



JAN-FEB 2008

Visit of Australian Minister for Trade Hon Simon Crean, to Mumbai and New Delhi

Minister for Trade, Hon Simon Crean, visited Mumbai and New Delhi from 15-19 January. This was the first visit to India by a member of the new Australian Government and, as one of Mr Crean's first overseas trips, underscored the importance that the Government places on raising relations with India to a higher level.

During his visit, Mr Crean gave a keynote address on *The Benefits of Freer Trade* at the Partnership Summit hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry. Mr Crean met key Indian Ministers and addressed the Mumbai and New Delhi Australian and New Zealand Business Associations in India (ANZBAI); the heads of numerous Indian regional business chambers; the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Mr Crean also opened the new Australian High Commission Chancery in New Delhi, reflecting the priority Australia places on its relations with India and Australia's commitment to strengthening and diversifying bilateral links.

One key aspect of Minister Crean's visit was to convey to Indian Ministers and the Indian business community the high priority that Australia places on bringing the WTO Doha round of trade negotiations to a successful conclusion. In this context, Mr Crean met with Minister for Commerce and Industry Kamal Nath, Minister for Finance P Chidambaram and Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar to discuss bilateral issues and the Doha Round.

Minister Crean also discussed with the Indian Government the benefits of trade liberalisation and noted that such benefits would only be fully achieved if it is complemented by domestic economic reform behind the border. He noted that both India and Australia had benefited from domestic economic reform, which had facilitated significant expansion of our respective economies.

Given the increasingly important strategic and economic role India is now playing in the region, Minister Crean advised the Indian Government that Australia would actively work to have India invited to become a member of APEC.

On a number of occasions Mr Crean highlighted the importance of concerted action by the international community to address the challenges posed by climate change and India's importance as a key developing country in shaping the post 2012 framework.



L to R: HE Mr John McCarthy High Commissioner to India, Mr Sanjaya Baru Advisor to PM of India, Hon Simon Crean, Minister for Trade

Australia India Free Trade Agreement Feasibility Study

Australia and India agreed in August 2007 to undertake a feasibility study into the merits of a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The study will be conducted jointly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Indian Ministry of Commerce.

The focus of the study will be on the economic benefits that India and Australia can derive from trade liberalisation and enhanced investment cooperation under an FTA. The study will address the impact on Australia and India of an FTA, including implications for economic activity, trade in goods and services, investment and other commercial linkages.

As there is a high degree of complementarity between the two economies it is likely that a high quality FTA would produce significant benefits to both countries.

Australia's trade with India is one of the fastest growing of all our major markets, at an average of over 32% per year for both goods and services. India is our sixth largest goods export market and our eighth largest services market.

DFAT seeks public submissions and comments which will help inform the feasibility study. Of interest would be any general views on the advantages and disadvantage of an FTA, as well as advice on any particular market access issues and/or other factors affecting two-way trade and investment with India. DFAT accords high priority to the views and expertise of all stakeholders with interests in the commercial relationship with India and will consult widely in preparing the study.

Interested parties are invited to lodge submissions by Friday 28 March 2008. Brief as well as detailed submissions/comments are welcome. All submissions will be made publicly available on the DFAT website unless the authors specify otherwise.

Submissions may be sent by email to india.ftastudy@dfat.gov.au or mailed to:

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Australia-India FTA Feasibility Study

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For further details please refer to www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/fta-study or telephone the Australia-India FTA Study team (Michael Wood: + 61 2 6261 9696 or michael.wood@dfat.gov.au; Carol Robertson: + 61 2 6261 9693 or carol.robertson@dfat.gov.au).

Industry consultations

Industry consultations will be conducted in state/territory capitals during March/April 2008.

Those interested in being involved are invited to advise the study team.

Dates confirmed:

- Hobart: Wednesday 12 March 2008
- Melbourne: Monday 17 March 2008
- Sydney: Wednesday 30 April 2008

Other cities to be advised.

Visit of Rahul Gandhi MP

Rahul Gandhi MP visited Australia in 2007 under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Special Visits Program. The Australia-India Council provided part funding for the visit. This was Mr Gandhi's first visit to Australia and the programme included Perth, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, as well as a site visit to the Argyle Diamond Mine. During the visit, Mr Gandhi met the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, the then Minister for Environment and Water Resources, Mr Turnbull, Mr Rudd, Mr Crean, Mr McClelland, Mr Garrett, the Premiers of WA, NSW and Victoria, as well as the CEO of Telstra, the Managing Director of Rio Tinto Australia and the CEO of BHP Billiton.

