



2nd meeting of the Australia-India Education and Skills Council

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

between

the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and
Workplace Relations of the Government of Australia

and

the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Skill Development and
Entrepreneurship of the Government of India

24 October 2024

Sydney, Australia

1. The Honourable Jason Clare, Minister for Education, and the Honourable Andrew Giles, Minister for Skills and Training, Government of Australia and the Honourable Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Education, Government of India, chaired the second meeting of the **Australia India Education and Skills Council (AIESC)** in Sydney, Australia on 24 October 2024.
2. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the AIESC as the primary bilateral dialogue between Australia and India on education, skills and research.
3. The Ministers recognised that education and skill development are a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship between Australia and India and that it fosters lasting connections between our people, institutions, and nations. Ministers welcomed further strengthening of education, skills and research cooperation as befits the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** between our two nations.
4. Ministers noted the importance of education and skills in building economic prosperity for Australia and India. Ministers acknowledged **A Partnership for the Future: Australia's Education Strategy for India**, released alongside the inaugural meeting of the AIESC in

Gandhinagar, India, and its goals for deepening mutual benefits through education and research partnerships.

5. Ministers noted India's **National Education Policy 2020**, which encourages internationalisation of education and provides opportunities for Indian and Australian educational institutions to collaborate.
6. Reflecting this strategic context, the Ministers agreed to focus AIESC discussions on **education and skills as a catalyst for economic growth** by building future workforces. This includes research workforces, as enablers of innovation and creators of knowledge. Ministers further reflected that education and skills will equip our people and our nations to meet the challenges of the future and that bilateral cooperation should include strategic engagement across the three sectors of schools, skills and higher education.
7. Ministers also considered the progress since the last meeting of AIESC and the continued strengthening of cooperation in education, skills and research between Australia and India, including through institutional partnerships.

FORECASTING FUTURE EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS FOR WORKFORCES

8. Ministers reflected on the mutual opportunity to partner in educating and skilling students to meet current and future workforce needs. To enable this, Ministers agreed to strengthen education and skills partnerships to deliver solutions to workforce needs in both India and Australia, including through international best-practice and standards in priority areas agreed by both countries.
9. Ministers discussed the importance of identifying critical skills shortages and welcomed **Jobs and Skills Australia's** further collaboration with **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)** on forecasting labour market and qualification needs to inform future education and skills partnerships.
10. Ministers recognised that a skilled workforce, particularly in 21st century future skills, green skills, artificial intelligence and robotics is key to fostering economic development. Ministers agreed that there is potential for both countries to benefit from sharing information about approaches to defining job roles and developing qualifications to support **expansion of skilled workforces** in these areas.
11. Ministers noted the progress in the education and skills cooperation in the agriculture sector, through the recently-concluded **Developing Critical Skills Courses in India** project which trained Indian agricultural workers in emerging technology-enabled job roles. The project introduced 5 new Qualification Packages and 20 National Occupational Standards for the agriculture sector. The Ministers asked officials to continue work to identify ways

of expanding delivery of these courses in India. Ministers also agreed to apply this model in other sectors and committed to design and develop critical skill courses aligned to the industry needs in India and Australia for the rooftop solar sector.

12. Ministers noted the upcoming implementation of **Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES)** in December 2024 and the likely high demand of the program from recent graduates and early career professionals. The opportunity for mutually beneficial skills and knowledge transfer between Australia and India in the sectors of identified demand has an exciting future.
13. Ministers agreed on the importance of improving employability for graduates. To achieve this, Ministers institutions to partner with industry to deliver 21st century skills. Ministers agreed that the **Australia-India CEO Forum** is a valuable grouping for providing advice on models of industry-academic partnerships, work-integrated learning, and internship opportunities including practical placements. The Forum's Education Joint Working Group identified five areas to leverage opportunities in the education sector to support business in both Australia and India – (a) internationalization and flexibility of curriculum (b) driving industry-education partnerships for global employability between Australia and India (c) strengthening research collaborations with industry to achieve economic outcomes to benefit Australia and India (d) mutual recognition (e) two-way mobility of students and researchers.
14. In developing future workforces, both Ministers recognised the benefits of quality early childhood care and education. They agreed to collaborate in teacher preparation and curriculum development by undertaking a comparison of the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education early childhood care and education skill subject curriculum and the Australian Certificate III in Early Childhood and Care. This will create pathways to further study and grow India's workforce of **quality educators for early learning**.
15. Ministers agreed to cooperate in teaching standards by sharing best practices in understanding individual student needs, innovative approaches to curriculum and pedagogy, and creating supportive and inclusive learning environments. In undertaking this exchange, consideration will be given to the **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers** and India's **National Professional Standards for Teachers**.

BRIDGING SKILLS GAPS THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

16. Ministers noted that India's **National Education Policy 2020** has provided more opportunities for Australian universities and VET institutions in India and creates new opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships, including through the development of skilled workforces.

