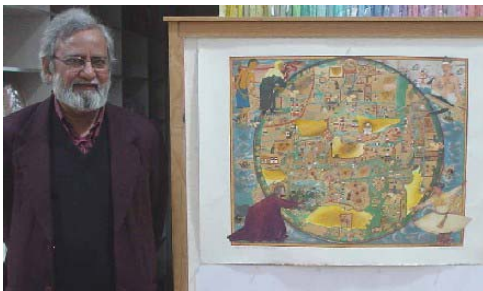
The fellowships are supported and administered by a consortium of Australian universities, led by Curtin and La Trobe Universities and including Monash University and the University of Queensland, in consultation with the AIC.

In addition to the fellowships, the AIC's Australian Studies Program includes two-way exchanges of academics between Australian and Indian institutions; the provision of material to Indian institutions providing Australian Studies courses; as well as a teacher exchange program which focuses on primary and secondary education.

For information about the application form email australianstudies@curtin.edu.au

Asian Tapestry Collection

A mural scale tapestry is to be woven for public display in the Sidney Myer Asia Centre Building at Melbourne University and will be the first in the Asian Tapestry Collection to be funded by the Tapestry Foundation of Victoria. The project facilitated direct artistic exchanges between the Indian artist Gulammohammed Sheikh, who was chosen to design the tapestry, and the weaver at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. The artist's visit to Australia was financially supported by the Australia-India Council.



An important adjunct to the project was the exposure of a wider audience to contemporary Indian art through lectures given by Gulam. The lectures were given both in-house at the VTW to the weavers and a wider appreciative audience of supporters and art lovers as well as multi-faceted audiences through lectures at Asialink (Melbourne University) and the Victorian College of the Arts. The AIC facilitated Gulam's visit to Canberra where he delivered a lecture at a National Gallery of Australia's lunch-time program.

Gulam Sheikh with his artwork for the tapestry.

Australian High Commission's Direct Aid Program (DAP) in India

November 2003 provided an opportunity to showcase New Delhi's Direct Aid Program (DAP) activities with a project visit by the High Commissioner, Ms Penny Wensley AO and the holding of "Oz Haat" at the High Commission.

During an official visit to Kolkata, the High Commissioner presented a DAP funding cheque to SEVAC, an organisation that focuses on mental health issues. SEVAC will use the funds to promote the human rights of mentally ill people in prisons, to ensure good governance in these institutes through the training of prison personnel, and to promote the rehabilitation of children and adolescents. The visit attracted local media interest.

In Delhi, the High Commission lawns were turned into a market place for a day for 'Oz Haat' (haat means village market), an exhibition and sale of the work of community organisations that have received funding under the High Commission's Direct Aid Program (DAP). Brass and wood items, hand-embroidered soft furnishings, woven rugs, paper crafts and recycled products among the items for sale. Other stalls provided information on issues such as HIV/AIDs. The day provided a great opportunity for community groups to raise funds, and a useful way to raise DAP's profile in New Delhi.



High Commissioner Ms Penny Wensley AO with women from the SEVAC Rehabilitation Centre in Kolkata

Partnership between IDP Education Australia and the Australia India Business Council

A new partnership between Australia's leading international education and development organisation, IDP Education Australia, and the Australia India Business Council (AIBC) will promote education and training opportunities between the two countries.

IDP will support the Australia-India Focus newsletter and the two organisations will host a series of joint activities and events during 2004.

IDP is Australia's largest international education and development organisation providing guidance, independent advice, enrolment and visa services for Indian students who are seeking to study in Australia. IDP has seven offices in India as part of its global network of offices in more than 40 countries around the world.

Earlier this year, IDP's Chief Executive Ms Lindy Hyam, was appointed National Director—Education within the Executive Committee of the AIBC.

Chief Operating Officer at IDP, Mr Greg Gallagher, was recently in India to officially open the newest IDP office in Hyderabad. While in Hyderabad, Mr Gallagher said there were many opportunities for IDP and the Australia India Business Council to work together on a range of projects which would benefit both India and Australia.