Education and research was a focus area for the visit, as Mr Gandhi sits on the Indian Parliament's Education Sub-committee. India's demography, in which the majority of its population is young, will prove an increasing challenge for the Indian Government in terms of provision of sufficient educational opportunities. Mr Gandhi was briefed on aspects of Australia's education and research systems at all levels, by government officials, universities and both government and private research organisations.

Energy and resources form one of the key planks of the Australia-India bilateral relationship. Rio Tinto hosted Mr Gandhi on a site visit to the Argyle Diamond Mine, which allowed him to see an Australian mine in operation. During the site visit, Mr Gandhi also received briefings on environmental reclamation work and work done to engage the local communities by Rio Tinto. Argyle supplies a significant proportion of India's diamond industry.

Whilst in Sydney, Mr Gandhi undertook a site inspection of the Hyde Park Barracks Museum, as part of a briefing on Australian curatorial services. The Australia Museum is working in conjunction with the Nehru Memorial in India at enhancing the visitors' experience at the memorial.

The visit was successful in highlighting a range of potential areas for future cooperation, particularly in relation to education and research. The program also provided an excellent opportunity to showcase Australia to one of India's rising political figures. Mr Gandhi was subsequently promoted to General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee in September 2007.



Rahul Gandhi MP (centre) with Australia-India Council Board Member Vinod Daniel and members of the AusHeritage Board at Hyde Park Barracks.

Presentation of the inaugural Australia India Council Special Awards

Thirteen prominent Indians were awarded with inaugural Australia-India Council Special Awards in November 2007. The honour recognised the awardees' exceptional contribution toward strengthening Australia-India relations. Awards were presented to:

- Mr Tarun Das (business)
- Dr Jasleen Dhamija (art)
- Professor C T Indra (education)
- Dr Jamshed Irani (bilateral relations)
- Mr O P Jain (culture)
- Mr Suresh Kalmadi (sports)
- Mr S K Misra (conservation)
- Mr Soli Sorabjee (law)
- Sister Mary Theodore (community service)
- Mr K V Mathew (bilateral relations)
- Mr K M Mammen (business and sports)
- Dr Rajendra K Pachauri (environment)
- Professor Santosh Sareen (education)

An initiative of the Australia-India Council (AIC), the awards were presented at ceremonies in Delhi and Chennai.

Delhi-based awardees were honoured at a reception held at the residence of the Australian High Commissioner, Mr John McCarthy, with several members of the Australia-India Council present. The awards were presented by the High Commissioner and Mr Darren Gribble, Chairman of the AIC and a former Australian High Commissioner to India.

"The Australia-India Council was established to forge people-to-people linkages between our countries 15 years ago", said Mr Gribble. "After over a decade of building upon the initiative, the Council wanted to express its appreciation to the extraordinary people who exemplify its goals", added Mr Gribble.

"I congratulate each award recipient for their valuable role in fostering people-to-people relations between Australia and India," said Mr Gribble.



New Delhi awardees at the presentation of the inaugural Australia-India Council Special Awards

India tour by Indigenous author, Alexis Wright

24 January – 6 February 2008

The Australia-India Council (AIC) was honoured to host a four-city tour of India by the award-winning indigenous author, Alexis Wright. Ms Wright, winner of the prestigious Miles Franklin Award in 2007 for her novel *Carpentaria*, is an eminent Australian author who has written several novels and non-fiction works about indigenous issues.

In addition to representing Australia at the Jaipur Literary Festival and the New Delhi World Book Fair, Ms Wright spoke at select universities and schools, complementing the AIC Australian studies program. With Aboriginal issues of interest to Indian academics in particular, Ms Wright was received very well in the academic circles and generated a considerable amount of media interest. Copies of *Carpentaria* were sold at a special India price during the tour, and a set of her four published works was provided to each host organisation and to select universities teaching Australian literature in India.

Ms Wright began in Jaipur with participation at the high-profile Jaipur Literary Festival, a talk and reading session at the Rajasthan University in Jaipur and a visit to the Jawahar Kala Kendra, a multi-arts complex. In Ajmer, Ms Wright inaugurated the third biennial Australian studies conference and participated in a panel discussion on creative writing. The New Delhi program included speaking at the prestigious Jawaharlal University, the Jamia Millia University and the Modern School in partnership with SPICMACAY (Society for the promotion of Indian Culture, Music, Art and Craft among youth).

