



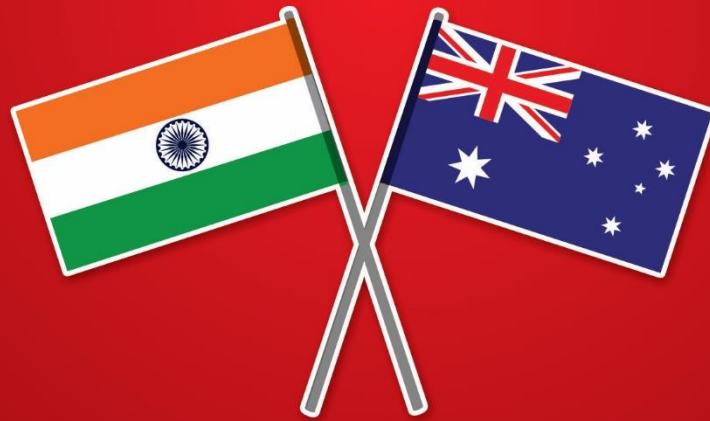
**O.P. Jindal Global University**

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# Submission for the Australian Government Foreign Policy Whitepaper



submitted by the

**Centre for India Australia Studies**

prepared by

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## **Preamble:**

The Australian Government is calling for public submissions as it prepares for its new foreign policy whitepaper, its first since 2003.

Given the important role that India will play in achieving Australia's national interest in the coming years, this submission aims to underscore different facets of the Australia-India relationship and opportunities to strengthen cooperation. Accordingly, this submission will focus on:

- the **Australia India relationship**;
- the importance of **engaging with institutions** such as the Centre for India Australia Studies;
- the importance of **engaging with youth and young leaders**;
- the importance of **State-to-State linkages**; and
- the importance of **Higher Education**;

## **Australia India relations**

The India-Australia relationship is growing from strength to strength, encouraged by the convergence of common interests in various areas such as education, regional security, energy and resources and international trade. Since November 2014, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed a state visit to Australia, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in almost three decades, both nations have taken progressive steps to strengthen bilateral ties.

It is important that the Australian Government specifically considers where India fits in to its Australia's foreign policy strategy for a number of reasons:

- **Strategic interests**, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region: Australia and India have committed to working closely together to strengthen defence ties. Both countries have committed enhancing maritime cooperation and have executed a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation.
- **Economic interests**: India is Australia's tenth largest trading partner and fifth largest export market. However, this economic relationship has the potential to become much more significant. Recognising this, more Australian companies, including start-ups and SME's, are beginning to engage in business in India. Despite differences in trade and economic policies between the Indian and Australian Governments, it is hoped that the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (which is currently being negotiated) will only serve to facilitate this trend.
- **Shared values and history**: India and Australia are members of the Commonwealth, are vibrant democracies which are federations, governed by the principles of the rule of law and which protect fundamental human rights and freedoms. In addition, English is widely spoken, and indeed it is the language of the law in both countries. These shared values present common ground for a healthy and prosperous bilateral relationship.
- **Cultural ties and soft-diplomacy**: With Australia's growing Indian diaspora, the number of people-to-people links between Australians and Indians is constantly growing. In addition, cultural ties in the areas of sport, art, film, literature and food present a unique opportunity for soft-diplomacy between India and Australia.

In addition to the broader strategic and economic interests of New Delhi and Canberra, this submission will argue that there are a number of areas that the Australian Government can focus on in their foreign policy strategy, from the perspective of building closer ties with India.

### **Institutions:**

***The Australian Government should invest in and facilitate dialogue with institutions that promote the Australia India relationship***

The Australian Government provides monetary and in-kind support to institutions that promote stronger ties with India, including the Australia India Institute, Asialink and the Australia India Youth Dialogue. While independence of such institutions is important, the Australian Government should ensure that there is an active participation in and a constant dialogue with such institutions.

Recently inaugurated by the Australian High Commissioner in New Delhi, H. E. Ms. Harinder Sidhu, the Centre for India-Australia Studies (CIAS) is another strategically important institution in the Australia India relationship. The CIAS has been established to harness the increased momentum and drive collaboration in key areas of the bilateral relationship.

