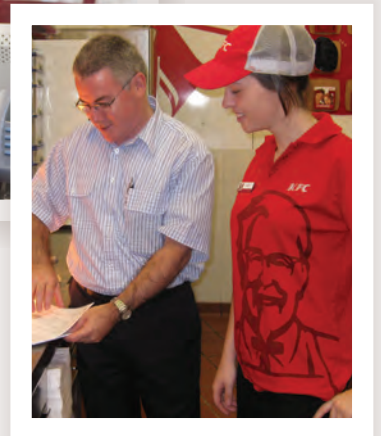


Growing a Retail Workforce:

A strategy for India & Australia



first impressions resources the australian retail college

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Executive Summary

First Impressions Resources – The Australian Retail College (**fir**) has 22 years experience in the design and delivery of retail training programs in Australia. The organisation specialises in the delivery of skills development training for the retail industry and has actively participated in the development and revisions of the retail training package over its thirteen year history in Australia.

Since attending the Global Skills Summit in Delhi in 2008, **fir** has maintained an active connection with major stakeholders in the Indian retail industry. **fir** was invited to showcase the national retail qualification pathway to visiting Indian government and industry representatives on a recent visit to Australia in 2010.

In the comprehensive Joint Ministerial Statement issued by the Australian and Indian governments dated 8 April 2010 (Appendix 1), a number of significant areas of cooperation and opportunities for collaboration were outlined within the vocational education and training (VET) sectors. Of particular interest for **fir** were the establishment of industry skills councils and the partnership opportunities for institutions from each country.

Within this context, **fir** undertook an independent visit to India to research the applicability of the Australian Retail Training Package to the Indian retail context. This also expanded on extensive desktop research that **fir** had already undertaken. The arrangement of meetings with Indian retailers was supported by three industry associations. Meetings held with Indian government representatives were useful and important information was collected.

The research undertaken highlighted some key areas for skills development in India and considerable similarities between the two countries' retail sectors. There is significant opportunity for Indian industry to adapt Australia's retail training package and models of vocational education and training to meet its skills development needs. This requires consideration of a range of factors by industry, Government and educators.

Specifically **fir** has identified twelve recommendations for Government, industry and educators (page 15) summarised as follows.

Executive Summary [Continued]

Government

1. Encourage Government and industry from both countries to continue cooperation in the light of the Joint Ministerial Statement
2. Establish the stewardship role of the Bureau of Vocational Educational Education and Training Collaboration (BVTEC)
3. Investigate options in India to provide for school to work transition and integration of VET in schools
4. Provide for work experience programs to be integrated into Indian Higher Education programs
5. Provide for international benchmarking of other Australian training packages

Industry

6. Formation of an Indian retail sector skills council involving industry and representing a wide range of retail formats and broad areas of responsibility
7. Australian Government support for Service Skills Australia to collaborate with Indian industry and Government in assisting the formation of an Indian counterpart
8. Conduct research into the impact on Indian employers of the minimum employment age of 18.

Educators

9. Inclusion of English language in Indian retail training programs.
10. Establish pilot training programs adapted from the Australian retail training package.
11. Develop Indian teachers' capabilities in workplace-based training and assessment and the use of recognition of prior learning.
12. Investigate opportunities for closer integration in both countries between education sectors and industry, including articulation arrangements.

Executive Summary [Continued]

The following projects are suggested as having the potential to mobilise these recommendations into significant action.

Capability development of practitioners

Australia to host Indian VET practitioners to develop capabilities in competency-based training and assessment, workplace-based training and assessment, the Australian retail training package and the like. There may be opportunities for funding through DEEWR, e.g. Endeavour Awards.

Development of Indian sector skills council

Service Skills Australia and **fir** to host a placement from Indian industry and/or related bodies to provide assistance in developing a framework for an Indian retail sector skills council. There may be opportunities for funding through DEEWR, e.g. Endeavour Awards.

Pilot train the trainer program in Bangalore

Work with retailers and educators in Bangalore to develop capabilities in competency-based training and assessment, workplace-based training and assessment, in the Indian context, with results to be shared with the sector skills council.

