



Submission No 36

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

Organisation: Australia-India Council

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SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION - AUSTRALIA-INDIA COUNCIL
For the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
October 2006

Australia-India Council

The Australia-India Council (AIC) was established by an Order-in-Council on 21 May 1992, implementing a key recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's July 1990 report on Australia's relations with India.

The objective of the AIC is to advance Australia's interests in India by:

- fostering the deepening and strengthening of relations between the two countries
- demonstrating to Indians Australian excellence in the arts, education, science and technology, sports and other fields
- promoting knowledge in India and Australia of each other's society and culture.

The AIC achieves this objective by initiating and supporting activities among influential persons and groups in Australia and India that:

- raise awareness of Australia and Australian capabilities in India and vice versa, including through the support of Australian studies in India
- promote and support visits, exchanges and institutional links in the following broad thematic areas: arts/culture (including film); education; society (including health and sport) science/technology (including the environment); and public awareness (including the law and commerce).

The AIC's programs and activities are a form of "second track" diplomacy that complement and support official exchanges at the governmental level. The AIC does not fund activities that are the responsibility of other funding bodies or other government agencies (eg academic research, development assistance, activities under bilateral science and technology agreements, and trade promotion activities normally handled by Austrade), or activities which are commercially viable in their own right.

The AIC is the only government-funded body charged with identifying, initiating and supporting projects to promote Australia-India links across the broad spectrum of bilateral activity. India's growing economic and strategic weight, the increasing convergence of interest between Australia and India, and fast-growing opportunities for co-operation in economic and in other areas provide a platform for the AIC to continue with its projects in new areas of cooperation that can be developed to advance Australia's interests.

Board Members

The AIC comprises a board of members with interest in the Australia-India relationship, drawn from a wide cross-section of the Australian community. Mr Darren Gribble (international trade consultant and former High Commissioner to India (1994-97) was appointed as Chairman of the Council in July 2005 for a period of two years. Board members include: Professor Bruce Bennett AO

(Professor of English, UniNSW/ADFA); Professor Suzanne Crowe (Head, AIDS Pathogenesis Research Unit, The Burnett Institute); Mr Vinod Daniel (Chairman, AusHeritage and Head, Collection Integrity, Australian Museum); Ms Suzanne Davies (Director/Curator, RMIT Gallery); Mr Sandy Hollway AO (Consultant, Sport and Major Events); and the DFAT Deputy Secretary with responsibility for India. An optimal number for the Council Board is not more than ten, provided that sufficient spread of professional expertise (matching the priority areas of the Council) can be obtained within this number. Council appointments are made with regard to: securing a good overall range and balance of professional expertise, including in priority fields of Council activity *viz* the arts, education including Australian studies, health and social issues, and science/technology/environment; experience and interest in India; an appropriate blending of old and new members, to ensure both continuity and 'new blood'; an appropriate proportion of women members; and appropriate representation, to the extent practicable, by Indian-born residents.

Administration

The AIC is supported by a secretariat located in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra. The Australian High Commission in New Delhi promotes the Council's activities in India.

The AIC receives its program funding from the Australian Government in the form of an annual grant through the International Relations Grants Programme (IRGP) administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Recent funding: 2002-03: \$720,000; 2003-04: \$727,500; 2004-05: \$740,000; 2005-06: \$725,000; and 2006-07: \$742,000.

The IRGP funding received by the AIC is committed to projects that are consistent with the government's foreign and trade policy objectives. Funds allocated to the AIC are used to develop, broaden and deepen Australia-India relations through contacts and exchanges in a range of fields which promote mutual awareness and understanding.

The AIC delivers targeted and innovative projects, frequently in partnership with key stakeholders in India and Australia, which focus particularly on increasing Australia's profile - as scientifically, technologically and educationally advanced, economically enterprising and culturally diverse - in India and enhancing Indian understanding and appreciation of contemporary Australia.

The funds are spent on a range of projects either initiated by the AIC, or initiated by individuals or organisations who sought and obtained funding under the AIC's competitive funding application process.

