



**COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**

# **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE**

on

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

(Subcommittee)

**Reference: Australia's trade relationship with India**

**DARWIN**

**Thursday, 14 August 1997**

(OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT)

**CANBERRA**

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

(Trade Subcommittee)

Members:

Mr Sinclair (Chair)

Senator Forshaw (Deputy Chair)

Senator Chapman

Senator Childs

Senator Margetts

Mr Brough

Mr Dondas

Mrs Gallus

Mr Hollis

Mr Nugent

Mr Price

Mr Slipper

Mr Stephen Smith

Matter referred:

Australia's trade relationship with India and to consider the emerging economies of South Asia, and report on such areas as:

India's economic significance for Australia, and the opportunities for expanding trade and investment;

the prospects for continuing economic reform and trade liberalisation in India and the implications of this for Australian trade and investment;

India's growing economic engagement with Asia and the Indian Ocean region;

South Asia's emerging economic significance for Australia, and the potential implications of closer economic cooperation amongst South Asian countries, including through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation;

trade and investment opportunities for Australia in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.



**WITNESSES**

**D'ROZARIO, Ms June, Deputy Chair, Australia-India Council, c/-  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, Australian  
Capital Territory 2600 ..... 385**

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE  
(Subcommittee)

*Australia's trade relationship with India*

DARWIN

Thursday, 14 August 1997

Present

Mr Sinclair (Chair)

Mr Hollis

Mr Dondas

The subcommittee met at 2.00 p.m.

Mr Sinclair took the chair.

**CHAIR**—I declare open this, the sixth public hearing of the trade subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into Australia's trade relations with India and the emerging economies of the South Asia region. The inquiry itself is one which most of us have found particularly interesting. We received some 70 public and confidential submissions and have taken a range of evidence. I must admit that as one who had not thought that the India connection was growing at the pace it has, it has been quite a revelation, at least to me. I think the opportunity to see where we are going in our relations with the South Asian region is particularly important at this time.

The fact that the state election was called has meant that, unfortunately, we are not today talking to the Northern Territory government about its general attitude in the South Asian region. We are very pleased that you have been able to join us, Ms D'Rozario. As deputy chair of the Australia-India Council, we know of your own involvement in the program of Charting Australia which was sent out on the transmitter on the Cox Peninsula. This morning we went out and visited that. For some of us it was a renewal; for others, it was the first opportunity to have a look at just what exactly it is, where it is and where the signal goes. The one aspect that concerned most of us in particular was that there is now no longer a signal going into India, which is a major problem as far as this inquiry is concerned.

**D'ROZARIO, Ms June, Deputy Chair, Australia-India Council, c/- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory 2600**

**CHAIR**—As deputy chairman of the Australia-India Council, I welcome you. As to the proceedings, we do not require witnesses to give evidence on oath, but they are official proceedings of the parliament and need to be treated as such. We prefer, obviously, all evidence to be given in public, but if you wish to give evidence in private, then by all means consult with us and we will consider your request. I invite you to make an opening statement and then we can have some dialogue about the subject.

**Ms D'Rozario**—Thank you, Mr Chairman. I understand that you might have heard from some of our members in previous sittings of your committee.

**CHAIR**—We have—from your chairman and from Mr Powys.

**Ms D'Rozario**—Mr Powys is the Director of the Australia-India Council. You probably have already been informed that the Australia-India Council is a public non-statutory body set up within the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio. Its establishment in 1992 arose specifically out of a recommendation of a previous Senate inquiry.

The council was brought about in 1992, which coincided with the start of economic liberalisation in India. At that time not a great deal was known about India. One of the recommendations to set up the council was to try to address that lack of information and also to bring India to a greater awareness within the Australian psyche. With the liberalisation, we have found ourselves in the box seat in many ways. Quite a few of the programs which the council has initiated had enormous economic as well as cultural benefits and has, I think, discharged very well the function of the council which is not only to improve the bilateral relationship but also to conduct activities which would lead to long-term gains.