17. Ministers welcomed the continued efforts by Australian universities to establish campuses and partnerships in India, and noted the successful opening of Deakin University and the University of Wollongong in **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City** (GIFT City). Ministers encouraged more Australian universities to set up campuses in India. Ministers welcomed the decision by Innovative Research Universities (IRU) to strengthen research collaboration with Indian universities.
18. Ministers emphasised the importance of skills in building resilient, productive workforces that contribute to economic growth. Ministers agreed that identifying and promoting models for **transnational delivery of vocational education and training** (VET) was a priority. Exploration of potential institutional collaboration with skills universities in India will also be encouraged, as will opportunities to collaborate in skilling vocational trainers and facilitating exchange of trainers.
19. Ministers also noted the opportunities for cooperation offered by India's **National Credit Framework** (NCrF) that integrates academic, vocational, and experiential learning into a unified credit system and enables seamless mobility between various sectors of education and skilling, recognizing learning across formal and informal settings.
20. Ministers welcomed ongoing efforts to implement qualification recognition arrangements under the **Mechanism for the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications** between Australia and India, which facilitates mobility for further study and general employment. They noted the workshops between the Australian Government Department of Education and India's University Grants Commission on best practice qualifications methodology, and the forthcoming release of the Australian Government's updated India Country Education Profile, to further streamline recognition and institutional cooperation.
21. Ministers welcomed new institutional partnerships, including those that **leverage education technology**. Ministers noted the potential for Australia and India's education sectors to diversify education offerings and deliver benefits to students through collaboration. Ministers acknowledged the Australia-India InnovED Forum, delivered by the Australia India Institute, and its report on opportunities to enrich and expand institutional partnerships by leveraging quality assured and regulated EdTech capabilities for hybrid and online learning. Ministers agreed that technology-enabled learning is an important tool in the drive for universal access and increased educational attainment.
22. To support further innovation in education and skills, Ministers welcomed greater cooperation between regulators in both countries. This will include sharing information about regulatory approaches to artificial intelligence in our schools, skills and higher education sectors.

23. Ministers tasked higher education regulators – Australia’s **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)** and India’s **University Grants Commission (UGC)** - to engage in knowledge exchange on quality assurance and quality standards to build a shared understanding of the integrity of innovative models of learning. Ministers also welcomed ongoing engagement on transnational delivery between VET regulators – the **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)** and India’s **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)** – including further opportunities for collaboration and information sharing to support understanding between regulators of respective regulatory environments.
24. In recognition of the importance of a strong foundation for future educational success, Ministers tasked officials to progress cooperation in school education. Ministers noted potential areas of engagement such as professional development, collaborative research, exchange, curriculum and pedagogy.
25. Ministers highlighted the importance of partnerships between providers and industry and the value of embracing innovation in courses, curriculum and delivery modes to meet the scale of workforce needs. Ministers welcomed the work of the **Australia-India Education Collaboration Working Group** on opportunities for more institutional partnerships between Australian and Indian higher education institutions and leveraging this cooperation to enhance research collaboration. Ministers tasked the Working Group to engage with institutions on taking this agenda forward.
26. In recognition of the important role of sports in both nations and the priority accorded to bilateral cooperation in sports, Ministers noted the significant role **sports education and sports research** can play in nurturing skills for excellence, fostering leadership and innovation, developing organisation, administration and governance capacities in sports and promoting inclusivity. Ministers agreed to elevate cooperation in sports education and sports research and encouraged institutions to partner in building skills, capability and research excellence in sports.

COLLABORATING TO STRENGTHEN RESEARCH WORKFORCES

27. The Ministers acknowledged the strategic contributions of the **Australia India Institute** to the Australia-India education, skills and research relationship through projects, events and other research initiatives including the Australia India Women Researchers Exchange, which aims to encourage researchers in STEM fields from regional universities to build networks for research collaboration.
28. Ministers discussed that interdisciplinary and collaborative research between both countries is mutually beneficial. Ministers welcomed further engagement between

institutions to expand capabilities for **commercialisation of research** and translation of research into industry outcomes, including by creating enabling environments for start-ups and direct partnerships with industry. This will seek to leverage synergies in respective areas of strength of both countries, noting that the **Australian Strategic Policy Institute's** August 2024 report 'Critical Technology Tracker: The rewards of long-term research investment', highlights that India ranks in the top 5 countries in 45 out of 64 critical technologies.

29. Ministers noted the growing contribution of people-to-people links in strengthening bilateral education and research ties, particularly cooperation driven by academics of Indian origin who lead priority agendas and research in Australian universities. The Ministers agreed that a **Forum of Academics** of Indian origin in Australia will help connect these academics across institutions and disciplines. It will build connections in education and research between Australia and India, imparting greater impetus to Australia-India relationship. Ministers also noted the value of working together to expand research connections beyond the diaspora and individual relationships.
30. Ministers welcomed the breadth of funding schemes for joint Australia-India research, including in priority sectors. Ministers acknowledged the mutual benefits to be gained from researchers collaborating in areas of national priority. Both Ministers welcomed the twelve priority areas identified under India's **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)** for joint research programs: i) Advanced Materials; Rare-earth & Critical Minerals; ii) Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change; iii) Agri & Food Technologies; iv) Semiconductors; v) Advanced Computing (Supercomputing, AI, Quantum Computing); vi) Healthcare & MedTech; vii) Space and Defence; viii) Next-Gen Communications; ix) Disaster Management & Resilient Infrastructure; x) Blue Economy; xi) Smart Cities & Mobility; and xii) Manufacturing & Industry 4.0.
31. Ministers noted that during the three phases of SPARC, a total of 119 proposals were jointly made by Indian and Australian institutions. Ministers noted the synergies in research capabilities and encouraged institutions to explore Centres of Excellence in research fields of mutual priority.
32. Ministers noted the forthcoming Australia India Institute report on the scale and scope of collaborative research partnerships between Australia and India that contributes towards national, regional and global achievement of **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

IN CLOSING

33. Ministers underlined the significant opportunity for increased connection and engagement between policymakers and education institutions to support India's

implementation of its **National Education Policy 2020** and consider further opportunities to support both countries to address education, skills and research needs.

34. Ministers agreed that the next meeting of the Australia India Education and Skills Council be held in India in 2025. Further, Ministers agreed that the next meeting shall have a tripartite focus on **schools, skills and higher education**.