



Submission No 32

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

Organisation: **Group of Eight**

Contact Person: Virginia Walsh
Executive Director

Address: **PO BOX 4008**
MANUKA ACT 2603

**Group of Eight**

15 September 2006

Dr Margot Kerley
Committee Secretary
Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament of Australia

Dear Dr Kerley

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

The Group of Eight (Go8) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

The Go8 recognises the importance to Australia of India's burgeoning services-based economy and rapidly expanding middle class. There is considerable strategic activity occurring across the Go8 aimed at increasing levels of engagement with India. Recent examples include:

- The participation of Go8 Chair, Professor Glyn Davis, in the Prime Minister's three-day delegation to India in March 2006.
- Monash University's agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) to establish the first joint institution for research and research training in areas of mutual interest to India and Australia. This collaboration will create in Bombay a centre of excellence in clean energy, water, biotechnology, mineral exploration and computer simulation. The centre is expected to enrol about 500 doctoral students.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between The University of New South Wales and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) to encourage research collaboration in the areas of science and engineering. UNSW also has co-operation agreements with Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Pune, the Indian Institute of Management (Bangalore), the Madras School of Social Work and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (Pilani).
- The University of Adelaide has an articulation agreement with the Global Academy of Technology in Bangalore and will host a workshop on water research in 2007 for academics and researchers from all Indian IITs.
- Ongoing and regular collaboration between the Go8 Deans of Engineering and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITS).
- A joint Go8-IIT Roorkee workshop in India in 2007 on computational fluid dynamics techniques, a field in which both Australia and India are recognised world leaders.

AUSTRALIA'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES

The University of Adelaide
The Australian National University
The University of Melbourne
Monash University
The University of New South Wales
The University of Queensland
The University of Sydney
The University of Western Australia

The Group of Eight Limited

ABN 98 089 687 990

PO Box 4008 Manuka

ACT 2603 Australia

Telephone +61 2 6239 5488

Fax +61 2 6239 5808

<http://www.go8.edu.au>

executive.director@go8.edu.au

+61 2 62395808

-2-

Considerable efforts are being made to increase the number of Indian students enrolled at Go8 universities as they currently account for a relatively small proportion of total international student numbers (4%).

However the Go8 believes that Australia is failing to attract the highest quality students from India, particularly at the undergraduate and research levels.

The large majority of Indian higher education students in Australia are undertaking short coursework masters programs, particularly in accounting and information technology. The most rapid growth in numbers from India is occurring in the Vocational Training and Education (VTE) sector, which experienced a 145% increase between 2005 and 2006.¹

A worrying perception of Australian education in India is as a provider of cheap rather than high quality courses. This perception is compounded by the large number of Indian students who clearly choose Australia as a study destination in order to gain permanent residency. Three-quarters of Indian students who complete university courses in Australia apply and receive permanent residency visas.²

Most Indian students at the undergraduate and research levels show a clear preference for the USA and the UK as study destinations, largely due to the existence of generous scholarships. Indian students represent only 4% of the total international undergraduate market in Australia and 7.5% of international research students.³

The Go8 believes that the Australian Government can play a positive role in addressing this imbalance. Just as the Colombo Plan laid the foundations for Australia's political engagement with the Asian region in the 1950s and 1960s, the Go8 believes the Australian Government should consider the merits of initiating a series of scholarships for outstanding undergraduate and research students from India over coming years.

Yours sincerely



Virginia Walsh
Executive Director

¹ DEST PRISMS Database Year to Date Commencements to July 2006

² Baas, Michael, "Students of Migration: Indian Overseas Students and the Question of Permanent Residency", People and Place Journal, Volume 14, Issue 1 (2006) Monash University.

³ DEST PRISMS Database Year to Date Commencements to March 2006