The reason we were interested in Radio Australia and what it could do to further our own objectives was that we noted that there was a close match between the Radio Australia activity in India and our own. I will put you in the picture as to what the objectives of the Australia-India Council were. Our principal objective was to broaden the awareness and understanding within Australia and India of each other's culture, society and institutions and also of areas of excellence and expertise.

Other objectives were to encourage activities to generate economic benefits to both Australia and India, to establish new areas of contact between Australia and India and to develop durable links between those two countries. In the five years that we have been in existence there were two major events which might be known at large to the Australian public: in 1994, we staged a major event which ran over three weeks in several cities around Australia. It was under the banner description of 'India Today'. That particular event was to introduce India to the broad mass of the Australian population. At the time,

we found that most knowledge of India centred around very limited areas. Sport was the obvious one and, in particular, cricket. So, when you mention the word 'India' in the same sentence with Australia, immediately the discussion turns to cricket. What we really wanted was a wider understanding of India within Australia. So this particular event, which ran for three or four weeks in Australia, was a very important event for us.

It was also significant in that it was the first time that an Indian head of state visited Australia. The Vice-President was an official visitor to Australia within that time and was invited specifically for that program.

The other side of that function of understanding each other's society was that in 1996 the New Horizons program was run in India in October-November last year. The Australia-India Council was a major sponsor and a very active participant in that program coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. That was one of a series of integrated country promotions, the three previous ones having been held in Korea, Japan and Indonesia.

The purpose of our involvement in New Horizons was to introduce Australia to Indian society as a major source of trade, investment and expertise. That was the focus of the Australia-India Council's participation in that. Our interest in Radio Australia, in the three years that we were involved with it, was that we found we were able to get enormous leverage out of our programs by supporting the Radio Australia broadcast into India.

The way we found that worked, as with any of these bodies which are set up and have a very big task to do with a very limited budget, was to devise a business plan and set priorities. We sought to bring to our programs people who would be able to assist our objectives. In the first year or so of our operations we were approached by a number of people with good ideas. They all had projects or programs that they wanted to run in India. We assessed these against our objectives and agreed to some of them, but after a few years of that we decided that we really ought to set our own agenda and use our limited funds to develop some collaborative arrangements with people who could assist us with these objectives.

We devised a number of areas in which we thought we could make the most ground. Of the several sectors that we were active in, three of them are currently the focus of our activities. The three are: print and electronic media, institutional and professional links, and science and technology. These are the three areas in which we have most of our funds committed for this particular year. There has been quite a deal of synergy between some of these areas. I believe that Radio Australia has played a very useful role in bringing some of that synergy about. Just as an example, one of our recent programs was that the council sponsored a visit by Professor Sir Gustav Nossal to India.

Sir Gustav attended as the President of the Australian Academy of Science.



Because of his eminence this became a very high level, high profile element not only because of the institutional and professional links part of our program in which we initially involved Sir Gustav but also because of his role in science and technology. So we actually got a cross-match between those two sections. We were able to add very significant value to his visit because there was an interview broadcast on Charting Australia with Sir Gustav on 23 February 1997.

In this particular interview he outlined not just his scientific background but also some very insightful comments on the interface with industry. So we got all three major elements of our program together on this one visit. Charting Australia is the program that I have just mentioned. This was a specific purpose designed program by Radio Australia which was broadcast weekly. I will make a few comments about the value of that program, but just for the moment what I am trying to demonstrate is the way we were able to bring all three of our major components of our program together in this way of cross-matching these particular elements.

With Sir Gustav's visit to India, what we were really trying to promote was Australian excellence not only in epidemiology but also in public health and community health education. Whilst he was there, Sir Gustav also explored the potential for collaborating in clinical trials facility and also in interfacing, as I mentioned before, with industry and various aspects of industry which deliver health to the mass of Indian population. Interestingly for us, his views were of such interest to business that he was accorded a full page interview in one of the leading business magazines, *Business Line*. That exposed the Australian health sector as a major source of medical and pharmaceutical technology. There are also a number of other aspects where Australians are regarded as being in the forefront, including in community health education programs. We got very significant run-on benefits by those types of techniques.