The new IDP Hyderabad office is one of the biggest offices in the IDP India network and boasts some of the best facilities available to Indian students. With computers designated solely for Global Apply Online students (an online application service for international students seeking to apply to study in Australia) and a resource centre with the most updated institution information, Hyderabad students now have the advantage of a facility for internet applications and unbiased counselling in their home town. The spacious and modern office is in a commercial area and the student-friendly ambience and service-focused attitude make it the ideal centre for students seeking information on Australian education. The office will also run IELTS tests (the International English Language Testing System) on a regular basis. Australia is a popular destination for Hyderabad students. Visit www.idp.com for further information.



India Breakfast Briefing – Australia India Business Council & Queensland Department of State Development

Over 40 people attended the second India Breakfast Briefing in Brisbane co-hosted by the AIBC and the Queensland Department of State Development. HE Mr RS Rathore, High Commissioner of India, was the keynote speaker and provided an update on the Indian economy, the process of privatisation/divestment and India's relationship with China.



Allan Border, former Captain of the Australian Cricket Team and HE Mr RS Rathore, High Commissioner of India

Speakers included the Hon Mike Ahern, Queensland Special Commissioner for Africa, Middle East and India, Mr Ranjan Sinha, Regional Manager for Tata International, who provided an overview on the Tata group of companies, Mr Peter Makepeace, proprietor of Makepeace Agencies and Australian representative for JK Tyres, discussed the WOW factor of India (Watch Out World) and why companies should consider doing business in India, and Ms Gayle O'Brien, AIBC Vice Chairman for Queensland and Business Manager (South Asia) for the Queensland Department of State Development, provided an overview on the Queensland Government initiatives to increase trade and relationships between Queensland and India.

The next India Breakfast Briefing is planned for February 2004 – for more information email Gayle.O'Brien@sd.qld.gov.au

Queensland Government Visit to India – 4-16 November 2003

The Hon Mike Ahern, Qld Special Commissioner for Africa, Middle East and India and Gayle O'Brien, Business Manager (South Asia) for the Qld Dept State Development and AIBC Vice Chairman for Queensland visited Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi in November 2003 to progress a range of trade initiatives between Queensland and India. As a result, the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry will have a Ministerial-led delegation visit Queensland in early February 2004.

In addition, the Queensland Government is planning two trade missions to India for March 2004. One mission would focus on the mining industry and visit Kolkata, Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Bhubaneswar and Delhi. The other mission would focus on major tourism developments being undertaken in India and visit Kolkata, Mumbai, Amby Valley and Bangalore. Seminars on export opportunities relating to the mining and tourism development sectors in India will be conducted throughout Queensland in December 2003—for more information email Gayle.O'Brien@sd.qld.gov.au

India's economy continues to strengthen

Consumer spending, driven by growing farm incomes, and a housing boom have combined to boost industrial growth in India. With its best monsoon in a decade, India will see agricultural growth surge to possibly 10.7% in the current financial year ending on 31 March 2004 compared to a contraction of 3.2% last year. Other key components of the economy – namely services and industry – are also performing well. As a result, forecasts of GDP growth are as high as 7.5% this financial year.

The upbeat mood is very much visible in the country today. Stockmarkets are roaring. Overpasses are sprouting across roads nationwide, part of an ambitious government road-building programme. Consumers are thronging modern malls. Bicycle-riding villagers are graduating to motorcycles and motorbike owners to cars. Low interest rates are creating a boom in consumer lending, especially mortgages.

The Bombay Stock Exchange's benchmark index has soared to touch a 42-month high of 5,000 points in early November, primarily due to heavy buying by foreign institutional investors drawn by strong corporate-earnings reports. So far this year, foreign portfolio investors have pumped in excess of US\$5 billion into Indian stocks, more than the previous three years put together.

Signs that the economy is moving into higher gear were already visible in the first quarter of the financial year from April to June. Powered by higher output in the services-and-manufacturing sectors, GDP increased by 5.7% compared to the same quarter last year. The really good news, however, is expected for the following quarters as bumper farm output translates into higher spending among India's 600-million-plus rural consumers.

The housing sector has seen mortgages grow by 76% to 516.7 billion rupees (US\$11.4 billion) in the last financial year, according to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. With a housing boom under way, bankers say mortgages are growing at a rate of 35%-40% annually.