The AIC's competitive funding application process enables the initiative and enthusiasm of a wide range of individuals and organisations to be encouraged and supported in furthering the Council's objectives. The competitive process has also helped to identify areas worthy of more systematic or long-term Council involvement.

The AIC particularly welcomes innovative projects that continue to advance the aims and objectives of the Council beyond the term of AIC funding, and therefore provide significant continuing benefits from what is often a modest initial outlay.

When considering funding proposals the AIC Board is very mindful that the objectives and outcomes of the proposal should contribute to Australia's interests: building networks and contacts; developing habits of working together; facilitating growth and transfer of knowledge; and generating mutual respect. Principal among them is highlighting Australian excellence to the Indian audience (especially opinion formers). While the AIC is open to proposals which build the bilateral relationship, they are most attracted to proposals which do this by promoting Australia's image to India, not the other way around, or at least which do both and therefore generate/lift mutual respect.

The AIC attaches a number of conditions to its funding, including that all applications are assessed against the following guidelines:

- individuals or organisations applying for funding should have a substantial record of achievement in the proposed field of activity – in other words, the AIC looks for reputable 'stakeholders' in Australia in the field in which funding is sought;
- the activity should be a worthwhile initiative with clearly defined outcomes that will promote a broader and deeper relationship between Australia and India;
- wherever possible, AIC funding should be accompanied by partnership support from other sources, whether funding or in-kind;
- activities should preferably offer prospects of future independent activity following initial AIC funding, so that the AIC contribution acts as 'seed' funding;
- provision should be made for publicity or promotion of the activity, including appropriate acknowledgement of AIC support; and
- the AIC encourages 'stakeholders' in India to identify an appropriate counterpart in Australia to seek funding on their behalf.

Five Core Program Areas

The five core program areas for the AIC are currently: the arts (including film and literature); education; society/social (including health and sport); science/technology/environment (including heritage); and public policy (including media links).

1. The Arts (including film and literature)

The objective of the arts program, which includes performing and visual arts, as well as arts management, is to encourage understanding between Australia and India by developing in each country an appreciation of the quality, diversity and sophistication of the other country's practices.

Key Activities:

Artist-in-residency program: Managed by Asialink (Melbourne University), the program aims to make Australians more India-literate. It enables Australian artists, writers and arts managers to work in India for up to four months and contributes to developing network, future exchanges and enhanced collaborations. The program also enhances the profile of Australia as a sophisticated, contemporary culture and further intellectual and cultural exchanges.

Literature tour. The Australian author tours (Peter Carey, Kim Scott, Tim Winton, Kate Grenville and Peter Goldsworthy) have drawn tremendous media attention and interest among the Indian academics and general public for Australian writing. The AIC has provided funding to Asialink to manage Australian author tours to India. The tours have included participation in the Kolkata and Delhi book fairs, academic seminars, visits to schools and wider trade promotions. The tours have raised the profile of Australian literature in India. They have helped in introducing 'new' authors to Indian publishers and academia stuck 'one generation back' in Australian writing. Penguin India have printed copies of recently published books by the visiting authors and Kim Scott's (relatively new writer of indigenous background) award winning *Benang* was Number nine on the India Top Ten Fiction list.

Australia International Cultural Council ~ India Promotion: The AIC is partnering the Australia International Cultural Council (chaired by Hon Alexander Downer MP) in its activities in India (November 2005 – early 2007). *AusArts: Celebrating Australian Art and Culture* is a two year cultural program that will showcase the diversity of Australian culture through major events in India focusing on art exhibitions, design, film, literature and other art and cultural events across India. Of particular note - Australia will be the focus country for the Kolkata Bookfair.

Grants:

- Extensions Dance Company (Townsville): funding to participate in the 4th International Children's Festival for Performing Arts in India.
- Spirit of India concerts: funding to the Nataraj Cultural Centre (Australian organisation) to bring high-quality Indian musical performers to Australia.
- India International Art Triennale: supporting (with the Australia Council) the participation of an Australian artist.
- Co-operation between National Institute of Dramatic Art and India's National School of Drama.
- Art Gallery of WA "Edge of Desire Exhibition": funding to enable the Indian artists to visit Australia.
- Les Murray tour. Responding to the encouraging demand for his collection of poems, four bi-lingual publications of a selection of his poetry is underway.
- Australian content in Indian Film Festivals: Provide opportunity for Indian audiences to see the exceptional work of contemporary Australian film makers.
- Indian film spotlight at the Melbourne International Film Festival.
- Sydney Biennale: funding to enable Indian artists to visit Australia to present their work.
- Queensland Art Gallery Asia-Pacific Triennale: funding to support the Indian content.
- Ceramics Exchange: funding to support workshops and exhibitions in both countries.