Going back to our involvement in Radio Australia: the Australia-India Council took a decision three years ago to part-fund the program Charting Australia. This was only discontinued on 30 June 1997 when the scope of Radio Australia activities was cut back such that it now has no broadcasting to India at all. Had that not been the case, I am sure that the council would have continued to fund to the extent of \$65,000 a year, which we had been doing for the previous three years.

The reason we were interested to continue funding and had been funding Radio Australia in India for that length of time was that we could not find any other method by which we could get such excellent value for money. There is no way in any of our public awareness campaigns that we could reach so many people with so little money. To give you an idea of why we were interested in Radio Australia and what they were achieving for us, I mentioned earlier that we saw that there was a fairly close dovetailing of Radio Australia's objectives with ours, particularly their objective of increasing awareness amongst the English knowing population and the Indian middle classes. That was one target group that we were trying to reach because this is the sector which drives economic

liberalisation and reform in India. From our point of view, this was the most influential sector to run with the awareness issue that we were striving for. The other aspect of Radio Australia's objective which we were very interested in was that this particular program, Charting Australia, was purpose designed. It was not a grab bag of stories which was just put together in a magazine format; its stories were specifically aimed at actively demonstrating a bilateral relationship between India and Australia.

There was never a story which just ran because it might have been of interest to Indian audiences. It was always a story which showed that there was a relationship between the two countries. Story-lines and the content of the stories were always targeted at identified sectors which were key sectors. That was the reason we were very interested in using the penetration of Radio Australia to get our message across. I might say that, within India itself, Charting Australia was known as the flagship of the Australian voice in India. There was only one other program which matched it: the South Asia report which is also broadcast by Radio Australia. Regrettably neither of those two now go to air.

In relation to what we were able to achieve for our money, the English knowing population—as an Indian person who speaks English that is how I would describe it—is the population which either speaks English or understands English in a sufficiently functional context. The estimate of this population is about 30 million people. This is only about three per cent of the Indian population but it is still a very wide audience. Of that particular number of people who know English we were able to reach over one million people just from the short-wave service alone. We know this from the audience survey material that Radio Australia undertook and provided to the council.

On the short-wave service alone, in the nine cities that we are serving there were over three-quarters of a million listeners. Some of these cities are at the forefront of Indian industrial development. They include cities like Bangalore, which is a high technology industry base within India; Chennai, which you probably know better by its former name of Madras; and of course Mumbai, which is the major commercial centre in India. Within those nine cities we knew we had an audience of 750,000. So, within the broader Indian nation, we conservatively say that there were over one million people listening to Radio Australia's Charting Australia program.

It was very encouraging for us that our penetration did not stop there. In 1995-96 Radio Australia achieved something that no other foreign broadcaster has achieved before: the Indian national broadcaster All India Radio agreed to rebroadcast Charting Australia programs on its local FM stations. Once again, we got enormous leverage from our 15-minute weekly program by going into literally millions of households. Millions of Indian middle class households had a knowledge and exposure to Australian current affairs which was simply not available anywhere else.

On these radio broadcast stations, although they were initially only being broadcast in five cities—Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta and Bangalore—All India Radio also

agreed to deliver by satellite the program to any of its stations anywhere within India. I think at this point it is necessary to point out that radio is an enormous medium in India. When the discussion was first initiated about the future of Radio Australia I know that there were a number of people who made comments about the declining audience of short-wave radio, that short-wave radio was a declining medium. That of course is true, but as I have pointed out this program was actually going to FM radio in a wide range of places across India.

In addition to the rebroadcasting there was also the monthly transcription service provided by All India Radio. This gave us yet another record to be distributed to people that were interested in Australian affairs. I think you can see that for our \$65,000 we were getting enormous value. We considered it the best value that we could get in terms of public awareness. I think every member of the committee will realise that \$65,000 in a public awareness campaign does not go very far at all in Australia.