The CIAS is the first and only Centre with a focus on the India-Australia bilateral relationship that is embedded in an Indian Higher Education Institution. This emphasises the scope for an increase in momentum, from an Indian perspective, for this important bilateral relationship.

With this strategic bilateral relationship becoming of an increasing importance, there is scope for numerous stakeholders, not just in Government, to strive for a deeper and more meaningful engagement. CIAS is focused on building stronger links between Indian and Australian:

- Institutions;
- Researchers and Academics;
- Students and Youth;
- Businesses; and
- Government and Policy-makers.

The CIAS hopes to work closely with the mission in New Delhi as well as DFAT in Canberra to help promote and facilitate closer ties between Australia and India.

### **Youth**

***The Australian Government should invest in next generation leaders (in Australia and in the region) who will help shape the future of Australia in the Indo-Pacific***

While the Australian Government has clearly recognised the importance of investing in next generation leaders, as is evidenced by the The Hon Julie Bishop's flagship initiative, the New Colombo Plan (NCP), there is still room to invest in the leaders of the future in Australia. The NCP provides university students the opportunity to take part in an internship and student exchange overseas. India has been one of the most popular destinations for Australian Students.

Young Australians will not only shape the future of Australia but also help shape the future of the world. The same is true of young people in India. Emphasising the importance of youth in India, Prime Minister Modi stated in his address to the Australian Parliament in 2014:

*It is the energy of our youth – the 800 million people below the age of 35 – eager for change, willing to work for it – because, now they believe that it is possible. That they can make it happen. It is this force of transformation that we will unleash.*

It is the energy, creativity and vision of the young leaders in Australia and India that give promise to an enduring and sustainable partnership between our future leaders. The Australian Government should continue to create opportunities for collaboration between young Indians and Australians.

Institutions such as the CIAS and the Australia India Youth Dialogue (AIYD) are helping shape the way young Australians and young Indians think about the other country. The Australian Government should invest in and support these initiatives. The AIYD is the leading track-two young leaders' dialogue between Australia and India. Its vision is to provide a sustainable platform for Australian and Indian young professionals to come together and foster an enduring partnership. Each year, the Dialogue invites 15 young Australian leaders and 15 young Indian leaders in the fields of commerce, arts, academia, policy, science and sport (among others) to discuss opportunities and challenges significant to the Australia-India relationship. Already, an alumni community of 180 change-makers are forging strong ties and in many cases collaborating on projects that are changing the shape of our bilateral relationship.

The CIAS hosts India Immersion Programmes for Australian students and has recently announced a flagship initiative, YLEAP-Australia (Young Leaders Externship Advance Programme), to create internship opportunities for Indian students in Australia. Such initiatives aim to create a community of young Indians and Australians who are aware, engaged and connected in the bilateral relationship. These young leaders are the future of the Australia and India - the Australian Government should continue to provide monetary and in-kind support for such initiatives.

### **State-to-State linkages**

***The Australian Government should work with Australian states to encourage state-to-state diplomacy between Indian and Australian states***

If the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh were a country, it would be the fifth most populated country in the world. This is illustrative of the scale of India's population, across states. Indeed, a number of Indian states have economies larger than that of some of Australia's trading partners. As a consequence, Australia should look to promote trade, investment and cultural exchange with states within India.

While there are still only a few formal state-to-state linkages between Australia and India, there is clearly an increasing trend favoring subnational diplomacy. This trend is perhaps unsurprising, especially given the presence of a strong diaspora and student population in Australia with strong links to their Indian home states.

A number of existing state-to-state agreements exist between Australia and India, including:

- New South Wales and Maharashtra, signed in 2012, focusing on financial services, energy, urban infrastructure, public health, biotech, IT, education, film, arts, culture and sport;
- New South Wales and Gujarat, signed in 2015, focusing on exchanges in education, skills development, water security, clean technology and smart city and infrastructure development;
- South Australia and Rajasthan, signed in 2015, focusing on two-way exchange of research, policy and technical capabilities;
- Western Australia and Andhra Pradesh, signed in 2016, focusing on mining and mining services, agriculture and fisheries, energy production and distribution, and education and training;

While the Victorian and Queensland Governments have not entered into official agreements with Indian states, they have facilitated State-based institutions to work with Indian State Governments on specific projects.