2. Education

The objective of the education program is to increase knowledge and understanding in Australia of India, and in India of Australia, through the education sectors in each country. The Australian studies component aims to promote, through support for Australian studies in Indian universities and schools, an informed understanding of Australian society and politics. The Australian studies program also seeks to demonstrate Australian excellence in all fields of endeavour. The Indian studies component aims to promote, through support of Indian studies in Australian universities and schools, an informed understanding of Indian society and politics.

The AIC's primary focus on education in general and Australian studies in particular complements and augments the Government's successful promotion of Australian education services exports to India.

Key activities:

Australia India Teacher Exchange: One of the AIC's longest-running collaborations, the Australia-India teacher exchange program, managed by the Asia Education Foundation, is designed to give Australian teachers and educational administrator a working familiarity with India while providing Indian teachers and administrators with a better understanding of Australia. The exchange also contributes to the long-term positioning of Australian education in India.

Australian Studies Fellowships: To complement the Australian Government's commitment to strengthening educational links between Australia and India, including links between academics and institutions, the AIC initiated the Australian Studies Fellowships. The fellowships were introduced in 2003 and are aimed at both established Indian academics and postgraduate students from Indian tertiary institutions with a strong interest in Australian studies, providing successful awardees to undertake special projects drawing on the resources of Australian universities. The fellowships are administered by a consortium of universities, led by Curtin University and supported by Monash University, Queensland University, ANU, University of NSW and University of Adelaide. Six of these prestigious fellowships (maximum of ten weeks in Australia) have been awarded annually in areas such as Australian literature, politics and history, environment and health, tourism, film, media communication, gender issues, multiculturalism and indigenous issues. The research and development of contacts carried out by the awardees' will help deepen India's understanding of Australia's vibrant and diverse society. The fellowships have added a significant new dimension to the education and research relationship between the two countries.

Indian Association for the Study of Australia (IASA): The AIC provides funding and in-kind support to the bi-annual conference. The IASA conferences cover a wide range of areas across the humanities and social sciences. The large delegations from both Australia and India are an indicator of gaining academic ties between Australian and Indian universities.

Understanding Australia Hindi website: The AIC provided a grant to Radio Australia to establish an educational website, based on the radio series *Australia Now* aimed at the Hindi-speaking audience in India. The website promotes a contemporary and realistic understanding of Australia among young Hindi-speaking Indians.

Other projects undertaken by the AIC to maintain the momentum of Indian interest in Australian studies included sponsoring visits (including teaching) by academics in both directions. The AIC has continued to work with the Australia Research and Resource Centre at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) by assisting with the development of course content for a Graduate Diploma in Australian Studies and Masters level course material. The AIC also continued its promotion of India studies in Australia.

3. Social/Society (including health and sport)

The objective of the social/society program is to develop collaboration between Australia and India in public health and social issues, and to demonstrate in India the quality and innovation of Australian expertise in the area of health and sport.

Key activities:

Critical Health Issues: In partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), India's peak industry body, through the Burnet Institute and the Alfred Hospital, continues to send Australian doctors to India for HIV/AIDS train-the-trainer programs. The aim of the HIV program is to train doctors in India on HIV clinical management with a strong focus on understanding the complicated regimens of antiretroviral (anti-HIV) drugs. To date there have been over 25 programs in cities and rural areas all over India, in which over 900 doctors and allied health staff have received training. As part of this activity, scientists from Australia have also visited Indian laboratories and worked with the local technicians to transfer technology for low cost test in order to monitor HIV infection.

Also in conjunction with the Confederation of Indian Industry the AIC has provided seed funding for a nutritional education program targeted at health workers and peer educators to raise awareness among women (particularly in rural areas) regarding the importance of nutrition.