A number of very worthwhile things flowed from our support of this particular program. I also need to say that the council believed that part of the reason for the success was the outstanding quality of the broadcast. I will give an impression of some of the types of material that was broadcast, but the consistent high listenership I think was the result of this program being generally known as providing consistently high quality and great depth of reporting.

It was also known as the only program which provided balanced coverage of Australian current events. I think it is true to say that there is very little reporting of Australian affairs in India, so this would have been the dominant if not the only source of information about Australian cultural life, political life and society within India. Now that program is not going in there it really is very difficult to get other sources of material published for Indian audiences. We do have, as part of our media program, another component: a journalists' exchange in which we have middle ranking journalists from both countries getting placements in counterpart media organisations and newspapers. By this means we hope to get a wider range of reporting on each other's political and economic affairs. That program is very much a question of how many of such people one can exchange each year and where they end up, whereas the Radio Australia thing was a mass program.

That really sums up the reasons why we found in the Australia-India Council that the Radio Australia program was a very important vehicle to get the Australian voice into India. It is timely that you should be having this hearing in this particular week because, as you probably know, today is the 50th anniversary of independence for Pakistan. In India that date is celebrated on the other side of midnight, which is tomorrow.

There has been a lot of reporting within Australia of the 50th anniversary of Indian independence. I noticed that on every current affairs program every day there is a story about Indian independence and what is happening there; in fact, I am checking the Indian

dailies each day to see whether there is any reporting about what is happening in Australia within the Indian media, and there is virtually nothing. So I think we are going to get back to the days where if there is not a cricket test being played they are not going to find out about what is happening in Australia. That would be a great pity.

I would just like to give you an impression of some of the stories that have been covered in this program in the three years that it has been running. I would like to preface that by saying that for some time the Australia-India Council has been promulgating information about the target areas that have been identified for Australia-India collaboration. Those have been identified in consultation with our counterpart organisations as well as with Indian industry organisations. The areas that have been identified are food processing; minerals processing; dry land farming; environmental management and technology; alternative dispute resolution, particularly in commercial jurisdictions; and infrastructure.

Just to indicate how some of those notch in with stories that have been run, just to underline the point: every story the Charting Australia program has done has been about the bilateral relationship. I just had a look at some of the recent stories that they had run. They ran a very interesting item on the Australian wine industry, something about which Indians knew virtually nothing, and an item on opportunities in the mining industry, where very senior mining industry people on both sides were interviewed. They interviewed the Chair of the International Wool Secretariat. They also ran a story on surviving drought in New South Wales—Mr Chairman, I believe you know something about that yourself—and interviewed the Chairman of the New South Wales Farmers Association.

These are stories in which Indian people have a great interest because they encounter a similar sort of climatic event, so lessons about how to survive it are very valuable to them. A very good story was run on the Ord River scheme—the environmental management of the Ord River scheme. On the Australian society side there has been massive reporting about the Australian Republican Movement. There have been stories about the stolen generation, euthanasia, alcohol education, ATV broadcasting in Asia and the Arafura Games, which is a Northern Territory specialty. Our local director of the games was interviewed and that is always very good. Immense coverage has been given to Northern Territory events. The Living With Alcohol program, a community alcohol project, was actually run here. The interviewee was from the Northern Territory. World heritage listing for Uluru was also covered.

This type of story just shows a broad spectrum of Australian life and society. The things that are of particular interest in these things are: how to manage an agricultural sector, dealings with indigenous people and the natural landscape. Indians have an immense fascination with the natural landscape of Australia. The audience reaction to these stories has been heart warming. The mailbag of Charting Australia from some of these stories was very encouraging. It is hard to believe the numbers sometimes. India is just a huge country and anything you do there will reach a lot of people by Australian standards.

