



Parliament of Australia

**Parliamentary delegation
to
India**

28 October to 4 November 2017

Commonwealth of Australia 2017

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Members of the delegation

Leader of the delegation

The Hon Anthony Albanese, MP

Member for Grayndler (New South Wales)
Australian Labor Party

Mr Ian Goodenough MP

Member for Moore (Western Australia)
Liberal Party of Australia

Mr David Littleproud MP

Member for Maranoa (Queensland)
The Nationals

Mr Milton Dick MP

Member for Oxley (Queensland)
Australian Labor Party

Senator Pauline Hanson

Senator for Queensland
Pauline Hanson's One Nation

Official

Ms Rachel Callinan, Department of the Senate
Delegation Secretary

Delegation to India

It was my pleasure to lead an Australian parliamentary delegation to India between 28 October and 4 November, the first such delegation for 17 years.

As well as myself, the delegation was comprised of:

- Mr Milton Dick MP, Member for Oxley (Queensland)
- Mr Ian Goodenough MP, Member for Moore (Western Australia)
- Senator Pauline Hanson, Senator for Queensland, and
- Mr David Littleproud MP, Member for Maranoa (Queensland).

The delegation was supported by Ms Rachel Callinan (Delegation Secretary).

The delegation participated in a full program of events in New Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. The key objective of the program was to strengthen parliament to parliament ties with India by undertaking visits to India's National Parliament in New Delhi, and the state legislatures of Maharashtra and Telangana.

Other aims of the visit were to gain greater insight into the current social, economic, governance and political issues faced by India and its people, and to discover opportunities to further the deep relationship between our two countries. A summary of the activities undertaken by the delegation follows.

NEW DELHI PROGRAM

Sunday 29 October

Cultural tour

The delegation (with the exception of Mr Albanese) was privileged to be given a guided tour of the Taj Mahal, Agra, one of India's most significant cultural landmarks

and a place of great importance to the Indian people. The palace was built between in the 1600s by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a tomb of his late wife Mumtaz Mahal. It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983. Mr Albanese made a visit to the Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi which was inaugurated in 2005. The temple is a Mandir – an abode of God - a Hindu house of worship, and a spiritual and cultural campus dedicated to devotion, learning and harmony.

Australian Alumni Association India web launch

The delegation attended an evening event to launch the Australian Alumni Association India's website. The Association brings together Indian alumni of Australian educational and training institutions to provide support and foster strong ties between the two countries. The event was an opportunity for alumni and guests to celebrate the organisation and its developing strength in keeping alumni connected. The speakers, which included Her Excellency Ms Harinder Sidhu, Australian High Commissioner to India, the President of the Alumni Association, Mr Sunder Gurusamy and the delegation leader, highlighted the importance of education in furthering the bonds between India and Australia.



AAA India's website launch: delegation, High Commissioner and President of the Association

Monday 30 October

Australian High Commissioner's briefing

The delegation's first full day of activities commenced with a briefing from the High Commissioner and senior commission officials. The briefing covered Australia-India relations, India under Prime Minister Modi, economics and trade, regional issues, Indian students of Australian educational institutions, and other matters.

Strategic roundtable

The delegation then participated in a roundtable discussion with Indian academics and strategic thinkers. The forum provided the opportunity to hear views on India's foreign policy and its role in the Indo-Pacific region. Topics discussed included India under Prime Minister Modi, India's relationships with China, Pakistan and the United States, infrastructure issues, education, and economic matters.



Strategic roundtable: delegation with roundtable participants

Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

The delegation visited Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital which receives funding from Australia's Direct Aid Program to assist in training underprivileged women as nurses, and to purchase ophthalmic and e-learning equipment to support the hospital's work.

The delegation was provided with a briefing about the work of the hospital and had the opportunity to talk with students and learn about their backgrounds and experiences at the hospital.

The delegation was greatly impressed with the importance of the hospital's work and the significant impact it was having in the community and on the lives of the students undertaking its training program.



Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital: delegation with staff and students

Cultural tour

The delegation visited Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi, the mausoleum of the Mughal Emperor Humayun which was built in the mid-1500s. It is the earliest example of Persian influence in Indian architecture and has within it over 100 graves. The tomb was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993.

Indian Parliament

The delegation spent the afternoon at the Indian National Parliament, undertaking a tour of both chambers, meeting with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and with the Standing Committee on External Affairs.

Hon Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Ms Sumitra Mahajan

The delegation had the honour of meeting with the Honourable Speaker of the Lok

Sabha, Ms Sumitra Mahajan and senior officials. This meeting, attended also by the Australian High Commissioner, provided an opportunity to explore similarities and differences in our parliamentary systems and discuss opportunities for future cooperation, including a proposal to develop a memorandum of understanding between the two parliaments to provide a framework for further developing inter-parliamentary relations.

The group noted that it had been a long time since the last visit to India by an Australian parliamentary delegation. All were in agreement of the importance of such visits in strengthening democratic ties and the desirability for them to continue.



Indian Parliament: delegation and High Commissioner meeting with the Hon Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Ms Sumitra Mahajan

Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs

The delegation also met with the Hon Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, Dr Sashi Tharoor, and committee members. While the Parliament was not in session, the delegation's visit coincided with a meeting of the committee, which provided an opportunity for the delegation and committee members to exchange views on strategic issues and key bilateral questions.

Welcome reception

The Australian High Commissioner hosted an evening welcome reception for the delegation at her residence. The reception provided an opportunity for the delegation to meet a range of people from government, business and civil society, including Dr Sashi Tharoor whom the delegation had met with earlier that day. At the event, the High Commissioner also launched a series of artworks by a Kashmiri Indian artist which featured Australian prime ministers.

Tuesday 31 October

TERI Deakin Research Centre

The delegation visited the TERI Deakin Nanobiotechnology Centre in the nearby city of Gurgaon in the state of Haryana. The centre is a partnership between Deakin University and TERI's Biotechnology and Bioresources Division. It was established in 2010, develops innovative nanobiotechnology based solutions to address current challenges in the field of agriculture and environment.

The delegation received a briefing on the work of the centre and a tour of its impressive facilities which also provided the opportunity to interact with staff and students.



TERI-Deakin Research Centre: delegation with staff and students

Roundtable on India's economic agenda

In the afternoon, the delegation participated in a roundtable forum discussing India's economic agenda with representatives from Brookings, ratings agency ICRA, and International Growth Centre (IGC) India, as well as senior officers from the High Commission.

Held at the High Commission, the forum was a valuable opportunity for the delegation to learn more about India's economic reform agenda, including recent demonitisation and the introduction of the GST, as well as opportunities for Australian business in India.



Roundtable discussion on India's economic agenda: delegation with forum participants.

Delhi Metro and Museum

Later in the afternoon, the delegation took a ride on the Delhi Metro and toured the Metro Museum at Patel Chowk Metro station. The Museum shows the history of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and the metro which is India's first modern public transportation system. The delegation learnt that the metro has revolutionised travel in Delhi by providing a fast, reliable, safe and comfortable means of transport.

Cultural tour

The delegation also visited the Khan Market, a vibrant commercial precinct in New Delhi.

MUMBAI PROGRAM

Wednesday 1 November

In the morning, the delegation travelled from New Delhi to Mumbai, capital of the State of Maharashtra.

Tata Consultancy Services

The delegation visited Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) at its Banyan Park campus. The delegation received a briefing from senior representatives of TCS on the Tata conglomerate and its operations, and the work of TCS in particular. TCS is one of the leading companies in the Indian IT sector with an international presence across major cities including in Sydney. TCS is also a partner of the Australian Cyber Security Research Institute. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss further engagement with the Australian IT industry.

The delegation was also taken on a tour of the campus and an informal lunch provided a further opportunity to exchange information and views.



