

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCIS, Kolkata.

India – Australia Bilateral Relations

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Embassy Profile Report for 06.08.2025 depicting the Embassy of Australia.
2. The India-Australia bilateral relationship is underpinned by shared values of a pluralistic, Westminster-style democracies, Commonwealth traditions, expanding economic engagement and increasing high level interaction. The longstanding people-to-people ties, ever increasing Indian students coming to Australia for higher education, growing tourism, and sporting links, especially Cricket and Hockey, have played a significant role in further strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. In recent years, India-Australia relationship has charted a whole new trajectory of transformational growth. Bilateral cooperation has seen exponential growth in existing frameworks of cooperation and further expanded across a wide spectrum of new areas opening up new possibilities, both at bilateral as well as global level.
3. Australia and India upgraded bilateral relationship from ‘Strategic Partnership’ in 2009 to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020. Over the years, an array of institutional mechanism has been put in place to promote bilateral co-operation. Bilateral mechanisms include high level visits, Annual Meetings of Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers’ Framework Dialogue, 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers’ Dialogue, Joint Trade & Commerce Ministerial Commission, Defence Policy Talks, Australia-India Education Council, Defence Services Staff Talks, Energy Dialogue, JWG on different issues etc.
4. India and Australia also co-operate in various multilateral fora. Australia supports India’s candidature in an expanded UN Security Council. Both India and Australia are members of the Commonwealth, IORA, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development, International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and have participated in the East Asia Summits. Both countries have also been cooperating as members of the Five Interested Parties (FIP) in the WTO context. Australia supports India’s membership in the APEC.
5. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Hon. Scott Morrison, former Prime Minister of Australia held virtual meeting on 21 March 2022. A Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of the meeting. The list of outcomes and documents announced/signed include:
 - a) Establishment of Annual Summit between India and Australia;
 - b) Establishment of General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers’ Exchange programme;
 - c) Return of 29 arte facts by Government of Australia;
 - d) MoU on Co-Investment in Australian Critical Minerals Projects between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO), Australia;
 - e) Letter of Intent regarding Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement;

- f) Letter of Arrangement between India and Australia for Educational Qualifications Recognition;
- g) MoU for cooperation and collaboration on broadcasting between Prasar Bharati, India and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia;
- h) Matching funds as Australia of the amount of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) and;
- i) Matching funds as Australia of the amount of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Visit of PM Narendra Modi to Australia: Hon. PM Narendra Modi visited Sydney on 22-24 May 2023. During the visit, both PMs held the bilateral meeting on 24 May, exactly 1 year after their first meeting in Tokyo in 2022 on the sidelines of Quad Leaders' Summit. This was the 6th meeting at the level of PMs since Hon. PM Albanese assumed office in May 2022 and came just 2 months after the State visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India in March 2023. The outcomes of the meeting included signing/exchange of Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA) and Terms of Reference of Taskforce on Green Hydrogen, announcement to open a new Consulate General of India in Brisbane and opening of Australian Consulate General in Bengaluru.

Quad Leaders' Summit: The first-ever Quad Leaders' Virtual Summit held on 12 March 2021 saw the participation of Prime Ministers of India, Australia, Japan and President of USA. Hon. PM Modi participated in the first in-person Quad Leaders' Summit in Washington D.C on 24 September 2021. Prime Ministers of India, Australia, Japan and USA met in Tokyo for the Quad Leaders' Summit on 24 May 2022 and again at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Hiroshima on 20 May 2023.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

6. India is Australia's sixth largest trading partner. As a trading country partner of India, and as per latest compiled and available statistics with DGCI&S, India's exports to Australia during 2024-25 was recorded at 8.58 billion USD and India's imports from Australia during the same reference period was 15.53 billion USD. India's imports from Australia were significantly high in 2022-23. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are as under.

Export-Import statistics from 2020-21 to 2024-25

(USD Billion)			
Year	Total Trade	Import	Export
2020-21	12.29	8.25	4.04
2021-22	25.04	16.76	8.28
2022-23	25.96	19.01	6.95
2023-24	24.10	16.16	7.94
2024-25	24.11	15.53	8.58

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

7. India's main exports to Australia are refined petroleum, medicaments (incl. veterinary), pearls & gems, jewellery, made-up textile articles, while India's major imports are coal, confidential items of trade, copper ores & concentrates, natural gas, non-ferrous waste & scrap, ferrous waste & scrap and education related services.

8. The India-Australia economic relationship has grown significantly in recent years. As part of its efforts to develop strong economic relationship with India, the Australian Government commissioned the India Economic Strategy to 2035 to define a path way for Australia to unlock opportunities offered by Indian Economic growth. The paper was released in July 2018. An update to the India Economic Strategy was released in April 2022. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal released the CII Australia Economic Strategy Report in December 2020. The report gives a macro-overview of Australia, reviews Australia's business environment, highlights market opportunities in Australia for Indian products and delineates investment and cooperation opportunities in 12 focused sectors and 8 emerging sectors.