We were convinced that the range of stories being presented were really about our target expertise and about the relationship. I hope that something can be retrieved from this situation. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much indeed Ms D’Rozario. We are all fairly concerned about the shutdown but we find it very difficult to measure just how many people in fact listen and whether there is new technology which is taking over from short wave. The Radio Australia transmitter as I understand it essentially is sending in short wave signals which to my recollection tend to be a bit fluctuating and thereby may not be as sure as FM or AM signals. The suggestion has been that through satellite transmission other forms of reception are far better, more readily available and there is not the value in retaining the old technology. I know Radio Australia has given us numbers and you talk about correspondence—and the mailbag has always been some measure—but we really would like to try and get a hand on how many people listen, do they have access to other forms of transmission, and is there reason to maintain the present transmissions for another 10 or 20 years. That is the area that I have found particularly difficult to understand. You say you have had a lot of letters since the transmissions stopped. Have you had any means of determining how many people no longer hear it and want to hear it?

**Ms D’Rozario**—As I mentioned, from the short wave signal conservatively over 1 million people were receiving the program.

**CHAIR**—When was that?

**Ms D’Rozario**—That was just before closure. These figures I think were provided to us in December last year.

**CHAIR**—That is from Radio Australia?

**Ms D’Rozario**—Yes. Just to put that in perspective, we should look at what other media this class of person might have access to. I would like to just draw a comparison using something like the *Indian Express*. The *Indian Express* is a major English language daily. There are dozens of newspapers in India. There are about 10 or 12 major English language dailies and they are all targeting the same group of people. They are targeting English-knowing middle class people. The *Indian Express* has a readership of 2 million people, which does not sound like a lot in India but it has 12 or 13 daily competitors. You have the *Business Standard*, you have the *Times of India*, you have the *Hindu*, you have the *Deccan Herald*, and you have the *Pioneer*. All of these are very well known—some of them are venerable newspapers. So the *Indian Express*, and I think some of the others that I mentioned would have a similar readership, has about 2 million people.

**CHAIR**—A million people is quite a lot.

**Ms D’Rozario**—Radio Australia had an enormous reach but only on the FM

signalling. Again, there are hundreds of radio stations and they cater to all types of demography. A number of the radio stations are very much urban stations; we do not get them in the rural areas and we have to constantly remind people that the urban population of India is only about 27 per cent so the other 73 per cent are getting another type of signal altogether.

Because of the degree of urbanisation and the conglomeration of urban populations we are still reaching a lot of people who are directly involved in economic activities. So as to whether there are listeners out there, there definitely are—and listeners particularly interested in Australia. That was really their only source; the only other alternative would be the BBC, which sometimes ran a story about Australia.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Would that one million English language listeners that you have identified only listen to Radio Australia or would they have a smorgasbord of say the ABC, Voice of America and others? I also wonder what reach the BBC and Voice of America or someone else like that would have into India? You have identified one million listening to Radio Australia, and I think yesterday someone told us that the BBC was the largest. I am particularly interested in whether that one million exclusively listen to Radio Australia for the English component or whether Radio Australia is one item on a smorgasbord from which they choose?

**Ms D'Rozario**—I think it is true to say that they are listening to other services as well. The short wave radio community tends to listen across a number of services, so the people that listen to Radio Australia would very likely also listen to the BBC Overseas Service.

**CHAIR**—You mentioned that you had this contract with the renegotiations with the FM stations. Did they take the signal for the FM signal?

**Ms D'Rozario**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Or did you send over the tapes?

**Ms D'Rozario**—They re-broadcast the tapes. For the additional cost of forwarding the tapes they were picking up the program and re-broadcasting it.

**CHAIR**—Are you still forwarding the tapes?

**Ms D'Rozario**—I am not at all certain.

**CHAIR**—It just seems to me that that was one thing we could do. Generally our committee is quite concerned to get it reopened but there is a problem which I acknowledge and that is that technology is changing. Whatever we do we have got to get a signal back into India and into other countries in our region. As far as I am concerned

that is a sine qua non, but what is important is that you have got to have a look at new technology and if we can go to new technology, although we might not like it, it might be better to move away from the short wave. I understand that, probably in the villages, short wave is the only form of reception. But I would have thought the English speaking Indians would be more likely to be middle class than they were to be the people in the villages. For that reason they would be more likely to have access to new technology and that is why I wondered whether we would not be better if we tried to put the money into satellite transmission or some other form of signal. Have you any views on that?