Tata Consultancy Services: delegation receiving a briefing from TCS representatives

Yes Bank Ltd

In the afternoon, the delegation met with the CEO and founder of Yes Bank Ltd, Mr Rana Kapoor, and other senior representatives of the bank at its Mumbai headquarters. Yes Bank is one of the

largest private banks in India. Through the briefing, the delegation learnt more about the Indian banking sector, the services offered by Yes Bank and its successes, and the optimistic future of the private banking sector and investment in India.

Australian business representatives

The delegation attended a dinner hosted by Australian Consul General Tony Huber with the heads of Australian companies based in Mumbai. The companies represented included Macquarie, NAB, Rio Tinto, SBI IAG, QBE, Qantas and ANZ. A representative of Austrade also attended. This event allowed the members of the delegation to hear first-hand about the experiences and challenges faced by Australian companies in India and the broader business environment in India.

Thursday 2 November

Cultural visit

In the morning, the delegation undertook a walking tour of the historic area of Mumbai. This was followed by a tour of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, one of India's most significant museums. The group toured exhibition spaces of sculpture, antiquities, painting and textiles.

Wreath-laying at the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks memorial

The delegation participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel to pay respects to those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008. In a series of coordinated attacks across Mumbai on 26-29 November 2008, including at the hotel, 164 people were killed, including two Australians. Mr Albanese laid a wreath on behalf of the Australian Government.



Memorial for the Mumbai Terrorist attacks: Delegation paying their respects after laying a wreath

Deputy Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council

The delegation met with Mr Manikrao Thakre, Deputy Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council and several members of the Council, many of whom had recently participated in a parliamentary delegation to Australia. During the lunch meeting, the group discussed their shared experiences as legislators and current issues being examined by their respective parliaments. The meeting also provided an opportunity for delegation members to explore some of the issues that had been raised with them during their other engagements, from a legislative and constituency perspective.

Maharashtra Police

The delegation met with Mr Deven Bharti, Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order), who provided an overview of police and counter-terrorism resourcing since the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. State and local policing issues and administration were also discussed, and the delegation gained an insight into policing challenges faced in a city whose greater population is similar to the population of Australia.

In the evening the delegation travelled to Hyderabad, capital of the State of Telangana in Southern India.

HYDERABAD PROGRAM

The delegation undertook a full day of activities in Hyderabad. Telangana is the youngest state in India, formed in 2014 from part of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Friday 3 November

Centre for Good Governance

The delegation attended a breakfast briefing with the Centre for Good Governance which provides advice and implements programs to help the Government of Telangana to implement its reform agenda. Telangana has been a leader in governance reforms. The delegation was interested to learn about the various reform initiatives underway, including in the area of e-governance.

T-Hub

The delegation then visited T-Hub, a 'start-up incubator'. T-Hub is a public-private partnership between the Telangana government, some academic institutes and the private sector. The delegation received a briefing from its CEO and other representatives and toured its headquarters where various start-ups work in a collaborative environment drawing on the IT infrastructure of T-Hub. The potential for opportunities for Australian start-ups was also discussed.



T-Hub: delegation receiving a briefing from representatives of T-Hub.

National Police Academy

In the afternoon, the delegation visited the Sadar Vallabhbai Patel National Police Academy which is the focal point for police training in India.

A briefing was provided by the Director of the academy, Ms Doley Barman IPS, and a number of other senior representatives on the history and features of the academy and its training program. The Academy offers basic, mid-career and specialised training for Indian Police Service (IPS) officers. SVP collaborates with a number of international institutions, including the Australian Institute of Police Management and Charles Sturt University, representatives of which were also present. The briefing was followed by an inspection of the facilities and an informal lunch.



