



Submission No 1

Inquiry into Australia's relationship with India as an emerging world power

Organisation: Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

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Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

the council of Australia's university presidents

(ACN 008 502 930 - ABN 53 008 502 930)

Our Ref: K-03-005

24 May 2006

Dr Margot Kerley
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: jscfadt@aph.gov.au

Dear Dr Kerley

Inquiry into Australia's relationship with India as an emerging world power

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the potential trends noted in the Committee's terms of reference.

It is believed that the terms of reference are too narrow, particularly in the light of the recent visit by the Prime Minister to India and the Minister for Education's references to India at the recent Australian Education International Forum in Brisbane. International education is Australia's fourth largest export earner and deserves specific mention in the terms of reference and India is Australia's second largest market for international students, following China.

However, it is important that the Indians should see Australian universities as partners, not merely as providers of education. Research is of immense significance and Australian universities are increasingly seeking to collaborate with Indian universities. Australian universities are committed to working collaboratively with India, especially in the areas of technology and knowledge transfer, whilst recognising, but not over-emphasising, the export-based approach to international education

On his visit to India in March 2006, the Prime Minister committed Australia to spending \$20 million to support the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund and \$5 million for research fellowships and professional development over the next five years. He also witnessed the signing of two agreements between the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, and Monash University and the University of New South Wales to develop collaborative research programs to develop the next generation of scientists and engineers to contribute to the future economic growth of both countries.

The Minister for Education, Science and Training chaired a meeting in Brisbane on 3-4 April 2006 of twenty-seven Ministers and senior officials representing Education and Training portfolios from across the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting was held parallel with the International Education Forum, attended by over 900 delegates from around the world. The Ministers agreed that internationalisation is a necessary and critical element for all education systems in the region. They also agreed on the common goal of increasing greater student and academic mobility and transferability of qualifications.

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Student and academic mobility and exchange are seen to provide the basis for friendship, mutual respect and understanding, just as education is the key to prosperity, security and peace in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Mobility and exchange lead to increased transferability of skills and facilitate participation in the global workforce.

The importance of continuing relationship building including through two-way flows of students and staff cannot be over-emphasised. I hope that this inquiry will give due importance to the place of education within the strategic possibilities for both nations resulting from increasing globalisation and regional imperatives.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Mullarvey
Chief Executive Officer