**Ms D'Rozario**—I am not a communications expert but I can certainly understand that short wave radio is a declining medium—and that is, I think, proven—and satellite technology is the favoured method of reaching larger audiences. So certainly one has to go with current technology. I do not think our position here is about nostalgia for short wave radio as such but about broadcasting by any means. ATV did not actually get into India until very late in the piece and its footprint was such that really it only got into the southern part of India—it was just outside the eastern boundaries. So we did not really have any exposure from that particular delivery at all. If there are satellite broadcasts or other methods of broadcast that would be excellent but so far there is nothing on the horizon that can actually fill this void which has been left.

**CHAIR**—Have you used ATV at all?

**Ms D'Rozario**—We have not used ATV at all, no.

**CHAIR**—Does ATV transmit into India?

**Ms D'Rozario**—No. The footprint was just outside the eastern boundary and on the southern boundary it only just covered it, so a very small part of India was covered by ATV.

**Mr HOLLIS**—In your view, is Australia better known in India or is India better known in Australia—or are we in mutual ignorance of each other?

**Ms D'Rozario**—I think that by and large there is still a great lack of understanding of each other. Some commentators say—it depends on what particular group you are speaking to—that Indians are more knowledgeable about Australia than Australians are about India. I think Justice Michael Kirby, another visitor whom we sponsored to visit India, made the point that when he spoke at universities Indian law students knew the Australian Constitution better than Australian law students. So there are things of that nature, but then again there is a devoted readership of Australian literature within India, people that read Australian authors. You would be hard pressed to find a counterpart group in Australia that reads Indian authors, who write in English of course.

So I think there is still a great lack of understanding. Although we are trying to change attitudes it is still very much the case that Australians, when they think about

India, usually conjure up an image of abject poverty and lack of any sort of connection with economic development. That of course is a totally out-dated image. I think most international analysts now concur that within five years India will have the fourth largest economy in the world, after China, the US and Japan. At the moment it is the seventh largest economy but I do not think that is known to very many Australians.

**Mr HOLLIS**—We had the education department before us last week. They produced figures showing the very high increase of Indian students in Australia over the last 10 years or something. It went from something like 14 in one year to 4,000—an incredible increase, so you probably are right in that there must be a growing awareness there of Australia.

**Ms D’Rozario**—I think that has arisen because some of the universities have been very aggressively marketing their courses to Indian students.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I was personally surprised that Australia had more students from India studying here than say the UK had. It was quite remarkable. I think the question came up about the numbers, where Australia rated, and they said it was second after the United States and that in recent years more students from India were studying here than in the United Kingdom.

**Ms D’Rozario**—I think for a number of years the education sector, particularly tertiary education, was being very heavily sold in India. The basis of that was there were not the problems with English that there were with the languages in some other countries, and Indian students find Australia a very attractive option for tertiary study because of the high regard in which Australian universities are held.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Some of us are a little disturbed because not only in the education field but also in a field that you mentioned earlier, the health or medical field, it seemed to us that India was being seen as a potential market from an economic point of view rather than as an opportunity for sharing. I think one of the witnesses who came before us made this point very much in regard to universities. The witness was making the point that it was a great pity that, as far as the tertiary education sector went, too many Australian universities were only seeing India as a potential market from which it can bring students to study rather than as an opportunity for sharing or a collaborative effort between research departments and a sharing of expertise between say Indian universities or Indian academics and Australian academics.

**Ms D’Rozario**—I think it is certainly true that India is seen as just an enormous emerging market for all manner of goods and services. In recent months the Indian Government has taken steps to restrict recruitment of students to Australia for a variety of reasons but one of the reasons was the selling of places, if you want to put it like that, where it was just becoming a numbers game. There are a number of sectors which see India as just a huge consumer market to be satisfied, with this insatiable trend towards



higher consumerism and a very high-growth middle class sector which is moving towards greater material wealth.

