
India-Australia Bilateral Brief

The historical ties between India and Australia started immediately following European settlement in Australia from 1788. All trade to and fro from the penal colony of New South Wales was controlled by the British East India Company through Kolkata. India and Australia established diplomatic relations in the pre-Independence period, with the establishment of India Trade Office in Sydney in 1941. Australia's first High Commissioner to India was appointed in 1944, while India's first High Commissioner to Australia assumed charge in 1945. The first hoisting of the Indian National Flag (before it was done in India) took place in Australia on 15 August 1947 at India House in Canberra.

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.

3. In recent years, India-Australia relationship has charted a whole new trajectory of transformational growth. The relationship was elevated to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) on June 4, 2020, during the first India-Australia Virtual Summit. It underscores the shared commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, grounded in democratic values, the rule of law, and mutual respect. A range of institutional mechanisms at high/ministerial/official levels have helped deepen and broaden this cooperation, and are elaborated below.

4. **Leaders/ Ministerial level Mechanisms:**

- **Annual Summit:** Annual Summit is a leadership-level bilateral mechanism established to strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The first Summit was held in March 2023, during Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (PMAA)'s visit to India. The second Summit was held on 19 November 2024 on the margins of the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

- **Foreign Minister's Framework Dialogue (FMFD):** FMFD, the central mechanism for advancing the bilateral agenda, is held annually, alternatively in India and Australia. The most recent 17th FMFD was held in India on 26 May 2026.
- **2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue:** The inaugural Ministerial Dialogue was held in 2021. The second Ministerial Dialogue, held in New Delhi on 20–21 November 2023, resulted in significant outcomes in the defence sector, aimed at deepening strategic and security cooperation.
- **Defence Ministerial Dialogue:** Hon'ble Raksha Mantri paid his first visit (in 12 years) to Australia on 9-11 October 2025. During his visit, both sides institutionalized the India-Australia Defence Ministerial Dialogue mechanism. During the visit, first India-Australia Defence Industry Roundtable, chaired by RM was held in Sydney on 10 October 2025. The second Defence Ministerial Dialogue was held in India on 01 June 2026.
- **Joint Ministerial Commission meeting (JMC):** A Ministerial Commission to review economic and commercial cooperation is co-chaired by the respective Ministers. The 19th JMC meeting was held on 25 August 2024 in Australia. CIM also visited Australia on 08 November 2025.
- **Australia-India Education and Skills Council (AIESC):** AIESC is an annual meeting mechanism co-chaired by the Education & Skills Ministers from both sides, to advance education, research & skilling cooperation. The scope of Australia India Education Council (AIEC) to Australia India Education and Skills Council (AIESC) was enhanced in 2023, and the inaugural AIESC meeting was held in Gandhinagar in India in 2023. Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, visited Australia from 10-15 September 2025. The 3rd AIESC meeting was held on 08 December 2025 in India.
- **Annual Foreign Ministers' Cyber Framework Dialogue:** The first meeting under this framework was held on 12 February 2022. A Mini-Cyber Dialogue was held on 9 April 2025 in New Delhi during the visit of Australia's Cyber Ambassador Mr. Brendan Dowling to India.
- **India-Australia Energy Dialogue:** India-Australia Energy Dialogue co-chaired by Energy Ministers, acts as the overarching platform for energy and mining cooperation. 5 iterations of the dialogue have been held so far. The 5th India-Australia Energy Dialogue was held on 16 October 2025 in New Delhi.