In addition, the Government of India's Smart Cities Mission may present opportunities for city-to-city linkages between Australia and India.

While national Government-to-Government ties are fundamental for the strategic and economic sustainability of the bilateral relationship, the Australian Government should work with its State Governments and encourage them to promote state-to-state relationships with India's states.

## **Higher Education**

***The Australian Government should work with Australian Higher Education institutions to encourage strategic institutional linkages with Indian Higher Education institutions***

Despite the fact that Australia is home to some of the world's leading universities, the vast majority of India's top graduating students have tended to prefer the USA and the UK as destinations for Higher Education studies. In any event, Australian universities need to look beyond focusing on attracting Indian students and find a way to contribute to India's growing culture of quality Higher Education.

The aspirational India is seeking opportunities in Higher Education around the world. Given that more than 800 million Indians are under the age of 35 years old, this represents a significant opportunity for Australia, and Australian Higher Education institutions, to significantly contribute to educating hundreds of millions of young Indians.

Australia's international student enrolment reached a record total of 554,179 in 2016. Of these international students, 27.5% came from China and 11% of came from India. It is in Australia's interest to promote its Higher Education institutions to Indian students. The contrast between the number of Chinese and Indian students studying in Australia highlights the opportunity for growth. Indeed, an increase in the amount of Indian students will be beneficial on a number of levels, namely; (i) it makes commercial sense for Higher Education institutions; (ii) it promotes greater diversity in universities; and (iii) builds stronger people-to-people links, thereby directly contributing to the broader bilateral relationship. In addition, the alumni community who have graduated from Australian institutions are an important asset for Australia both while

in Australia and when they return to India, often rising to key decision-making positions in government and business.

In any event, the Australian Higher Education industry needs to look beyond striving to attract Indian students. Australian Higher Education institutions are well-positioned to form strategic partnerships with Indian Higher Education institutions that are mutually beneficial.

Presently, there is a dearth of Australian literature and academic participation in Indian Higher Education. Indeed, of the many Indian academics with foreign qualifications and degrees, very few have Australian Higher Education experience. Government initiatives such as the Endeavour Award programme are encouraging Indian academics to pursue further studies in Australia. However, there is still scope for stronger engagement with Indian academics. For instance, from the Australia-China perspective, there has been a proliferation of China study centres in Australian universities and Australia study centres in China. This same presence does not exist in Indian Higher Education institutions. The Centre for India Australia Studies hopes to encourage involvement and collaboration amongst Indian and Australian academics. The Australian Government should promote deeper academic and institutional collaboration amongst Australian and Indian universities.

#### **About the Director of CIAS, Shaun Star:**

Passionate about promoting the Australia-India relationship, Shaun has been working in India since 2010. He is the Chair and co-founder of the Australia India Youth Dialogue, the Executive Director of the Centre for India Australia Studies, housed at O.P. Jindal Global University and an Assistant Professor and Assistant Dean (International Collaborations) at Jindal Global Law School.

Shaun is an Australian qualified lawyer and has worked at various top-tier law firms in Australia and India, including at Amarchand & Mangaldas & Suresh A. Shroff & Co. Shaun was recently named as one of 30 people to watch in the business of law in Asia. He has subsequently founded his own advisory practice, Australia India Advisory, and has advised numerous Australian organisations (from start-ups to listed companies), assisting them with their entry and expansion into India.

Shaun has published a book entitled “Australia and India: A Comparative Overview of the Law and Legal Practice”, a volume which has received contributions from judges, leading barristers, academics and legal practitioners. The book has been launched by Former Australian High Court Judge, The Honourable Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG, and the Attorneys General of Australia and India.

Shaun is co-founder and Chair of the Australia India Youth Dialogue, a forum which hosts young politicians, entrepreneurs, policy-makers and diplomats and encourages collaboration between young leaders of both of our nations.

Commentating on the Australia-India relationship, Shaun’s opinion pieces have been featured in Indian and Australian national newspapers and he has participated in panel sessions on Indian prime time television discussing the bilateral relationship.