Now that liberalisation is in full swing a number of companies are wanting to enter for this reason alone. From our point of view, the Australia-India Council prefers collaborative arrangements because, first, we are a public authority but, secondly, our major interest is to produce some long-lasting links which are not predatory. They have to be collaborative because we simply would not get the acceptance of our programs on either side if they were only to the benefit of one party. The liberalisation program has encouraged the entry of some of the very big multi-national firms, and that is what they are good at—finding new markets.

**CHAIR**—We were told the other day that there are some student exchanges between India and the Northern Territory; do you know anything about that?

**Ms D’Rozario**—I think one of the community organisations, Rotary International, runs a student exchange.

**CHAIR**—Particularly with the Northern Territory?

**Ms D’Rozario**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—I just wondered whether you knew anything about Rotary’s particular exchange program. I do not know whether it is at the secondary level or tertiary level, but we have had evidence that there were some particular links between Northern Territory schools and India. Do you know anything about it all?

**Ms D’Rozario**—I know of that program but I do not know how many participants there are.

**CHAIR**—Is it a Northern Territory schools or education department program?

**Ms D’Rozario**—I actually thought it was individual schools that linked up with other schools. It could be coordinated by the Department of Education; I am afraid I am not very familiar with the details of that. We have had some Northern Territory participation in the teacher education program. There is a program that is run through the Australian Education Foundation which we also contribute to. They take teachers and develop curricula for Indian studies within secondary schools, and we have had a few Northern Territory participants in that.

**Mr DONDAS**—The Australia-India Council obviously funded part of the costs for Charting Australia. Have you any idea how much it was?

**Ms D’Rozario**—It was \$65,000 a year for the past three years.

**Mr DONDAS**—And that was for transmission costs, re-broadcasting, the whole lot?

**Ms D'Rozario**—I think it was approximately half of the amount for putting that entire program together, yes.

**CHAIR**—How much time did Charting Australia take? Was that the whole of the Indian program or only part?

**Ms D'Rozario**—Charting Australia was one of two.

**CHAIR**—That you funded?

**Ms D'Rozario**—We funded Charting Australia.

**CHAIR**—So the \$65,000 went to Charting Australia?

**Ms D'Rozario**—That is correct, yes. And the reason for that, Mr Chairman, as I say, is that it was a purpose designed program.

**CHAIR**—We have been given a list of the other program contents but I was not too sure how much of that was also funded by you.

**Ms D'Rozario**—Just Charting Australia.

**Mr DONDAS**—Since transmission moved to Shepparton in the last couple of months, and obviously the transmission signal from Shepparton is weak, is it getting to any part of India at all in any sense? With the Cox Peninsula transmitter, programs have been transmitted into certain areas of India, been picked up by the local radio station and, as you said, been re-broadcast to either FM or AM stations. Even if the link may be too weak for normal people out in the remote areas or in isolated areas of India, why wouldn't the local radio station be able pick up a weak link and re-transmit it on a stronger wavelength?

**Ms D'Rozario**—I really do not know the answer to that. I do not personally know what has happened since 30 June because I have not actually been to India since 30 June.

**CHAIR**—When is your next Australia-India Council meeting?

**Ms D'Rozario**—On 5 September.

**CHAIR**—Nick's question might be something that you could pursue with them. Will you also pursue with them these negotiations that you had with the FM stations in India. Do they mean that you could still transmit the program direct to them even though

it was not broadcast on Radio Australia? Perhaps you could either ask Mr Powys or get somebody to let us know because it is going to be quite material to what we might be able to do to try and look at the future.

**Ms D'Rozario**—I think, Mr Chairman, that the program is not made any more specifically because of the funding for it. That part of Radio Australia activities was reduced or—

**CHAIR**—Withdrawn?

**Ms D'Rozario**—Withdrawn completely. Charting Australia no longer exists as a program. So we would have to re-activate it and then put it in in some other way and we would have to find someone who would—

**CHAIR**—Prepare it?

**Ms D'Rozario**—Yes, a broadcast partner to do that. I think one of the reasons why there was the agreement with All India Radio was the regard for Radio Australia. All India Radio is the Indian Government national station so I am not sure they would be as amenable as somebody else.