5. **Other Trilateral and Multicultural mechanisms (Leaders'/Ministerial):**

- **Quad Leaders' Summit:** Sixth Quad Leaders' Summit was held in Wilmington, USA on 21 September 2024.
- **Quad Foreign Ministerial Meeting:** The latest Quad Foreign Ministerial meeting was held in India on 26 May 2026.
- **India-France-Australia Trilateral Ministerial Dialogue:** India-Australia-France Trilateral Ministerial Meeting was held in February 2025 in Johannesburg on the margins of G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting.
- **India-Indonesia-Australia Trilateral Ministerial Dialogue:** The second India-Australia-Indonesia Trilateral Ministerial Meeting was held on 12 July 2023 on the sidelines of East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) 2023 and ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 2023 in Jakarta. Trilateral focal points meeting at Joint Secretary level was held in July 2024.
- **India-Japan-Australia Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI):** The Trade Ministers of India, Japan and Australia formally launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) in a trilateral Ministerial Meeting held virtually on 27 April 2021. The 2nd SCRI Ministerial meeting was held on 15 March 2022.
- **Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation (ACITI) Partnership:** A new trilateral technology and innovation partnership was launched on 22 November 2025, on the sidelines of G20 Summit. The text of MoU under the ACITI Partnership to advance cooperation in emerging technologies and innovation was finalized during the visit of Canadian PM to India in March 2026.

6. **Presidential visits:** Australia's then Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove visited India from 10-14 March 2018, and represented Australia at the International Solar Alliance. He also travelled to India on private visit in December 2014, and called on the then President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee. Then President Shri Ram Nath Kovind visited Australia from 21-24 November 2018.

7. **Prime Ministerial visits/meetings:** PM has held several bilateral meetings with PMAA. PM visited Australia in May 2023, followed by PMAA's visit to India in March & September 2023. The latest bilateral meeting was held on 22 November 2025 in South Africa, on the sidelines of G20 Leaders' Summit. Apart from these, both leaders have congratulated each other for respective election victories, and held frequent telephonic conversations and exchanged letters. The two-way Prime Ministerial visits held in 2014 built significant momentum in the bilateral

relationship. India also hosted the then Australian Prime Minister in 2017. PM also held two Virtual Leaders' Summits with the then Australian Prime Minister in 2020 and 2022.

8. **Foreign Ministerial visits/meetings:** EAM has held multiple bilateral meetings with the current Foreign Minister of Australia Senator Penny Wong, including five Foreign Minister's Framework Dialogue (FMFDs). EAM visited Australia in February & October 2022, February 2023, February & November 2024. FMPW visited India in February-March & November 2023 and November 2025. The latest meeting was held on 27 May 2026, for the 17th FMFD in New Delhi.

9. **Senior Officers/Officials level mechanisms:**

Defence cooperation: India-Australia Defence partnership has steadily strengthened in the recent past. Visit of Hon'ble Raksha Mantri to Australia from 09-11 Oct 25, being the first visit of an Indian Defence Minister to Australia in 12 years, was important due to a number of strategically important outcomes such as signing of landmark agreements/MoUs, institution of an annual Defence Ministers Dialogue, and conduct of the first ever India – Australia Defence Industry Round Table at Sydney.

- **India-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Secretaries' Dialogue:** The first Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 12 December 2017. The fourth Dialogue was held on 14 October 2024 in New Delhi.
- **India-Australia JWG meeting on Research, Industry and Materiel Cooperation:** The fourth JWG meeting between MoD, India and DoD, Australia on Research, Industry and Materiel Cooperation was held in Australia on 18 August 2025.
- **Defence Policy Talks (DPT):** It is held at the level of Additional/Special Secretary, MoD. The 10th round of Defence Policy Talks were held in New Delhi on 08 May 2026.
- **India-Australia Maritime Dialogue:** The 6th India-Australia Maritime Dialogue was held in Canberra on 13 August 2024. Indian side was led by JS (DISA).
- **Staff Talks:** Interactions at the single-service level have been steered through the Staff Talks. Naval Talks were held on 14 May 2024 in New Delhi. 12th Army-to-Army Staff Talks were held on 29-31 October 2025. The 12th India Australia Air Staff Talks held from 29 April-01 May 2026 in Australia.
- **General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme:** It was announced during the Leaders' virtual Meeting in March 2022 under which 15 Australian Defence Force officers joined 15 Indian Defence Force personnel for the first iteration of

the programme in March 2023 in India. Australia hosted the second iteration in July 2024. The 3rd iteration was held in India from 14-26 October, 2025.