One potential snag, however, is the strengthening rupee. Since January, the rupee has appreciated 5.5% against the United States dollar, which has made India's oil imports, the country's biggest import item, cheaper. However, an appreciating rupee is also a drag on exports. The government is targeting a 12% increase in exports but economists think that may not be achievable, given the strengthening rupee.

	Growth in: 2002-03 2003-04 (forecast)		
GDP	4.4%	7.5%	
Consumer spending	2.5%	7%	
Fixed investment	9%	9%	
Industrial production	6%	6.5%	
Consumer prices	4%	4%	
Exchange rate(rupee/\$)	48.4	44.5	Source: Far Eastern Economic Review

AIBC member of the NSW-Asia Business Advisory Council

The NSW-Asia Business Advisory Council assists the New South Wales Government in promoting trade and investment opportunities for NSW in Asia. Council members are drawn from various sectors of the NSW business community and are appointed by the NSW Government on the recommendation of the Minister for State Development, the Hon Michael Egan, MLC, to whom the Council also reports.



The Council is funded by the NSW Government, chaired by Hon Henry Tsang MLC OAM, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier on Trade and Investment, and supported by its Executive Director, Ms Ellen Lintgens of the Department of State and Regional Development. Neville Roach, Chairman of the Australia India Business Council, was asked to join the Council in 2002 and was instrumental in requesting that the Council be renamed (from East Asia to) the Asia Business Advisory Council.

Members of the NSW-Asia Business Advisory Council with the Hon Michael Egan, MLC, NSW Treasurer and Minister for State Development - (from L to R) Dr Minshen Zhu, Ms Orawan Taechaubol, Mr Douglas Park, Mr Michael Egan, Mr Henry Tsang, Ms Sallie Beaumont, Mr Neville Roach and Mr Peter Sinn

Australia: a wealth of opportunity for India

Described by the OECD as the most resilient economy in the world, Australia offers Indian investors a secure platform for new investment, or to expand existing operations. Australia's vibrant economy, political stability, sound business environment, well-educated and skilled workforce, abundant natural wealth and first-class communications and transport infrastructure, make it an attractive business destination. Australia also has the advantage of having a very multilingual workforce, sophisticated IT and R&D infrastructure, high tech adaptation and innovation, competitive business costs and an efficient regulatory environment.

Australia and India have substantial converging interests, due in part to the changing international environment. In 2002-2003, India became Australia's 11th largest export market and 17th largest trading partner with two-way trade reaching A\$3.55 billion in 2002-2003. While bilateral trade is balanced in Australia's favour, its expansion has been in both directions and the potential exists for further growth in commercial relations. Along with exports, Australian investment is playing a key role in Indian economic growth.

The Indian Government has identified Australia as its eighth-largest foreign investor. That investment is now more than A\$1 billion, much of it in fast-growing service sectors including ICT, education, health, tourism and leisure, media and finance, as well as mining and niche manufacturing. For India, investment in Australia may be quite small but it is growing, with much of it in IT and the energy and minerals sector (including copper mines and an ammonia plant).

This upsurge in business engagement is linked to continuing growth in both economies and, importantly, to the ongoing economic transformation of both countries - in particular India's ongoing domestic economic liberalisation and reform.

Our two countries share strengths in many fields of research associated with ICT and biotechnology, so it is natural they work together to achieve greater outcomes in these areas. It is no secret that India has done an excellent job of fostering ICT companies and has developed a global reputation for excellence, particularly in software engineering. Major investments have been made by a pioneering group of Indian ICT companies in Australia, establishing Global Development Centres, and undoubtedly opening the window for other Indian-based companies that recognise Australia's value as a springboard into the Asia Pacific region. Australia's competitive advantages that appealed to these companies include our large ICT skills base and the concentration of research and development hub activity.

The energy sector has also been identified as of particular importance. Given India's growing energy needs, it is natural that interest is quickening in Australia's mining and energy technology and capabilities. Natural gas consumption is projected to rise strongly in India. India represents the largest emerging gas market in the Asia Pacific region. While the Middle East may be a natural supplier to western India, Australia is well located to be a reliable supplier to eastern India.

Our healthy bilateral relationship with India has translated into permanent outcomes: Australia and India are building professional and personal interaction in education, tourism, business, culture, development cooperation, medicine, science and sport, in shared workplaces and in university campuses.