**Mr DONDAS**—If the transmission signal, even though it may be weak, cannot be picked up and cannot be re-broadcast, it just gives us another added argument. I would like to see Radio Australia, through Cox Peninsula, reopened. But if some technical person says they can pick it up on a weak signal and they can re-broadcast it on the local FM or AM station, then we still do not need the Cox Peninsula transmitter. I am looking for someone to say no, the link is so weak that it cannot be done. If it is costing us \$65,000 a year, how much would it cost the Australia-India Council to put somebody there to actually do their own program from India through the other broadcasting stations that you are already talking about using at Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta and Bangalore. Could you get a person on site in India to coordinate some program to go through those areas—\$65,000 is a lot of money in Australian terms but it might not necessarily be a lot of money in India.

**CHAIR**—But at the same time you will also have that \$65,000 now which you are not spending?

**Ms D'Rozario**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—And you will be presumably looking at some other way by which you can, to a degree, pick up that part of your first point, which you said was printed and electronic, which was your priority, so presumably you will need to look at some way to allocate it.

**Ms D'Rozario**—Yes and, as I mentioned, one of the reasons why this was a program we were funding is the immense dollar leverage we were getting out of it. Certainly we now have those funds for other purposes. But we would have to find someone as well-credentialed to prepare the program in the method that Mr Dondas suggests and they would then possibly have to negotiate some kind of licence arrangements for re-broadcasting.

**CHAIR**—But as I understand it, Radio Australia continues and, while that particular transmission cannot continue, you might still be able to get Radio Australia to do the program. They may well be prepared to do it because it might be a way by which they can maintain some presence in some other way. So I think it is worthwhile your looking at it. Presumably, if you have had negotiations before with Radio Australia, they will have had to contact you and tell you what is happening about Charting Australia.

**Ms D'Rozario**—I think it is certainly worth discussing what could be done and who might still be able to do it and what facilities are still on the ground, yes.

**CHAIR**—As a deputy chair of the Australia-India Council and living in the Territory, do you personally have much commercial link or other trade link or cultural link with India? Is there a link between the Northern Territory and India that is worth noting?

**Ms D'Rozario**—Yes there is, Mr Chairman. I have very extensive links with India. But we also have quite a large resident population of Indian people living in the Territory and almost all of them maintain their links with India and are still very frequent visitors there. It is very pleasing to note that two of our Indian community members have been honoured in the Australia Day honours and so on. I think we have actually the only Indian born people who have been honoured in this way. Just in the last list there was one of our people and about 10 years ago one of our other Indian residents was rewarded for her contribution to social and community affairs in the Territory. All of these people are still very communicant with their original places in India.

**CHAIR**—Do you do that individually or collectively? Is there an active group of Indian residents of the Northern Territory who maintain a dialogue or are you just social friends, virtually, because of your common origins?

**Ms D'Rozario**—There is no commercial group. We have an Indian Society here and we also have a Hindu Society in the Territory. But the maintenance of continuing links is very much an individual thing.

**CHAIR**—I thank you very much for that. As you would gather, we are pretty sympathetic to reopening Cox Peninsula. We will find some way to do something about it. It just seemed to us that for that reason it would be helpful if you could let us know of the results of that September meeting of the Australia-India Council, but perhaps it might be easier if you get Mr Powys, who is in Canberra, to formally advise us because we will not

be finishing our submission by then. But if you have any other evidence or you have any other views that you would wish to forward to us then please feel free to do so. We are hoping to have our paper ready by the end of the year. Whether we get that done and where we get to depends on a number of circumstances. There will of course be a draft of your *Hansard* record available and it will be sent to you and if you wish to correct any factual errors in it then by all means do so. Can I just finally thank you very much for your evidence and for attending here today and I hope we can do something to reopen Charting Australia, because it sounds to me as though it is a very worthwhile effort.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Dondas):

That this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

**Subcommittee adjourned at 3.00 p.m.**