The concluding event in Delhi was one of the highlights of the visit, an 'author-in-conversation' event, jointly with an Israeli author, and conducted by an eminent Indian poet. Australia's Deputy High Commissioner, David Holly, hosted a reception in honour of Ms Wright at which she spoke and read from her award-winning novel *Carpentaria*.

The tour helped consolidate a continuing Australian presence at literary events in India, and also complemented the AIC Australian studies program, a focus area of Australia-India Council activity. Authors tours have not only raised the profile of Australian writing in India, but have also paved the way for the publication of Indian editions of Australian titles. Eminent authors who have previously toured India on AIC-supported programs include Tom Keneally, Les Murray, Tim Winton, Peter Carey, Kim Scott, Peter Goldsworthy, Kate Grenville and John Zubrzycki, among others. Ms Wright's tour of India was also supported by the Australia Council.



Author Alexis Wright, speaking

Australia India Business Council

After marking its 21st birthday in 2007, the Australia India Business Council (AIBC) has come of age and is set to continue its busy program of business events across Australia in 2008.

"Last year was an important year for the Council" said Chairman of AIBC, Mr Brian Hayes QC.

"AIBC arranged the visit of the largest-ever Australian trade delegation to India, which I had the pleasure of leading, as we accompanied the Trade Minister to attend the 2007 Joint Business Council function in New Delhi."

With the support of platinum sponsors Accor, Qantas, Ernst &Young and NAB, and national sponsors KPMG and Middletons, the AIBC ran signature events in capital cities across Australia.

These national events include:

- Ernst and Young *India Budget Update* in March;
- Accor-Qantas *Australia India Address* in August; and
- KPMG *India Economic Update* in September.

State chapters of the AIBC also held regular events to assist members to learn more about the Indian market and opportunities for Australian companies.

Commenting on 2007, Mohan Monteiro, President AIBC NSW, said "In NSW, we ran an active program of events spanning addresses by political and business leaders. Our focus is to increase the level of awareness of the business potential that India and Australia have to offer each other, and provide an opportunity for businesses to network with each other."

"We estimate that we would have had over 1,000 attendees at various events held during the year, including our flagship Annual Address delivered by the Premier of NSW – The Hon. Morris Iemma MP. We were delighted to have the Premier lead a delegation to India together with leading Australian universities and businesses. We were also delighted to host a dinner in February 2008 for Hon, Mr Kapil Sibal, Indian Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences. The dinner offered members a unique opportunity to hear first-hand, the Minister's views on the development of the commercial relationship between Australia and India and the opportunities for the two countries to collaborate."

"The AIBC looks forward to working closely with partners in 2008" said Brian. "This year we anticipate hosting the Joint Business Council meeting in Melbourne, which will bring together both business executives and the Ministers for Trade, from both countries."

AIBC is the key Australian business association recognised by the Australian and Indian governments for promotion of bilateral trade and investment. Information on membership services are available at info@aibc.org.au or www.aibc.org.au



Indian Minister for Science, Technology and Earth Sciences Hon Kapil Sibal speaks with members of the AIBC at a dinner hosted in Sydney.

Australia India Business is an official annual publication of the Australia India Business Council, produced by Palamedia.

For further information, visit :
<http://www.australiaindiabusiness.com/>



Indian companies continue to expand in Australia

Australia has continued to attract investment from India across a range of sectors including agribusiness, resources, manufacturing and services.

A wide range of Indian businesses expanded their operations across states in 2007, signifying a deepening economic relationship between Australia and India.

- **Bank of Baroda** One of India's largest retail and commercial banks, Bank of Baroda, opened a Representative Office in Sydney. The Bank commenced operations in Gujarat in 1908 and celebrates its centenary anniversary.
- **Gujarat NRE Coke** Gujarat NRE Coke Ltd acquired a third mine in NSW. The company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2007.
- **Satyam Computer Services** IT multinational Satyam opened offices in North Sydney and Brisbane.
- **Polaris Software** IT multinational Polaris announced it had chosen NSW for its PACE Lab, a new software testing and validation lab.
- **HCL** IT multinational HCL opened an office in Canberra.
- **Reliance Industries** In December Reliance Industries announced a joint venture with Australian uranium exploration company UXA to conduct an exploration program on tenements in South Australia and the Northern Territory.
- **Wipro** IT multinational Wipro announced the opening of a development centre in NSW.
- **Champagne Indage** Indian wine-maker Champagne Indage acquired a winery in South Australia.
- **Rolta** Rolta, a leader in specialised IT solutions for the geospatial and engineering sectors, chose Sydney for its Asia Pacific regional headquarters.

