

**GROUP OF EIGHT /  
AUSTRALIA INDIA INSTITUTE  
THE NATIONAL EDUCATION  
POLICY: POSSIBILITIES  
FOR INDIA-AUSTRALIA  
COLLABORATION**

**PROGRAM**

**Wednesday, 14 October 2020**  
15.00 – 17.00 pm (AEDT)

**Zoom Webinar ID 985 6195 3062**  
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## PURPOSE

The new National Education Policy, released on 30 July 2020, substantially rethinks school and higher education in India. This seminar will reflect on how India and Australia might enhance university research collaboration, building on the policy directions identified in NEP. The goals of the seminar are to:

- Maintain and develop strong links between key practitioners and policymakers in Australia and India
- Refine understanding of areas where collaboration and engagement would be especially fruitful in 2021
- Identify three or four areas of potential joint short- or medium-term action on the part of university leaders and/or government

<b>15.00</b>	<b><i>Introduction</i></b>
15.00 – 15.05	<p>Forum Opening and introductory remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Professor Margaret Gardner AC</b> Go8 Chair and President and Vice Chancellor, Monash University</li> </ul>
15.05 – 15.15	<p>Education and Research as a key pillar of the Australia-India relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</b> Minister for Education</li> </ul>
15.15 – 15.25	<p>The NEP: a new vision for India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>His Excellency Mr A. Gitesh Sarma</b> High Commissioner of Indian in Australia</li> </ul>
<b>15.25</b>	<p><b>HOW CAN AUSTRALIA PARTNER WITH INDIA IN RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS?</b></p> <p>Chair – <b>Professor Michael Wesley</b> Chair, Go8 Global Engagement Group and Deputy Vice Chancellor International, University of Melbourne</p>
15.25 – 16.00	<p><b><i>Discussion on the following areas for potential collaboration:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Developing the wide research ecosystem in which the new elite multi-disciplinary universities will operate, for example through connecting the new National Research Foundation in India to research councils in Australia</li> <li>■ Leveraging the ability for foreign institutions to establish campuses in India by developing joint facilities, possibly around themes such as agriculture, water, health, sport or social equity (see Briefing Paper point 1)</li> <li>■ The establishment of a series of conferences in major areas of joint interest such as water, soils, education, health, social cohesion, and environmental transformation</li> </ul> <p><b><i>How can Australia and India work together on enhancing two-way PhD mobility and training?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The further development of joint doctoral supervision and mobility programs, taking advantage of the new focus on flexibility in the NEP</li> <li>■ The development of joint post-doctoral initiatives aimed at providing early career researchers with experience of both Australian and Indian research environments and aimed at capacity building in key areas, drawing on the Australia India's Institutes' New Generation Network model (see Briefing Paper point 2)</li> <li>■ The development of fellowship and scholarship opportunities that facilitate research mobility across the Australia-India bilateral, including optimal utilisation of existing schemes such as SPARC and GIAN</li> <li>■ The establishment of joint approaches to industry engagement, including discussion with foundations</li> </ul>

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<b>16.00</b>	<b>HOW CAN AUSTRALIA AND INDIA WORK TOGETHER TO RESHAPE HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY?</b>
	Chair – <b>Professor Craig Jeffrey</b> Director and CEO Australia India Institute
16.00 – 16.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reflection on the overall public purpose of universities, drawing on insights within the NEP on universities’ core functions in society</li> <li>■ Explore the potential to leverage teaching opportunities across the Australia-India boundary (Briefing Paper point 3)</li> <li>■ Collaboration in the development of the elite multi-disciplinary universities that NEP identifies as key to its strategy. This could also include establishing dialogues on the role of universities and their regions in the context of the public good (Briefing Paper point 4)</li> <li>■ Exploring how Indian and Australian partners might engage with other organisations around issues of equity in higher education (Briefing Paper point 5)</li> <li>■ Engagement on how higher education and TAFE can better integrate in both the Australian and Indian systems (Briefing Paper point 6)</li> </ul>
<b>16.25</b>	<b>OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS</b>
16.25 – 16.35	<p>Summary of key discussion points, next steps and thank you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Professor Deborah Terry AO</b> Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Queensland</li> </ul>