9. The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("IndAus ECTA") was signed on 2nd April, 2022 by CIM Hon. Shri Piyush Goyal and former Australian Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan in a virtual ceremony, in the presence of PM Modi and former PM Hon. Scott Morrison. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal visited Australia from 5-8 April 2022 after the signing of ECTA. The visit included engagements with Trade Minister Hon. Dan Tehan, Hon. Jason Wood, and Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Alex Hawke, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Roger Cook, then Deputy Premier of Western Australia and Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Science and Hon. Madeleine King, then Shadow Trade Minister. CIM also held meetings with Australian business & CEOs and the Indian community in Australia. Australian Parliament has ratified the agreement on 22nd November 2022 and entered into force from 29th December 2022. Legislation on DTAA, alongside ECTA passed in Australian Parliament and came into effect with the Entry into Force of ECTA. The Indian IT companies will not be double taxed with effect from the financial year 2023-24. Both sides are also engaged in negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

10. India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission: India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was established in 1989 to enable interaction at a government and business level on a range of trade and investment related issues. JMC meetings are held regularly. Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) Shri Piyush Goyal and former Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan co-chaired the 17th India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission meeting in New Delhi on 30th September 2021. The 18th India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was held on 11st March 2023 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by CIM Shri Piyush Goyal and Hon. Minister for Trade and Tourism Don Farrell.

11. India-Australia CEO Forum is a mechanism for business from both nations to engage directly on ways to build the bilateral trade and investment relationship (It was established in 2011 and revitalised in November 2014). The Forum includes heads of Indian and Australian business from a broad range of sectors, including energy and resources, agribusiness, financial sector, telecommunications, IT, education and pharmaceuticals. The last meeting (CEO Dialogue) was held in Sydney in November 2018 during the visit of Hon. President of India to Australia. CIM launched the India-Australia Business Champions with then Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan on 27th September 2021. The CEO Forum was co-chaired by CIM Shri Piyush Goyal and Hon. Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism on 9th March 2023 in Mumbai, during the visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India.

Various Dialogue Mechanisms

➤ Various institutional dialogue mechanisms include Annual Meetings of Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, Joint Trade & Commerce Ministerial Commission, India- Australia '2+2' Foreign Secretaries and Defence Secretaries Dialogue, Defence Policy Talks, Australia-India

Education Council, Defence Services Staff Talks, Energy Dialogue, India- Australia-Japan Trilateral Dialogue, India-Australia-Indonesia Trilateral Dialogue, India-France- Australia Trilateral Dialogue, India-Australia Bilateral Dialogue on Global Cyber Issues, India- Australia Maritime Dialogue, India-Australia Economic Policy Dialogue, India-Australia Dialogue on Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Export Control as well as Joint Working Groups on Tourism, Counter-Terrorism, Water Resources, Agriculture, Skill Development etc.

Defence Cooperation

During PM Modi's visit to Australia in November 2014, both sides decided to extend defence cooperation to cover research, development and industry engagement and agreed to hold regular meetings at the level of the Defence Minister, conduct regular maritime exercises and convene regular service-to-service talks. CNS Admiral RK Dhowan signed a Technical Agreement on White Shipping Information Exchange during his visit to Australia in October 2015.

The 11th IAF-RAAF Staff Talks was held in Australia in May 2022. The 15th Naval Talks were held on 1-3 May 2023 in Australia. Defence Policy Talks were held in Canberra on 24th July 2023. The Army-to-Army Staff Talks was held in Perth from 4-6 October 2023. 3rd India-Australia JWG meeting on Research, Industry and Materiel Cooperation was held in New Delhi on 18 August 2023. India participated at Sea Power Conference 2022, Air & Space Power Conference 2022, and Army Chief Symposium. Chief of Naval Staff visited Australia in September 2022. Chief of Army Staff visited Australia on 3-7 April 2023. Australia's Chief of Army visited India from 24-27 September 2023.

Establishment of General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme was announced during Virtual meeting in March 2022 under which 15 Australian Defence Force officers joined 15 Indian Defence Force personnel for the first iteration of the program in March 2023 in India. India participated in the 2021 and 2023 edition of EX TALISMAN SABRE as Observers. Australia hosted Exercise MALABAR from 10-22 August 2023 in which a P-8I aircraft participated. AUSINDEX—the Navy exercise, was held in Sydney on 21-22 August 2023. AP-8I maritime patrol aircraft was deployed to Darwin in April 2022 and conducted coordinated exercises with a Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon aircraft. Reciprocal deployment of Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon aircraft was done in Goa in June 2022 and in Chennai in June-July 2023. Indian P8I participated for the first time in the multinational Kakadu exercise held in Darwin in September 2022. AP-8I maritime patrol aircraft participated in the coordinated operations with RAAF strengthening Maritime Domain Awareness in Darwin on 7-15 April 2023. INS Vagir, India's Scorpene submarine, on its extended range deployment visited Australia from 21-28 August 2023 and participated in various exercises with Royal Australian Navy.