Indian investment in Australia has the potential to increase further as India's economy grows and India-headquartered companies continue to expand their global presence.



Inauguration ceremony of the Sydney Representative Office of the Bank of Baroda. L to R: Mr John Laker Chairman Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, Mr Pawan Kumar Bansal Hon. Minister of State for Finance, Dr Anil K Khandelwal Chairman and Managing Director Bank of Baroda, and Mr Sujan R Chinoy Consul General, Consulate General of India Sydney.

First Australian awarded Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

Mr Neville Roach, Chairman Emeritus AIBC, was awarded a Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award by the President of India Ms Pratibha Patil on January 9. The award recognises and honours the achievements of the Indian Diaspora and is presented annually at the Pravasi Bharatiya Sammelan (Conference of Global Indians) in New Delhi.

In 2000, Mr Roach was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his service to business and for his contribution to the development of Australian multiculturalism.

Mr Roach is currently Chairman of TCS-FNS, an Australian banking solutions company acquired by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) India, Chairman of Smart Internet Cooperative Research Centre, Director of OneSteel and Australian Academic and Research Network. His previous roles include Chairman of Australia India Business Council, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Fujitsu Australia Limited and Director of Fujitsu Asia, Deputy Chairman of SBS, Chairman of Council for Multicultural Australia, Business (Migration) Advisory Panel, Australian Information Industry Association, National ICT Australia Limited and Intelligent Island Board, and President Asian Oceanian Computing Industry Organisation.

Appointment to the Australia-India Council

In August 2007, the Governor-General, His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery, appointed Professor Robin Jeffrey as a member of the AIC board for a three year term.

Professor Jeffrey is a world-recognised scholar on Indian history, media and politics. He is currently the Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific and Director of Research at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.



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Bollywood Stunt Queen - Fearless N

Kantanka and Sydney Olympic Park are proud to present Fearless N, a theatrical adventure based on the life of Australian-born Bollywood stuntwoman and cinema icon, 'Fearless Nadia'.

Inspired by the true story of Bollywood stuntwoman and cinema icon Fearless Nadia, Theatre Kantanka invites you to be part of the action and witness Nadia's extraordinary journey from Perth school girl to Bombay Bollywood Superstar! This blonde, blue-eyed stuntwoman cavorted with lions and performed live fight scenes atop moving trains, stealing the hearts of men and women in India.

Born Mary Evans in Perth, Fearless Nadia spent most of her childhood in colonial India. In 1935, she rose to fame with the debut of her screen persona Fearless Nadia in *Hunterwali* (The Lady with the Whip), and went on to star in more than 50 films performing all her own stunts.

As an outsider who had greater freedom to play contemporary characters deemed daring and risqué, Nadia has emerged as an icon of the Hindi film industry, an international cult figure, and a symbol of the liberation from British colonialism and the emancipation of women in India.

Don't miss this opportunity to be a part of the action and witness Nadia's extraordinary journey from Perth schoolgirl to Bombay Bollywood Superstar!

For more information visit www.kantanka.com.au

Upcoming events

- 29 February - 23 March: 28th Spirit of India concerts in various cities in Australia. See www.nataraj.org.au for details
- 12–21 March: AIBC SA and the Department of Trade and Economic Development are organising a mission to India from 12-21 March for experienced exporters. The mission will be led by SA Premier, the Hon Mike Rann MP. For more information please contact Ms Maggie Farrell 8303 2468
- 25 March: Australia-India Strategic Lecture, Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney. The speaker will be Mr Lalit Mansingh, India's former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to the USA. Please see www.lowyinstitute.org for further details.
- 10 April: Critical Issues Conference, Melbourne Business School. 10% discount for members of AIBC. Email Ms Wendy Farrell, info@aibc.org.au Ph +61 3 8662 5213
- 4-5 June: Mergers and Acquisitions 2008—Australia India Cross-border workshop 10% discount for members of AIBC. Email Ms Wendy Farrell, info@aibc.org.au Ph +61 3 8662 5213

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. 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.

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Australia-India Focus is also available from the Australia India Business Council's website at www.aibc.org.au and the website of the Australia-India Council 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 first point of contact by government and business representatives from both countries seeking access to industry, business and government leaders of both countries.

The Council runs business events in major capitals of Australia and runs trade delegations to India.

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

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