Economic and Trade:

- **Bilateral Trade :** India was Australia's fifth largest trading partner in the year 2025. Total bilateral trade (Goods & Services) decreased to AUD 50.21 billion in 2025 from AUD 53.06 billion in 2024. India's total exports to Australia increased to AUD 18 billion in 2025 from AUD 17.52 billion in 2024. Australia's exports to India decreased to AUD 32.2 billion from AUD 35.54 billion in 2024. In CY 2024, India's Service exports to Australia grew by 28% to AUD 6.05 billion from AUD 4.73 billion in CY 2023.
- **Bilateral Investments:** At the end of 2025, Australia's stock of investment in India was \$26.8 billion and India's stock of investment in Australia was \$45.3 billion. In 2024, India's investment into Australia was AUD 50.64 billion and Australia's investment in India was AUD 27.62 billion.
- **ECTA:** On 2 April 2022, India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) was signed, and subsequently entered into force on 29 December 2022. Under ECTA, Australia provided zero-duty access to India for 100 percent of its tariff lines in two categories: (i) Zero Duty on 98.3 % tariff lines from December 29, 2022 and (ii) Phasing out to zero duty on the remaining 113 tariff lines in five years. India agreed to provide duty free access immediately on 40.3 percent tariff lines and remaining 30 percent in a phased manner. Work and Holiday Visa Program under ECTA became operational in September 2024.
- **CECA Negotiations:** The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) builds on the foundation of ECTA, aiming for deeper commitments in five core areas: Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Rules of Origin (including Product-Specific Rules), Digital Trade, and Government Procurement. The negotiations are currently ongoing.
- **DTAA:** was signed in July 1991, which came into force in December 1991. A Protocol amending the DTAA was signed in December 2011. Legislation on DTAA, alongside ECTA was passed in Australian Parliament and came into effect with the Entry into Force of ECTA.
- **Uranium:** A Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement was signed between India and Australia in September 2014 and a subsequent Administrative Arrangement (AA) was signed in November 2015 for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Australian Parliament passed the Civil Nuclear Transfer to India Bill 2016.

- **CEO Forum:** It is a mechanism for businesses 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. Following the virtual meeting of the Australia-India CEOs Forum on 28 October 2024, the Forum presented 20 policy papers to the Australian and Indian Governments as specific recommendations to strengthen bilateral economic relations. There are five Joint Working Groups - Education; Infrastructure, Finance and Investment; Energy, Net Zero, Critical Minerals and Resources; Digital Economy; and Agritech, under the CEO Forum.
- **India-Australia Economic Policy Dialogue:** It is an annual dialogue to share experiences in areas such as Fiscal Affairs, Economic Affairs, Revenue and Taxation Policy, Investments, Capital Market and Financial Services, etc. The 10th India-Australia Economic Policy Dialogue (EPD) was held on 14th August 2025 in virtual mode.
- **Agriculture:** The Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for organic products between India and Australia was signed on 24 September 2025 in New Delhi. MoU on Food Safety was also signed on 24 September 2025 in New Delhi. The 6th JWG on cooperation in Agriculture was held in Canberra on 28 February 2025. 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 finalisation of market access for Australian Hass avocados to India and Indian okra to Australia.
- **Health:** An MoU on Health Cooperation was signed on 10 April 2017. Under this MoU the first meeting of the Joint Working Group was held on 9 November 2017 in New Delhi. The two Health Ministers held a virtual meeting on 14 July 2020 to discuss bilateral health cooperation including management of Covid 19. Ministry of Ayush established Ayurveda Academic Chair at Western Sydney University's NICM (3-year tenure). The 2nd JWG on Health Cooperation was held virtually on 24 April 2026.
- **Treasury-NITI Aayog Economic Policy Dialogue:** CEO NITI Aayog met Mr. Luke Yeaman, Deputy Secretary, Department of Treasury, Australia virtually on 21 June 2021 where both sides signed the Statement of Outcomes of the 2nd NITI AYO - Australian Treasury dialogue (held in December 2020).

Energy:

- **Renewable Energy Partnership (REP):** It was launched on 19 November 2024 during the 2nd India–Australia Annual Summit on the sidelines of the G20 Summit.

