



LOWY INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY



Australia India
Institute

2014 AUSTRALIA-INDIA ROUNDTABLE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

Relations between India and Australia have reached a new maturity, based on deepening connections between their societies, economies, education sectors and policy establishments. This positions these two democracies well to work together to advance their interests in a shared Indo-Pacific region.

This was among key conclusions reached by participants at the Australia-India Roundtable, the leading informal dialogue between the two countries, when it met in Sydney and Melbourne from 3-6 February 2014.

The closed-door discussions involved a candid exchange of insights to produce a range of creative policy ideas for political leaders and officials to consider and pursue.

Priorities identified during the discussions included the need to:

- Federalise the bilateral relationship, encouraging dynamic states and cities in both countries to connect more with each other;
- Renew the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund, through which both governments have supported scientific innovation of long-term economic benefit;
- Build industry and research links so that Indian business can commercialise and scale-up research from Australian universities;
- Improve business and regulatory environments to enable cross-investments by the private sectors in the two countries, including in the entire energy chain;

- Become more ambitious in strengthening defence ties, including through advanced naval exercises, shared maritime surveillance, research in areas of mutual strategic interest and potential cooperation in advanced areas of defence technology;
- Cooperate on issues of cybersecurity and internet governance, and establish deeper institutional interactions in this sphere;
- Work closely together in forums like the G20, East Asia Summit, Indian Ocean Rim Association and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium;
- Foster champions for the bilateral relationship among leaders and opinion-makers in both countries, as well as encouraging the further growth of people-people relations;
- Foster strategic collaboration across research, learning and teaching, student and staff mobility between Australia's leading research intensive universities (Group of 8) and a select grouping of India's best universities;
- Work towards a bilateral visit to Australia by the next Indian Prime Minister at the time of the Brisbane G20 summit in November 2014.

More than 60 prominent figures from diplomacy, think tanks, higher education, politics, business and media took part in the dialogue, held at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney and the Australia India Institute in both Melbourne and Sydney, in partnership with Indian think tank the Observer Research Foundation.

The Indian delegation interacted with the Minister for Trade and Investment, Mr Andrew Robb MP, the Minister for Defence, Senator David Johnston, and the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Barry O'Farrell MP. Mr Robb delivered the keynote address, focusing on prospects to advance trade and investment ties, which have great potential to grow further. The delegation also met with Opposition Senator Lisa Singh, recent recipient of the Indian Government's Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award, former Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, the Prime Minister's Parliamentary Secretary Mr Josh Frydenberg MP and NSW parliamentarian Mr Matt Kean MP.

Indian delegates held policy discussions with senior government officials in Canberra, including the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Peter Varghese, and with the Prime Minister's office. The delegation also met with senior scientific researchers at the University of New South Wales and visited its research facilities in sustainable energy technologies. The delegation visited the Australian War Memorial, in recognition of the shared military history of the two countries in this centenary year of the start of the First World War.

The Roundtable – an innovative composite dialogue involving both government and non-government participants – is the most substantial and high-level exchange of its kind held so far between Australia and India.

The Roundtable is supported by the two governments through the Australia-India Council of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Public Diplomacy Division of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

Issues discussed included:

- A stocktake of Australia-India relations, which have now moved well beyond a challenging phase;
- An overview of strategic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and globally;
- A global economic overview looking at potential implications for Australia-India economic relations;
- Prospects for cooperation in multilateral forums such as the G20;
- Prospects for cooperation in science and technology;
- Prospects for partnership in education and knowledge, including through the New Colombo Plan – which will involve sending young Australians to study in Asia - and through the development of models for Australian vocational skills training in India;
- Developing stronger business links, including a better understanding of the commercial opportunities on offer in the two countries;
- Management of the strategic challenges arising from the Afghanistan transition;
- Multilateral cooperation in the Indian Ocean;
- Opportunities and challenges in people-to-people relations and mutual perceptions, including the role of the 450,000+ Indian-Australians, now Australia's fastest growing migrant community.

The Indian delegation was led by Anil Wadhwa , Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, and also included: Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Joint Secretary (South), Ministry of External Affairs; His Excellency Biren Nanda, Indian High Commissioner to Australia; Samir Saran, Vice President, Observer Research Foundation; Dr C Raja Mohan (Indian Co-Chair), Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation and Nonresident Fellow, Lowy Institute; Dr Rajiv Kumar, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research; Professor Rakesh Basant, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation and Director, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad; Dr Rajeswari Rajagopalan, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation; and Ashok Malik, Australia India Institute-ORF Chair for Indo-Pacific Studies.

Australian participants included: John McCarthy AO, Chairman, Australia-India Council, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Ric Smith AO PSM, Nonresident Fellow, Lowy Institute and former Secretary of Defence; Rory Medcalf (Australian Co-Chair), Director, International Security Program Lowy Institute and Associate Director Australia India

Institute; Professor Amitabh Mattoo, Director, Australia India Institute; Dr Michael Fullilove, Executive Director, Lowy Institute; Rear Admiral (Retd.) James Goldrick AO, Nonresident Fellow, Lowy Institute; Paul Robilliard, First Assistant Secretary, South and West Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Michael Shoebridge, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Defence; Bernard Philip, Deputy High Commissioner, Australian High Commission New Delhi; Bryce Hutchesson, Assistant Secretary, South Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Jennie Lang, Vice-President, Advancement, University of New South Wales; Peta Seaton, Office of the NSW Premier, Government of New South Wales; Professor Arun Sharma, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Queensland University of Technology; Professor Mark Hoffman, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of New South Wales; Dipen Rughani, Chair, Australia-India Business Council; Ruchir Punjabi, Chair, Australia-India Youth Dialogue; Neville Roach AO; Mark Thirlwell, Chief Economist, Austrade; Mike Callaghan AM, Director, G20 Studies Centre, Lowy Institute; Susan Elliott, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Engagement), University of Melbourne; Professor William Maley AM, Director, Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University; Melissa Conley-Tyler, National Executive Director, Australian Institute of International Affairs; Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor, *The Australian*; and Matt Wade, Senior Journalist, *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The convening organisations agreed to build on the momentum of the dialogue and hold the next meeting of the Australia-India Roundtable in India within 12 months.

Rory Medcalf C. Raja Mohan
Australian Co-Chair Indian Co-Chair