These programs have been extremely successful and have gained momentum. Given that HIV and nutritional deficiencies are two of the largest problems faced by India, the work of the AIC in these areas, showcasing Australian medical expertise and forging new collaborative links, will continue to reap benefits for years to come.

Sport exchanges: Sports exchanges are a useful means of enhancing Australia's profile in India. In April 2004, the Western Australian Department of Sport and Recreation (WADSR) signed a MOU with the Sports Authority of India. This was a direct outcome of AIC-funded sports exchanges involving WADSR. This involved producing a framework for an Indian National Action Plan for Sports. The first collaborative activity following the signing of the MOU included a series of workshops in India focusing on sports science, coaching, sport infrastructure planning and the development of sports clubs.

Commonwealth Games and major events: The AIC's strategic plan is giving particular attention to the emerging complementarities between Australia and India in management of sports and major events, with a particular focus on the Commonwealth Games (Melbourne hosted in 2006 and Delhi to host in 2010). In this regard, the AIC, in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), organised a high-profile forum focusing on Australia-India collaboration in sports and major sporting events. The forum was designed to define more closely the complementarities between our two countries and opportunities to learn from each other. The Indian participants appreciated the detailed presentations and the willingness to share knowledge. Topics covered: Australian approach towards administration and development of sport; the importance of sports and major events in India; sports development in India; preparations and planning for the Commonwealth Games; promoting business and tourism through sport; and city legacy.

Australian expert speakers included: CEO, Australian Sports Commission; CEO, Sports Knowledge Australia; CEO, Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre; General Manger, Project Planning, Risk and Strategy, Melbourne 2006.

The event consolidated previous activities by the AIC and governments in Australia designed to build relations with India in the sports field and met its objectives of elevating the profile of Australian excellence in sports administration and major sporting events. It provided a basis for even closer collaboration in the future, especially as India moves towards 2010. There is further potential for interaction in a wide spectrum including sports education, management, venue design, marketing and financial management. The connections are capable of embracing professional/expert relationships, mutually beneficial business and wider people-to-people linkages.

Border-Gavaskar Scholarship: Young Indian cricketers receive six weeks of specialist coaching at the Australian Cricket Academy (Commonwealth Bank Centre for Excellence). The Border-Gavaskar scholarship (a joint initiative between Cricket Australia and the AIC) program has provided benefit for both Australian and Indian cricket and has quickly established itself as an important feature of the Australia-India cricket relationship. Several of the program participants have gone on to achieve places in the Indian Test cricket team.

All major sports cooperation activities in recent years generated a high level of involvement from Indian partner organisations, as well as extensive media coverage and goodwill. India sees Australia as a natural and attractive partner for sports development programs.

Volunteering: The AIC initiated a series of dialogues in India to build people-to-people links in an area where there are strong synergies between Australia and India. Of particular focus was the success of the volunteer program at the Sydney Olympics. Indian NGOs, such as the Dignity Foundation, have also taken an interest in modelling their own volunteering practices with regard to aging citizens, including the establishment of retirement villages, using Australian experiences. The dialogues focussed on motivating and recruiting volunteers, volunteer resource centres and corporate volunteering.

4. Science/Technology/Environment (including heritage)

The objective of the Council's science, technology and environment program is to demonstrate in India the quality, sophistication and diversity of Australian expertise and to promote professional and institutional links in these fields between Australia and India.

Key activities:

Biotechnology/Biomedical Fellowships: Recognising the potential for collaborative research in the various fields of science, the AIC initiated a biotechnology/biomedical fellowship, following a recommendation by Sir Gustav Nossal. Sir Gustav visited India to present an AIC prestigious lecture. During the course of his visit he also recommended that a workshop dedicated to scientific cooperation between Australia and India be initiated. He envisaged the workshop as a means to enhance cooperation in biotechnology between India and Australia, and to develop high-level links between scientists and institutions from both nations. The Nossal workshop, organised by the Australian High Commission resulted in the Australian and Indian delegations working on the development of an Indo-Australian

framework for future collaboration in biotechnology. The work between the two countries has further strengthened with the development of the Strategic Research Fund.