- **India-Australia Solar Taskforce:** During the visit of PMAA to India on 8-11 March 2023, both PMs agreed to establish a Australia-India Solar Taskforce, which will advise on opportunities to accelerate solar PV deployment and enhance supply chains. Subsequently, the Terms of Reference for India-Australia Solar Taskforce were signed. A flagship initiative, the Rooftop Solar Academy, was launched to train 2,000 women and youth as solar technicians, hosted by Pandit Deendayal Energy University in Gujarat.
- **India-Australia Green Hydrogen TaskForce (IAGHT):** During the visit of PM to Australia on 24 May 2023, the Terms of Reference for the Australia–India Green Hydrogen Taskforce were exchanged. The Task-Force facilitates bilateral cooperation in green hydrogen production, technology development, and commercialization, leveraging Australia’s expertise and India’s renewable energy capacity to accelerate the low-carbon transition and strengthen energy security. The IAGHT report was accepted by both the sides on 16 October 2025 during the 5th India Australia Energy Dialogue.
- **Energy Dialogue:** Under it, there are 5 separate JWG’s viz. Power; New & Renewable Energy; Coal & Mines; Critical Minerals; and Oil & Gas.
 - i. **JWG on Coal and Mines:** The 2nd JWG was held on 16 September 2025 in virtual format.
 - ii. **JWG on New and Renewable Energy:** The 2nd JWG was held in virtual format on 15 September 2025.
 - iii. **JWG on Power:** The 2nd JWG was held in virtual format on 16 September 2025.
 - iv. **JWG on Oil & Gas:** The 2nd JWG was held in virtual format on 18 September 2025.
 - v. **JWG on Critical Minerals:** The 5th JWG was held virtually on 29 January 2026 to review ongoing cooperation and explore opportunities to strengthen collaboration across the critical minerals value chain.
- **JWG on Energy and Minerals:** It was established in 1999 to expand bilateral relationship in the energy and resources sector.
- **Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Climate change:** On 3 September 2025, Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Climate change was held between DCCEEW and MoEF&CC in virtual format.

Education and Skills:

- **International students:** The number of Indian students currently enrolled for study in Australia is 1,42,515 (2025), making Indian students the second largest cohort of foreign students in Australia. Indian students are mainly pursuing degrees in the fields of

Management and Commerce, Information Technology, Engineering and related technologies and Health sector.

- **Offshore campuses:** Universities of Deakin and Wollongong became the first foreign universities to open their campuses in India (GIFT City). In the last few months, University of Western Australia (campuses in Mumbai and Chennai), Western Sydney University (Greater Noida), Victoria University (Noida) and La Trobe University (Bengaluru) have received approvals to open campuses in India and Letter of Intent (LoIs) have been handed over. The LoI for University of New South Wales was announced during the 3rd AIESC meeting in December 2025.

Science & Technology:

- **Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF):** India-Australia S&T relationship is being formally implemented under the India- Australia Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) since 2005. AISRF is a value-based partnership working on the principles of 'reciprocity, co-funding and co-creation'. The AISRF is Australia's biggest investment in research collaboration with any single nation, and it has catapulted Australia into becoming one of India's top five major research partner countries. The 15 rounds of the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) Collaborative Research Project grants have been completed and about \$ 1 million funding is announced for the 16th round.
- **Biotechnology Fund:** Since its establishment in 2006, the Indo-Australia Biotechnology Fund (IABF) has supported collaborative, leading-edge research between scientists in Australia and India across a range of jointly agreed priority areas. So far, 15 calls have been announced and this partnership has supported more than 56 joint projects in various areas of life sciences.
- **Indo-Australia Joint S&T Committee :** It is the apex body providing vision and direction to science & technology cooperation. The latest meeting of India-Australia Joint S&T Committee (JSTC) and Joint Biotechnology Committee (JBC) was held from 23-30 November 2024.
- **Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE) Accelerator:** Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) jointly launched India-Australia Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE) Accelerator virtually on 22 November 2023, aimed to support Australian and Indian startups and small to mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) in India and Australia working on circular economy technologies and solutions. 14 startups have been selected in Round 1 (7 each from India

and Australia). Cohort for Round 2 of the Australia-India Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE) Accelerator was announced.