Agriculture, Science & Technology

- MoU on Technical Cooperation for Australia-India Water Security Initiative (AIWASI) was approved by Union Cabinet in June 2022.

- Australia has given market access for export of pomegranate fruits (8 September 2020) and pomegranate arils in July 2022. During the 1st Annual Summit on 10 March 2023, both PMs welcomed the finalization of market access for Australian Hass avocados to India and Indian okra to Australia.
- On 10th December 2021, ISRO and ASA signed the Implementing Arrangement (IA) on "Cooperation on establishing and operating transportable Telemetry terminals in Cocos Island, Australia for the Human Space Flight Mission". Mr. Enrico Palermo, Head of ASA visited India on 4-10 September 2022 and participated at Space Expo in Bengaluru.
- AIM (Atal Innovation Mission), NITI Ayog in association with CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) launched the I-ACE hackathon on 16th October 2020 on virtual mode. Letter of Intent between Atal Innovation Mission and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for Furthering Cooperation in Innovation was signed during the 1st India-Australia Annual Summit on 10th March 2023.

Resources & Energy Security

- Pursuant to the MoU on cooperation in the field of mining and processing of Critical and Strategic minerals concluded during the Leaders' virtual meeting in June 2020, the first meeting of the JWG was held virtually on 26th November 2020. The Fourth India-Australia Energy Dialogue was held virtually on 15th February 2022 and was chaired by Shri Raj Kumar Singh, Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy and Mr. Angus Taylor, Hon. Minister for Industry, Energy and Emission Reduction. Both Ministers signed a Letter of Intent on New and Renewable Energy Technology where in both sides committed to work together on reducing the cost of ultra-low-cost solar and clean hydrogen.
- During the 1st India-Australia Annual Summit on 10th March 2023, the Terms of Reference for India-Australia Solar Taskforce were announced. A Renewable Energy Partnership was also announced. The Terms of Reference for India-Australia Green Hydrogen Task Force was signed on 23rd May 2023 during the visit of Hon. PM Modi to Sydney.

Critical Minerals

- During the Leaders' virtual meeting held on 21st March 2022, an MOU on Co-Investment in Australian Critical Minerals Projects was signed between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd.(KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO) Australia. To advance cooperation in critical minerals, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines of India, Shri Pralhad Joshi visited Australia on 3-8 July 2022 and held meeting with Hon. Madeleine King, Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia and interacted with key businesses. The 3rd JWG on cooperation in the field of Mining and processing of Critical & Strategic Minerals was held on the sidelines of International Mining and Resources Conference & Expo (IMARC) on 1st November 2022 in Sydney.

Education, Sports, Art & Culture

- The number of Indian students currently enrolled for studying in Australia is estimated at around 118,869 (July 2023), making Indian students the second largest cohort of foreign students in Australia. Under the New Colombo Plan of Australian Government, Australian undergraduates have studied and completed internships in India.

- Pursuant to the signing of the new MOU on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training, the Joint Working Group Meeting between India (Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) and Australia (Dept. of Education, Skills, and Employment) was held virtually on 26th November 2020.
- Australia-India Education Council meeting: Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship visited Australia during 21-24 August 2022 and co-chaired the 6th meeting of Australia-India Education Council (AIEC) with Hon. Jason Clare, Minister for Education of Australia. It was decided to rename AIEC as Australia- India Education and Skills Council (AIESC). Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Educational Qualifications was signed on 2nd March 2023 during the visit of Hon. Minister for Education Jason Clare to India.
- The Ministry of Ayush announced setting up of Ayurveda Academic Chair based at Western Sydney University's NICM Health Research Institute on 22nd November 2022 and Dr. Rajagopala S., Associate Professor & Head (Department of Kaumarabhritya) All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi was selected for the post of Academic Chair in the University.
- A MoU on Cooperation in Sports was signed during visit of former PM Turnbull to India in April 2017 and was renewed during the visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India in March 2023, along with signing of the India-Australia Audio-Visual Co-production Agreement. A MoU in the field of Tourism was signed between the two countries during the visit of PM Modi to Australia in November 2014 and was renewed in February 2022.

Indian Community in Australia

The Indian community in Australia continues to grow in importance, with the population of about 9.76,000 (Census 2021). After England, India is the second largest migrant group in Australia. There is a constant flow of students and tourists from India. The growing significance of the community is reflected in the large-scale celebration of Indian festivals in Australia.

Source: www.mea.gov.in