The number of Indian students studying at Australian universities has grown, with Australia now the third most popular overseas destination for Indian tertiary students. Education is an avenue for identifying and taking advantage of synergies between the two countries' experience and expertise. Both countries have reputations for excellence in biotechnology research, and this has become one among a number of priority areas for building educational links.

Tourist and business travel in both directions continues to grow significantly. Last year Australia and India signed a memorandum of understanding to promote bilateral tourism.

Invest Australia, the Australian Government's national inward investment agency, actively works in partnership with business and government to provide a range of programs and services that facilitate foreign direct investment to Australia. Indian operations are serviced through the Sydney office (Tel: +61 2 9397 1654). www.investaustralia.gov.au.

Annual India Update in Melbourne heralds India as the 'place to watch'

His Excellency Mr Rathore, the Indian High Commissioner to Australia launched the Business Briefing on India held on Friday 28th November in Melbourne by the Monash Asia Institute with the Australia India Chamber of Commerce, the Australia India Council, Australia India Business Council, the University of Canberra, Curtin University of Technology and the University of NSW. The event featured an intensive one day symposium, with a follow-up half day business briefing.

Distinguished speakers from India included Mr Haseeb Drabu, national editor of the Business Standard (Mumbai office), Professor Arun Kumar, Head of Economics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and author of 'India's Black Economy', and Professor A K Bagchi, head of the Institute for Development Studies in Kolkata

Tim Harcourt, Chief Economist, Austrade also addressed the briefing and noted that India is the “place to watch” for export opportunities. Mr Harcourt noted that:

- With a young dynamic population and increasing consumption levels, India offers a growing number of export opportunities for Australian companies, particularly for education, cultural, tourism and knowledge-based industries;
- India's economic reform process is driving the demand for Australian goods and services. Since the 1990s India has reduced its tariffs and quotas on imports and welcomed the previously shunned Indian 'diaspora' (Indians living overseas) back in Mother India. Over this period, Australia's merchandise exports to India grew 50 per cent faster than they did globally. India has strong democratic and judicial institutions, corporate governance and rule of law, a large number of Indian-grown companies competing abroad and a well educated diaspora. These factors are setting India apart from similar countries, such as China, and opening up a wealth of opportunities for Australian companies, particularly in knowledge-based industries;
- The Reserve Bank's Governor Ian MacFarlane recently stated that Australia was well placed to respond to India's increasing demands for imports of food, materials and intermediate goods if it emerges as a second Asian engine of growth. We are going to hear more about India, not just in terms of the cricket, but in relation to Australia's trading future. India will be a place to watch and to engage with for Australian exporters and entrepreneurs;

Peter Kane, Austrade's Senior Trade Commissioner in New Delhi noted that “Economic growth in India has averaged between four and seven per cent over the past five years and with a population of over one billion people and a middle class of 285 million, the opportunities are enormous. Student numbers have grown ten-fold since 1993, and tourism numbers have grown from 3,000 to 30,000 over the same period,” Mr Kane said.

Austrade's Trade Commissioner in Mumbai, Don Cairns, said Australia was a popular choice for Bollywood filmmakers for location shots, post-production work, animation and special effects. “Australia is also fast becoming a preferred destination for Indian film, TV Commercials and music video producers, despite strong competition from the Germans, New Zealanders, Swiss and the French,” Mr Cairns said.

See related story - First Official Indo-Australian Film, Arts, Media and Entertainment Organisation announced

Australia and India: Riding The Outsourcing Wave

India is fast becoming the leading destination for Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) as globalisation puts pressure on managers worldwide to focus on cost-effective outsourcing solutions.

With both strong opportunities and healthy challenges for Australian businesses due to this 'wave', the Australia India Business Council with the support of Ernst & Young recently held an open seminar on this topic at which participants were provided with up-to-date insights on the Indian BPO Industry, its market segments, key players, competition, outsourcing drivers, recent trends, projections and controversies.

Speakers included Mr Alf Capito, Partner & Mr. Mohan Monteiro, Senior Manager, Ernst & Young, Mr Gerard Pacheco, strategic analysis Asia, and Mr Neville Roach AO, Chairman, Australia India Business Council (and Chair of Fujitsu Australia).