Space:

- **Cocos Keeling Island:** In January 2022, ISRO and Australian Space Agency (ASA) signed an IA to establish a Temporary Tracking Terminal in Cocos Keeling Island, Australia to support Gaganyaan mission. A license agreement for usage of Site Q5 land at the Cocos (Keeling) Islands for establishing the Terminal is under discussion. During 17th FMFD in May 2026, both Ministers noted progress on use of Cocos Island Q5 Site for Gaganyaan tracking requirements.
- **Gaganyaan Mission:** An Implementing Arrangement (IA) for cooperation on crew and crew module recovery for Gaganyaan Mission was signed on 20 November 2024. Both sides are currently discussing positioning of Indian assets during the Gaganyaan Mission launch.

Sports:

- An MoU on Cooperation in Sports was signed during visit of then PM Turnbull to India in April 2017 and was renewed during the visit of PMAA to India in March 2023.
- A Strategy Report on sports cooperation '*Strategy for Sports Collaboration between India and Australia: A comprehensive partnership from grassroots to podium*' commissioned by the Mission in Canberra was launched on 21 November 2025 at TURF 2025-15th Global Summit on Business of Sports organized by FICCI. This strategy report outlines areas of cooperation in high-performance sport, sports technology, science & education, sports management and governance, elite athlete pathways, infrastructure development, hosting major sporting events and knowledge partnerships.

Consular matters:

- As per the Australian Census 2021, the Indian diaspora in Australia is over 9,76,000 strong, which is about 3% of the total population. They include 3,50,000 Indian passport holders. The States of Victoria (3.5 lakhs), New South Wales (3.16 lakhs) and Queensland (1.2 lakhs) have the largest number of Indian diaspora, followed by Western Australia (97,000), South Australia (57,000), Australian Capital Territory (24,800), Tasmania (7,800) and Northern Territory (6,672).
- The Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) and the Extradition Treaty between India and Australia, which were signed in June 2008, have been ratified by both the Governments,

and have entered into force on 20 January 2011. India and Australia signed a Social Security Agreement on the eve of our PM's visit to Australia in November 2014. The Agreement has been ratified by both countries and came into force with effect from 1 January 2016.

- The first Consular Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 23 September 2025, marking an upgradation of the JWG on Visas, Passports, and Consular Matters.
- **Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA)** was signed during the visit of PM to Australia in May 2023. MATES (Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early Professionals Scheme) became operational in November 2024.

Culture:

- A total of 40 artefacts, which were in Australian museums have been repatriated since 2014, including 11 items in 2026.

Counter-terrorism cooperation:

- Both sides have established a JWG on counter-terrorism, at Joint Secretary Level. The 15th meeting of the India-Australia JWG on Counter Terrorism was held on 29-30 October 2025 in Australia.
- Then Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri G. Kishan Reddy visited Melbourne on 07-08 November 2019 to attend 'No Money for Terror Ministerial Conference'.
- The 6th Round of India-Australia Dialogue on disarmament, non-proliferation and export control was held virtually on 30 March 2021.

10. Other mechanisms:

- **Australia-India Track 1.5 Strategic Dialogue:** 1.5 Track Dialogue was announced by the Foreign Ministers in November 2023. Pursuant to it, Australia announced Asia Society as their lead think-tank, while India announced Ananta ASPEN Centre. The Track 1.5 Track Strategic Dialogue was held on 18-19 May in Sydney.
- **Australia-India Youth Dialogue:** It is the pre-eminent track-two young leaders' dialogue between Australia and India. The Australia India Youth Dialogue 2025 was held in India from the 15-18 September, 2025.

11. India and Australia have significantly expanded their multilateral and trilateral cooperation in recent years through regional and global fora such as the Quad, G20, East Asia Summit, and Indo-Pacific initiatives. In December 2017, the Australian government formally

ratified, and became a member of International Solar Alliance. In September 2019, Australia joined CDRI as a founding member. 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, and have participated in the East Asia Summits. In 2008, Australia became an Observer in SAARC.

As of 30 June 2026