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FORUM  
OPENING



EDUCATION  
AND RESEARCH  
AS A KEY  
PILLAR OF THE  
AUSTRALIA-INDIA  
RELATIONSHIP

### **Professor Margaret Gardner AC**

Chair

Group of Eight

President and Vice-Chancellor  
Monash University

Professor Margaret Gardner AC became President and Vice-Chancellor of Monash University on September 1, 2014. Prior to joining Monash, Professor Gardner was Vice-Chancellor and President of RMIT from April 2005 until August 2014. Professor Gardner was Chair of Universities Australia from 2017 to 2019 and is currently the Chair of the Group of Eight Universities. She is also a Director of Infrastructure Victoria, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and a member of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Inclusion and Diversity Committee.





## THE NEP: A NEW VISION FOR INDIA



### **The Hon Dan Tehan MP**

Minister for Education

The Hon Dan Tehan MP is the Member for Wannon in Victoria. He is Minister for Education and was sworn in on 28 August 2018. Mr Tehan served as Minister for Social Services from 20 December 2017. Prior to this, he was the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of Anzac. Mr Tehan was elected to Federal Parliament in 2010 and has held positions as the Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security; Chair of the Victorian Consultative Panel for the Black Spot Programme; Chair of the Coalition Policy Committee on Economics and Finance; Co-Chair of the Parliamentarians Supporting Cancer Causes; Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Youth Mental Health, and; Chair of the Coalition Friends of Tourism. Prior to entering Parliament, Mr Tehan worked in agriculture in Australia and overseas. He has worked in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade where he held various roles, including as a diplomat at the Australian Embassy in Mexico.

### **His Excellency Mr A. Gitesh Sarma**

High Commissioner of India  
in Australia

His Excellency Mr A. Gitesh Sarma completed his B.A. (Hons) and M.A. in Political Science from Delhi University. Mr Sarma joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1986, worked in Ministry of External Affairs as Under Secretary (Europe East) and Director (Central Asia). Mr Sarma's overseas assignments include Indian Missions in Russia, Ukraine, Hong Kong, Pakistan and United Kingdom. He has been Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan and High Commissioner of India in Fiji. Additionally, Mr Sarma served as the Officer on Special Duty (IT Enabled Services) in the Information Technology Department of the state of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, India. He was also Joint Secretary (External Relations) in the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. Mr Sarma was Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs until November 2019.

HOW CAN  
AUSTRALIA  
PARTNER  
WITH INDIA  
IN RESEARCH  
COLLABORATIONS?



HOW CAN  
AUSTRALIA AND  
INDIA WORK  
TOGETHER TO  
RESHAPE HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
IN THE 21ST  
CENTURY?

### **Professor Michael Wesley**

Chair  
Go8 Global Engagement Group  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor International  
University of Melbourne

Professor Michael Wesley is an expert in international affairs who has worked in higher education, government and the private sector. Professor Wesley has extensive experience in international strategy and relations and has worked in higher education, government and the private sector. He has published on Australian foreign policy, Asia's international relations and strategic affairs, and the politics of state-building interventions. Previously, Professor Wesley was Professor of International Affairs and Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University and the Director of the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs at ANU. He has also held positions as the Executive Director of the Lowy Institute for International Policy, Director of the Griffith Asia Institute at Griffith University, and Assistant Director-General for Transnational Issues at the Office of National Assessments. He has a PhD in International Relations from the University of St Andrews. As Deputy Vice-Chancellor International at the University of Melbourne, Professor Wesley provides leadership across the University, with overall responsibility for strategic guidance and expert advice for internationalisation and global engagement.



## OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS



### Professor Craig Jeffrey

Director and CEO  
Australia India Institute

Professor Craig Jeffrey is Director and CEO of the Australia India Institute. He works on contemporary India and youth. Building on long-term social research in north India, he has highlighted the positive contributions of marginalised youth to Indian society, working in Hindi and Urdu, which he speaks fluently. He has written eight books, including the *Timepass: Youth, Class and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford University Press 2010) and *India: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press 2017). Professor Jeffrey has advised over thirty PhD researchers in Seattle, Oxford, and Melbourne and has recently developed a New Generation Network of 15 post-doctoral scholars conducting applied research on contemporary India across Australia. Jeffrey's work has influenced public policy in the UK, India and Australia.

### Professor Deborah Terry AO

Vice-Chancellor and President  
University of Queensland

Professor Deborah Terry AO is Vice-Chancellor and President of The University of Queensland (UQ). Prior to commencing this role in August 2020, she served as Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University in Western Australia (from February 2014 to July 2020). Professor Terry was made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) in June 2015, in recognition of her distinguished service to education in the tertiary sector. She is also Chair of the Board of Universities Australia; a Fellow and past President of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia; an appointed member of the Australian Research Council Advisory Council; and serves on the Australia and New Zealand School of Government Board and Australia's Academic and Research Network Board.

## KEY INVITEES



### **Dr Michael Spence AC**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal  
University of Sydney

Dr Michael Spence AC has led the University of Sydney as Vice-Chancellor and Principal since 2008. An alumnus of the University of Sydney, Dr Spence has a BA with first-class honours in English, Italian and law. He also speaks other Asian languages. Dr Spence holds a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Oxford and before returning to Sydney headed Oxford's law faculty and its social sciences division. In 2017, he was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours.



### **Ms Vicki Thomson**

Chief Executive  
Group of Eight

Ms Vicki Thomson is the Chief Executive of the Group of Eight (Go8) – Australia's eight leading research-intensive universities. She took up her role in January 2015. Prior to this, she was Executive Director of the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN). Ms Thomson's diverse background covers print and electronic journalism, politics, issues management and the higher education sector. She has an extensive media, political and policy background and was Chief of Staff to a South Australian Premier. She is a Board member of the European Australian Business Council and is a member of the Australian Government's New Colombo Plan Reference Group.





### **Professor Michael Brooks**

Interim Vice-Chancellor  
and President  
University of Adelaide

Professor Michael Brooks is the Interim Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Adelaide. He is a leading international researcher in computer vision and image analysis, and his work in intelligent video surveillance has seen wide commercial use in the security industries and has resulted in international awards. Professor Brooks has extensive experience in research leadership and senior management. Previously serving as Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (DVCR), Provost, and (in 2017) Interim Vice-Chancellor. As DVCR, Professor Brooks established six of the University of Adelaide's flagship research institutes and has overseen the University's rapid rise up the international rankings.



### **Mr Tayyeb Shah**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
(Global Partnerships)  
University of Western Australia

Mr Tayyeb Shah is Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Partnerships) at The University of Western Australia and responsible for a portfolio that spans Global Engagement, Innovation & Industry Engagement, the Cultural Precinct and Development & Alumni Relations. A globally-renowned expert in higher education, business development and international relations, Mr Shah joined UWA in June 2019 from King's College London, where he held a number of roles most recently as Deputy Vice President (Global Business Development). During his 12 years at King's College London, Mr Shah was instrumental in expanding the university's international and commercial partnerships.

# INDIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION – A NOTE<sup>1</sup>

Craig Jeffrey, 4th October 2020

On 29th July 2020 the Indian government approved a new National Education Policy (NEP) that aims to make India a “*vishwa guru*” (world educator) and commits to raising GDP spending on education from the current 4.6% to 6% (see Bhushan 2019).

The NEP dismantles the current school system in which children move into school at the age of five and follow a 10 years plus 2 model in favour of one in which children arrive at school at three years of age and undertake 5 years of early primary schooling, 3 years of upper primary, 3 of middle school, and 4 of high school. The inclusion of early childhood education within the ambit of the formal school system is a key move as is the direction to provide free breakfasts, in addition to midday meals, for all children. Vocational education will be introduced in schools from Sixth Class and the Education Ministry will constitute a new National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that education is about, “How to think not what to think”. This is reflected in NEP’s focus on driving a move away from rote learning and rigid arts, science, and commerce streams in secondary school towards problem-based learning and critical thinking. The NEP also forecasts an end to winner-takes-all public examinations towards a more modular system. These changes are bound up in the professionalisation of teaching. The government will provide six months of online training to nursery teachers. All school teachers will now have to do 4 year degrees. National professional standards for teachers will come on stream in 2022.