For complimentary email updates on similar events/activities of the AIBC, forward your email address and location in Australia or India to info@aibc.org.au

India Community Function hosted by Premier of Queensland

The Hon. Peter Beattie MP, Premier and Minister for Trade, hosted an official function for the Indian community at Parliament House on 25 November 2003.

Over 100 members of the community and industry attended, along with a number of Queensland Government Ministers and Members of Parliament. The High Commissioner of India and the Indian Consul-General attended, along with the recently appointed Honorary Consul of India (Queensland).

Queensland Universities Cricket Tour of India – March 2004

The Queensland Government is organising a Queensland Universities Cricket Tour of India in March 2004. The Tour will visit Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Delhi. It will be accompanied by a business delegation representing the higher education sector in Queensland.

The cricket team will be led by Australian cricket legend Allan Border and the business delegation will be led by Mr Paul Braddy, Chair of the Queensland Education and Training Export Board.

The business delegation will attend seminars and official functions in each city, whilst the cricket team will play matches

Increasing collaboration between Australian and India scientists and scientific organisations

Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) hosted a two day workshop on bioremediation of contaminants and toxic chemicals in Melbourne on 20-21 November. The workshop was attended by leading research institutes including the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) India.

Meetings focused on identifying areas of mutual interest for the two leading research organisations to collaborate on. The workshop allowed both CSIRO and CSIR to table their respective interests and capabilities with the parties identifying areas of interest to explore collaborations. The workshop will be followed by visits from CSIRO scientists and business leaders to convert the interest generated into potential research activities.

The workshop was also attended by some of the CSIRO's partners in the above domain - ACIAR and Orica Australia Limited.

For more information, contact Sid Jain, Business Development and Planning Manager, CSIRO, +61 2 6246 4033 or Sid.Jain@csiro.au

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST—AUSTRALIA

To obtain email notification of India-related business and cultural events in Australia as and when they occur, provide your email address to info@aibc.org.au and (preferably) indicate which State of Australia you would like to attend events in.

- NSW - Market Visit to India (Chennai), 11-16 December, 2003 (coinciding with "FoodPro" India) — Registration form at www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au - Trade Missions and Market Visits or email raji.bhatia@business.nsw.gov.au; The mission is being organised by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development in association with the NSW-Asia Business Advisory Council and the Australia-India Business Council. The mission will visit Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, although individual itineraries can be arranged to include other centres where market research confirms that companies have good business prospects. Companies in the food and beverages, food processing and packaging sectors have the option of joining the mission in Chennai and extending their stay to visit the 5th Indian Food & Food Technology Fair, (Foodpro 2003) in Chennai from 13 to 16 December.
- Delegation visit and catalogue display by the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Mumbai, Feb 2004, Perth plus other Australian capitals, Email:sonia.grincer@doir.wa.gov.au
- Ministers for Mines of Orissa visit to Western Australia, 2004 (tbc), Email:sonia.grincer@doir.wa.gov.au
- Ministers for Mines of Tamil Nadu visit to Western Australia, 2004 (tbc), Email:sonia.grincer@doir.wa.gov.au
- Business delegation from Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FKCCI) to visit Brisbane in 2004 (dates to be confirmed). This delegation will be led by the Hon RV Deshpande, Minister for Large & Medium Industries, Karnataka Government. For more information contact Ms Gayle Queensland Department of State Development (Vice Chairman, Queensland, AIBC) on Gayle.OBrien@sd.qld.gov.au;