SVP Police Training Academy: Delegation receiving a briefing from the Director and senior officers

Telangana Legislative Assembly

The delegation visited the Telangana Legislative Assembly and met with the Hon Speaker, Mr Madhusudhana Chary. The Speaker discussed the formation of the new State of Telangana and the progress being made in areas such as infrastructure, as well as the challenges faced by the state's new parliament,

including the relative inexperience of many of its members. The group also discussed India-Australia relations, including the sister-state relationships between Hyderabad and Brisbane and Ipswich. The delegation was also given a tour of the assembly chamber.



Telangana Legislative Assembly: delegation

Governor of Telangana

As its last formal engagement of the visit, the delegation had the honour of meeting with the Governor of Telangana, His Excellency, ESL Narasimhan IPS (Retd). Mr Narasimhan has been Governor of the new state of Telangana since its creation in June 2014. His Excellency discussed the progress made in the state since its creation and canvassed a number of current issues of significance to the people of the state more broadly. The wide ranging discussion allowed the delegation to reflect on the various activities it had participated in, and wealth of information exchanged, during the visit.

Cultural visit

In the evening, the delegation (with the exception of Mr Albanese who departed that evening) visited the Golconda Fort, which is a medieval citadel built by the Qutb Shahi dynasty, before it was conquered by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1687. The Fort was once

home to the famed Koh-i-Noor and Hope diamonds.

Saturday 4 November

Cultural visit

On the morning of its departure from India, the delegation visited the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, which was established in 1951. The museum displays art and objects of Indian heritage dating from the Mauryan to the Mughal dynasty and the rule of the Nizams in Hyderabad, as well as art from all over the world.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the delegation I would like to extend my appreciation to all those who met with us during our visit. The information shared enabled us to gain valuable insights into various aspects of India's parliamentary, governance, social and economic framework and the challenges faced by government and private sector innovators alike.

I would also like thank Her Excellency Ms Harinder Sidhu, Australian High Commissioner and her staff for the excellent support they provided to the delegation during the visit. Their collective efforts ensured that the delegation was well briefed, the engagements were informative, and that visit went smoothly. Thanks are also due to Mr Geoff Barnett of the Australian Parliament's International Parliamentary Relations Office who made the arrangements for the visit, and Ms Callinan our delegation secretary.

Finally, my thanks go to my fellow delegation members for their inquisitive, constructive and bi-partisan approach to the delegation's work.

The Hon Anthony Albanese
Delegation Leader

Appendix 1

Parliamentary Delegation to India – Program 28 October to 4 November 2017

Saturday 28 October

- Depart Australia, arrive New Delhi

Sunday 29 October

- Cultural tour - Taj Mahal, Agra (Mr Dick, Mr Goodenough, Mr Littleproud, Sen. Hanson)
- Cultural tour - Swaminarayan Akshardham (Mr Albanese)
- Australian Alumni Association Web Launch

Monday 30 October

- Briefing from Australian High Commissioner
- Strategic roundtable meeting with Indian academics and strategic thinkers
- Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital
- Cultural tour - Humayun's Tomb
- Indian Parliament - Speaker of Lok Sabha; Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs
- Welcome Reception at Australian High Commission

Tuesday 31 October

- TERI-Deakin Research Centre, Gurgaon
- Roundtable on India's Economic Agenda
- Delhi Metro Museum
- Cultural tour – Khan Market

Wednesday 1 November

- Depart New Delhi, arrive Mumbai
- Tata Consultancy Services
- Yes Bank Ltd
- Dinner with Australian business representatives hosted by Mr Huber Consul General

Thursday 2 November

- Cultural tour - Bombay Heritage Walk and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya
- Wreath laying at the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks memorial
- Deputy Chairman of Maharashtra Legislative Council and members
- Maharashtra Police
- Depart Mumbai, arrive Hyderabad

Friday 3 November

- Centre for Good Governance
- T-Hub
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy
- Telangana Legislative Assembly – Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
- Governor of Telangana
- Cultural tour - Golconda Fort
- Depart Hyderabad (Mr Albanese)

Saturday 4 November

- Cultural tour - Salar Jung Museum
- Depart for Australia (Remaining delegates)