In terms of higher education (HE), the NEP aims to raise the proportion of young people in HE to 50% by 2035 (from 26.3% in 2018). A new Higher Education Council of India would regulate HE and have under it four organisations:

1. A National Higher Education Regulatory Council – a new single regulator for the sector
2. A Higher Education Grants Council, responsible for the funding of higher education
3. A National Accreditation Council
4. A General Education Council that establishes learning outcomes for universities. The NEP also confirms the establishment of a National Research Foundation in India.

The NEP will dismantle the current system wherein colleges do not confer degrees and must do so through hub universities to which they are affiliated. In the new system all HE institutions will have degree-granting power. The affiliation system will be phased out in 15 years and the number of higher educational institutions will be reduced to 15,000 (from the current 1000 universities and 45,000 degree colleges). As part of this reorganisation, the tens of thousands of universities in India that offer one or two degrees (and typically enrol

<sup>1</sup> This note represents the personal opinions of the author

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION WITH INDIA

fewer than 500 students) will be amalgamated or converted into larger, multi-disciplinary institutions. The NEP also proposes a distinction between research universities and teaching universities. At the top level, it aims to set up a series of elite multidisciplinary universities that parallels the Ivy League in the US.

The NEP also introduces 4 year multidisciplinary degrees with multiple exit options: students can obtain a 1 year certificate, 2 year diploma, 3 year degree or 4 year honours. At the same time, it removes one step in the system of postgraduate education by removing MPhil degrees.

A common theme across school and university education is that of social equity. The NEP aims to increase the participation of under-represented groups in schools and universities. It signals the creation of a Gender Inclusion Fund to “build the nation’s capacity to provide equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students” (quoted in Jha and Parvati 2020: 201) as well as Special Education Zones focusing on underrepresented groups. The NEP also indicates that Indian Sign Language will be standardised across the country.

Across all these areas of educational change, the NEP sees an increased role for non-state players in the management of education. It also specifies a larger role for foreign organisations. The NEP moves to allow the top 100 global universities to establish campuses in India. The NEP also encourages top Indian universities to consider opening campuses elsewhere.

Implementation will be complex and necessarily protracted. The Draft National Education Policy pointed out that the existing higher education system with Indian States is characterised by the “widespread prevalence of vested/commercial interests” that may act on a brake on some aspects of these intended reforms (GOI 2019: 204; (see also Gould 1972; Jeffrey 2010; Kapur and Mehta 2017). Partly in recognition of such points, the NEP sets a long-range timetable, with the new system expected to be fully operational by 2040.

There are many areas where Australia might productively work with India during this twenty-year implementation phase, especially given the recent emphasis on research cooperation in the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Australia (DFAT 2020). The Australian Government (DESE, AHC) has an important role in facilitating opportunities through working with Australian and Indian institutions and the Indian Government. Six spheres of action are of particular note.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION WITH INDIA

### ONE

The shift to allowing foreign institutions to establish campuses in India is a major new step. Universities outside India could approach an Indian partner about developing joint physical facilities in each other's country on a reciprocal basis. This could provide a platform for joint PhD supervision, co-produced learning programs, and other collaborations. This idea would link to the suggestion in Peter Varghese AO's India Economic Strategy (IES) to identify ways for top Australian universities to leverage the development of new capacity in India (Varghese 2018).

**Potential action:** Universities in Australia and India discuss the possibility of the development of a joint facilities perhaps involving multiple institutions on both sides. Consideration could be given to themed hubs, for example focusing on agriculture, water, sport, or social equity.