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST—INDIA

- [9th International Security, Safety & Fire Exhibition](#) (Multi Products) 5-12 December 2003, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- Paperex 2003/PPC 2003 (Printing and Publishing) 5-8 December 2003, New Delhi, Preetha.Nair@mail.doc.gov
- Indian Ports and Shipping 2003— 8- 10 Dec 2003, Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai; www.india-invest.com/events.htm
- [7th Social Development Fair](#) (Multi Products) 9-15 December 2003, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, India
- [Consumexh - 2003](#) (Cosmetics And Toiletries , Clothing and accessories , Home furnishings and madeups , Electronics & Computer Hardware And Software , Domestic electrical appliance) 9-15 December 2003, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- [India International Trade Fair - 2003](#) (Multi Products), 14-27 December 2003, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- [Kosmetika 2003](#), (Cosmetics And Toiletries), 21-30 December 2003, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- [Health & Fitness Equipment Show](#) (Machinery And Mechanical Appliances , Internal combustion engines, Agricultural machinery and implements, Textiles machinery, Machine tools, Office equipment, Mechanical pumps) 21-30 December 2003, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas— Meeting of the Global Indian family, 9-11 January 2004, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi — Hosted by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), www.indiaday.org, Email: indiaday@indiaday.org or indiandiaspora@ficci.com
- IASA's (Indian Association for the Study of Australia) second international conference - 15-17 January 2004— Hosted by Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (NJU) in New Delhi. Supported by the Australia-India Council., www.iasa-india.org
- Hortitec - Agritec India International 2004 , The International Exhibition and Conference on Processing & Technology for Horticulture and Agriculture, 26 Jan 2004 - 29 Jan 2004, Organizer: CIDEX Trade Fairs Pvt. Ltd., Government of Andhra Pradesh. Location: Hyderabad / Hitex; Co-Organizer: Köln Messe International
- SuperComm India 2004—Experience the Future of Communications and IT - Today, 4 - 6 February, 2004, Pragati Maidan Exhibition Centre, New Delhi, India, www.supercommindia2004.com/
- Indo-Australian Conference on Biotechnology In Medicine, Focus on Infectious Diseases, Cancer, Immunology, Genomics and Pharmacogenomics National Seminar Hall Complex, Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore 560012, 9 - 11, February 2004, www.manipal.edu/manipal/lnk-announcements/biotech_conf.html
- HOSPIMedica INDIA 2004 13-15 February, Hyderabad, www.hospimedica-india.com
- NSIC (National Small Industries Corporation) Used Machinery Expo 2004, 14-18 February 2004, NSIC Exhibition Centre, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi; www.nsicindia.com; Email: exhb@nsicindia.com
- Indian Handicrafts & Gifts Fair (Spring) 2004, 28 Feb—2 March 2004, New Delhi. Also features World Bamboo Exposition, www.epch.com; Email: epch@vsnl.com
- Queensland Universities Cricket Tour of India – March 2004—The Queensland Government is organising a Queensland Universities Cricket Tour of India in March 2004. The Tour will visit Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Delhi. It will be accompanied by a business delegation representing the higher education sector in Queensland. The cricket team will be led by Australian cricket legend Allan Border and the business delegation will be led by the Hon Paul Braddy, Chair of the Queensland Education and Training Export Board. The business delegation will attend seminars and official functions in each city, whilst the cricket team play matches against local university teams and conduct coaching clinics. Contact Ms Gayle Queensland Department of State Development (Vice Chairman, Queensland, AIBC) on Gayle.OBrien@sd.qld.gov.au;

Reforms Will Speed Up, Says Commerce Minister Jaitley at the India Economic Summit 2003

The pace of reform in India is set to increase, even as Indians begin to reap the benefits of more than a decade of restructuring, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Law and Justice Arun Jaitley told participants in the closing session of the World Economic Forum's [India Economic Summit](#) 2003.

"We can now see after years and years of reform, with many more to come, a confidence building within India," Jaitley said, noting that "the argument in favour of the reform process has conclusively succeeded."

The minister remarked that industry is now stronger and citizens are more conscious about economic issues and the quality of governance. The government, he asserted, would focus on key priorities, including the development of infrastructure and the reform of the interest rate regime, the utilities sector and labour laws. He pledged to ensure the "profitability, safety and security of investment" and "to create an environment where industry is able to grow and grow profitably." Jaitley also underscored India's commitment to the multilateral trading system, predicting that stalled global trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization would continue.

The three-day Summit brought together over 400 participants from 20 countries for interactive discussions under the theme "Enhancing India's Competitiveness: A Must for Growth". A summary of an action plan for India based on participant deliberations is available at www.weforum.org



Australia-India Focus

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 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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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. The views expressed within this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Australia-India Council or the Australia India Business Council. Articles may be reproduced freely with acknowledgement. Please direct your editorial enquiries to info@aibc.org.au

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