

Government of Western Australia  
Inquiry into Western Australia's economic  
relationship with the Republic of India

*Asialink Business Response*

## ***Asialink Business – Building critical India capabilities***

Asialink Business is the National Centre for Asia Capability, established in 2013 with a mandate from the Australian Government to develop an Asia capable workforce in Australia. Our support enables Australian businesses to become more aware, more knowledgeable and capable of identifying, defining and capturing opportunities with diverse Asian markets.

India is a significant market of focus across all our activities. Our team possess diverse India engagement experience across the private and public sectors, including direct experience working in and with this dynamic market. Asialink Business supports the development of India capabilities across the Australian workforce, focusing on the following critical areas:

- *Public Forums, Events and Engagement:* Asialink Business delivers public forums and events, which build awareness of the opportunities with India. We share insights, drive discussion and shape understanding of contemporary political, economic, and business-related issues impacting Australia's relationship with India.
- *Research and Information:* Asialink Business develops information products, bespoke research, and thought leadership which support organisations across their market entry journey with India. Our information products including our India Country Starter Pack, provide up-to-date information on economic, political, and social insights. Our bespoke research is focused on assisting organisations in respect of the development of in-depth Indian market and industry research, insights and analysis, in the form of high-quality reports and deliverables which provide evidence-based and actionable advice.
- *Training Programs:* Asialink Business has designed and developed an extensive suite of high-quality training programs, which address the fundamental needs for Australian businesses to build the capabilities essential to engaging with India. Our programs are grounded in global best practice, real world experiences, contemporary models and tools, and draw on the importance of cultural as well as technical knowledge, to deliver robust, practical and scalable business training programs for our clients.

Asialink Business is committed to supporting WA and its engagement with India. Through our on-the-ground presence in Perth, we offer a tailored and collaborative approach and provide timely and accessible support to local stakeholders, partners and businesses to support their aspirations with India. For example, in 2019 we supported the WA Government's India Forum and worked in collaboration with CEDA and the WA Government to launch WA's Asian Engagement Strategy, with India identified as a priority market in this strategy.

## ***Building on Australia's national strategy for engagement with India***

In 2019 Asialink Business welcomed the timely release of An India Economic Strategy to 2035: Navigating from Potential to Delivery. We have been proud to amplify this comprehensive and visionary strategy to help cement India as a priority economic partner for Australian organisations, by leveraging our communications and media channels, as well as our events and networks to highlight key messages and opportunities.

We have also supported the dissemination of the strategy through leading a series of focused leadership roundtables and discussions. For example, we have convened boardroom briefings led by Mr. Peter Varghese AO, the author of the strategy, in Sydney and Melbourne, with small groups of senior decision-makers from a cross-section of sectors to discuss the implications and practical actions that emerge from the strategy execution. We have also led tailored sector-specific discussions, for example we held an executive forum in Melbourne with Mr. Varghese, and education-sector partners to explore the opportunities for the education sector.

The India strategy draws on the findings of Asialink Business' 2017 Match Fit: Shaping Asia capable leaders report and makes a strong call to action for corporate Australia to urgently improve its literacy of India's business environment. Adapting behaviours, customizing offerings, and aligning priorities will be essential to long-term success with India at all levels of the economy. To achieve the vision for the strategy, Australian organisations urgently require a more sophisticated understanding of Indian culture, the business environment and Australia's relationship with India, as well as the skills to manage the complexities of relations and ensure mutual understanding and success within an Indian context. With this in mind, it will be critical for the WA Government to support strategic initiatives which improve the India capabilities of WA-based organisations to enhance the state's relationship with India and generate greater trade and investment outcomes.

### **Opportunities for WA to strengthen its relationship with India**

An India Economic Strategy to 2035, provides a comprehensive national roadmap for India and identifies ten sectors where Australia's competitive advantages match India's needs, and ten states in India where we should focus our efforts. The opportunities for WA to engage with India across sectors should be defined and prioritised based on those which present the best prospects for the future growth of the State. Key initiatives such as trade missions, events, business grants or other programs outlined in the implementation plan should be targeted and aligned with the identified key Indian states, sectors and opportunities of focus.

A number of state and territory governments in Australia have developed comprehensive plans for engaging with India, to ensure a nuanced and tailored approach for their specific regions. Unique examples of how these plans have been practically implemented, are highlighted below for the WA Government's consideration:

- *Awareness raising:* State Governments have utilised events as a major platform to promote their focus on India, key priorities and opportunities for local businesses. Asialink Business has delivered a number of events including our *State of the Nation: India* event series in collaboration with State Governments to support their agenda and to provide first-hand insights into recent developments in India across politics, business and the economy. These events support local businesses by generating interest in and awareness of the opportunities with India, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of business and government leaders invited to present at these forums.
- *Knowledge building:* To support the application of key aspects of its India strategy, Asialink Business has recently worked with one State Government to develop India Sector Guides that provide practical, engaging and accessible information to assist small and medium-sized enterprises in the State to identify, assess, and access opportunities in the Indian market. These sector guides will assist in driving greater engagement between the State and India, in the priority areas outlined in its India strategy. In addition to these sector guides, we have also assisted state governments with building their India strategies, including comprehensive engagement plans, as well as innovative tools to enable strategic resources such as the Indian diaspora to be utilised effectively in strengthening partnerships with India.
- *Capability development:* To support a State Government with a major initiative to build the Asia capabilities of public sector staff and its key stakeholders, Asialink Business has delivered a series of India-focused programs, including high-level briefings for ministers, senior staff and external stakeholders championing the State's India strategy. Through these programs we have assisted in the roll-out of the strategy and focused on building an understanding of key cultural and business practicalities for working with Indian stakeholders, to provide these individuals with the skills to advance their engagement with India.

Asialink Business would be pleased to assist the WA Government with elevating its relationship with India. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with you. For any queries, please contact:

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