### TWO

Early career capacity building is another area for much greater joint working, especially given how the pandemic has disrupted early career researchers' work across the world. It would be useful for the next generation of Indian faculty to have experience outside India, just as it would be valuable for many early career researchers in countries such as Australia, Canada and the UK to spend time in India. These principles are enshrined in the Go8's PhD Taskforce report on India/Australia collaboration (Go8 2017). In the next phase it might be especially advantageous to collaborate in the post-doctoral area.

**Potential action:** Australian universities could partner with the Indian government, and possibly also corporate foundations, to create international networks of three-year post-doctoral students who gain experience in India and abroad. This could build on the All's New Generation Network initiative.

### THREE

The development of joint undergraduate and graduate teaching initiatives is a third sphere where existing action could be scaled up. The current pandemic has changed many people's understanding of how technology can bring people together across distance, and there are obvious opportunities in terms of online learning in particular, as the IES also points out. Joint initiatives are likely to be most successful where they are faculty led and where the faculty concerned have an existing research interest that works in tandem with their teaching cooperation.

**Potential action:** Leveraging the new research being conducted by the All regarding key scholars working across the India/Australia boundary and the recently-announced Australia Research Collaboration hub in India, the All could convene a webinar on teaching opportunities across the Australia-India boundary with joint input from both countries and with a view to developing a work stream in this area.

### FOUR

The role of research universities as leaders in regional economic and educational change could be another basis for collaboration. Director of IIT Delhi, Professor Rangopal Rao, hailed the NEP as a "Morrill moment" in the history of educational planning in India – a reference to the Morrill Land-Grant Act in the US. That Act established universities that became change agents for the surrounding region, including other higher educational institutions. As India moves the NEP into implementation phase, it might usefully think about how some of the new elite multidisciplinary universities could deepen their engagement with other, teaching-focused institutions in their locality such that students at provincial teaching universities and colleges benefit from this development of world-class research institutions. Australia could engage in highly productive cross-national dialogue on this issue.



**Potential action:** Go8 convene a discussion of ‘universities and their regions/the public good’ working with an appropriate partner in India such as the NIEPA.

**Potential action:** A suitable organisation could work with TAFEs in Australia to develop discussions on integrating HE and vocational education with Indian counterpart organisations.

## FIVE

Other countries could also work with India around the global challenge of broadening effective participation in school and university education. Challenges in the area of social equity in India are likely to include reducing the digital divide (Pitroda 2020) and further reflecting on the relationship between the NEP and India’s Right to Education (RTE) Act (2010).

**Potential action:** Appropriate organisations could galvanise relevant educationalists in India and Australia to discuss HE and equity with a view to the development of new joint initiatives.

## SIX

International cooperation could also extend to discussing the rise of educated unemployment, especially in the wake of Covid-19. One of the strengths of the NEP is the emphasis it places on schools and universities as places where people learn to live fulfilling lives and not simply as training grounds for employment. As Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal put it: “The main objective of the NEP 2020 is to develop good human beings and not machines” (Shenoy 2020). At the same time, however, the NEP recognises the need to address the challenge of educated unemployment and underemployment in India (Jeffrey 2010; Mehrotra 2020). The initiatives presented in the NEP on vocational education are encouraging in this regard, and it would be excellent if the NEP could trigger international discussion regarding graduate employment in the 2020s.

These six suggestions come with two caveats. The first is that the success of these six initiatives will require both countries providing adequate respect and importance to social science and humanities disciplines, as consistent with the emphasis of the draft National Education Policy on ‘liberal arts’ and the NEP on ‘holistic education’. It is notable that the Australia India Strategic Fund has been limited to STEM subjects. An additional suggestion would be that both countries develop a humanities and social science grant scheme.

Second, genuine reciprocity must be hard-wired into all projects. One of the NEP’s greatest strengths is that it articulates nicely that India is and always has been a major centre of knowledge production. India’s Education Minister recently stated, “The NEP 2020 will help India regain the title of world teacher and help transform out institutions to regain former glory.” None of the international collaborations proposed above will work if Australia approaches India with the view that they have ‘solutions’ to complex educational challenges or with a transactional mindset. Internationalisation must instead proceed from an acknowledgement of India as a beacon for change and of the importance of learning from India to improve Australian education.

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