The fellowships offered to date have covered areas such as bioprocessing of heavy metals for reclaiming contaminated soils; diabetes research, malaria vaccines and the relationship between HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

Recipients of such fellowships have confirmed that the exchange programs have led to the development of important collaborations between Australia and India and significant exchanges in competencies, ideas and techniques. Under the Joint Working Group on Science and Technology a workshop on environmental remediation will be held at an Indian Institution. This is a direct result of the fellowship scheme collaboration.

Biotechnology: The AIC funded a visit to India by a biotechnology expert to scope the various areas of collaboration between the two countries at an industry level. An outcome of the visit was the signing of an MOU between Australia and India's two peak biotechnology bodies.

Heritage Conservation: The AIC provided seed funding to AusHeritage to further develop people-to-people relationships between Indian and Australian heritage practitioners through workshops on materials conservation, architectural conservation, site management and collections management as well as specific projects such as technical assistance in designing an international gallery for the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai. Two major initiatives have included the development of Cultural Heritage Certificate programs in India and a conservation Management Planning initiative in conjunction with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

Sustainable Tourism: The AIC has provided funding to Australian experts to participate in workshop/seminars to promote sustainable tourism activities in both Australia and India.

Environmental Management: Following on from a successful Australia-India Disaster Management Symposium, held in New Delhi in November 2000, the AIC has continued to support visits to India by practitioners from Emergency Management Australia. Such visits have enabled Indian practitioners to gain familiarity with Australian emergency management planning and response procedures and with the range of training facilities in Australia.

5. Public Policy (including media links)

The objective of the public policy program is to strengthen links between key institutions in Australia and India with a view to promoting the long-term bilateral relationship.

Key activities:

Sir John Crawford Lecture: A joint initiative of the AIC and the National Centre for Applied Economic Research (New Delhi) the lecture series is a forum for eminent Australians to give a prestigious lecture in India. Sir John Crawford worked closely with Indian and international colleagues to pioneer the Green Revolution in India's agricultural development. In this spirit the Crawford lecture is a project to exchange knowledge and understanding between Australia and India on issues of

major public interest. To date lectures have been presented by: Dr Lloyd Evans AO (CSIRO); Sir Gustav Nossal (Walter and Eliza Institute); Professor Ross Garnaut AO (ANU) and Professor Allan Fels AO (Australia and New Zealand School of Government).

Narayanan Lecture: The Narayanan lectures, part-funded by the AIC, are among the major public lectures within the ANU (Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies). Each year, this oration has been delivered by a major Indian public figure. The tenth oration (“India’s Space Enterprise: A Case Study in Strategic Thinking and Planning”) was delivered in July 2006 by Dr K Kasturirangan, the Director of the National Institute of Advanced Studies at Bangalore.

In addition to the lectures, both the Australian and Indian public figures undertake a wider program which is useful in furthering relations between Australia and India in academic, diplomatic and business areas. Such links provide major inroads into promoting future collaborations and consolidating institutional and people-to-people linkages.

Australia-India Security Roundtable: A significant second-track dialogue supported by the AIC, in partnership with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, is the Australia-India Security Roundtable. The fifth roundtable is scheduled to be held in New Delhi in early December. The dialogue provides a useful platform for interaction between select Indian and Australian experts and analysts on key strategic, security and defence issues and is designed to explore the scope for expanded security dialogue and cooperation between the two countries.

Media exchanges: The AIC has continued to support media activities, including exchanges, technical development and targeted journalist visits (including add-on activities to support media visits under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade International Media Visits program). Of particular note is support of the Australian High Commission seminar on the nature and role of the contemporary media in India and Australia.

Advocacy

The AIC communicates its programs, and procedures for funding, on the AIC [website \(www.dfat.gov.au/aic\)](http://www.dfat.gov.au/aic). The website provides information on recent AIC activities, media releases and useful links regarding the Australia-India bilateral relationship.

Australia-India Focus: The electronic newsletter reports information on recent and forthcoming events within the bilateral relationship. It is jointly funded by the AIC and the Australia India Business Council and distributed in both Australia and India.