Pilot retail course with a specific Indian retailer

Develop a retail course with a specific retailer, adapted from the Australian retail training package, as a trial program. Results to be shared with the sector skills council.

Background

fir is an Australian award winning training organization specialising in the delivery of skills development and training for the retail industry. The primary focus for the college is to support career development in the retail sector and provide Australian retailers with a nationally recognised qualification pathway from entry-level, Certificate II through to postgraduate. **fir** delivers innovative retail training to employers and learners that meets industry needs Australia-wide, with an emphasis on workplace based solutions.

With 22 years experience, **fir** has developed long standing relationships with some of Australia's leading retailers, however also continues to support the staff development needs of smaller and regional businesses. **fir** runs a number of school-based programs, providing relevant vocational qualifications and experience which provides the platform for future careers. **fir's** relationship with University of Wollongong (UoW) provides an articulation from the **fir** Diploma program into the UoW Master of Retail Management program, with credit in one subject.



Figure 1: The retail qualifications pathway

Background [Continued]

During this time **fir** has also developed strong relationships with the retail sector industry skills council, Service Skills Australia, and has been involved in training package development and reviews, projects and pilot programs and research activity, in relation to the retail industry. This has also involved programs around language, literacy and numeracy development for the retail workforce.

For some time **fir** had watched the emergence of India's organised retail sector with interest and in September 2008 identified the Global Skills Summit in Delhi in September 2008 as an opportunity to investigate this at first hand. Hosted by the Confederation of Indian industry (CII) and co-sponsored by Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) the conference highlighted the issues faced by the growing organised Indian retail industry, which included the skills development of its current and its potential workforce.

In 2008 it was anticipated that the Indian organised retail sector would need to recruit 1.1 million additional staff over the following five years (Boston Consulting Group, 2008). The National Skills Development Corporation predicts the need to be over 17 million persons by 2022 (2010). This scale of growth would demand an influx of workers from more rural areas, who might not have the very basic skills required. Basic and higher level skills development were seen as fundamental for this level of growth to be realised.

Upon returning from this conference, **fir** developed a proposal with Service Skills Australia and the Australian Government to provide a three-tiered support for an initiative that would research the opportunities for the Australian Retail Training Package to be adapted to the Indian retail environment as a vehicle for Indian industry to formalise its skills development programs. This proposal formed the basis for continued dialogue between the parties on how this might be realised.

Background [Continued]

In January/February 2010 the Government of India, together with two of India's leading industry bodies, visited Australia to learn about Australia's VET system and the lessons learnt throughout its development. One industry being viewed was retail. At the invitation of DEEWR, **fir** led the 'shop-floor to boardroom tour' as a practical insight into the national qualification pathway from 'pre-employment to executive level' within the Australian retail industry.

This was very well received, with great interest shown in staff participation in skilling through national qualifications, and it provided **fir** with an understanding of the challenges and job creation opportunities the growing Indian retail sector is facing. The Indian delegates were impressed by the flexibility afforded by the Australian Retail Training Package, both in terms of the range of retail formats covered and also in the flexibility of training delivery and assessment models.

India possesses the fastest growing retail sector in the world and with a range of international retailers entering the market, is presented with many challenges. Meeting the rapid growth in demand for staff in the sector and the subsequent skilling of these people to a globally competitive level was presented as a priority. This rapid and unprecedented growth in the retail sector in India is seen as challenging the traditional view of how skills are developed.

The delegates also pointed to the fact that India has a growing young population, which will place demands on employment and social welfare. Their vision was of India as a potential supplier of skilled labour to international markets. In contrast, Australia has an ageing workforce and faces the challenges of both labour and skills shortages, including in retail, in the years ahead.

Australia and India both are experiencing increasing globalised competition in the retail sector with a growing multinational brand presence. This brings with it a demand for internationally relevant skills and the potential for a supply and demand relationship between the two countries. These factors establish an opportunity for a framework that will facilitate relationships between governments, the retail sectors and training providers.

Meeting with Indian Industry

Meeting with the Indian delegation further demonstrated to **fir** the potential for the Australian VET system and the Retail Training Package to provide models that might be adapted by India in meeting its rapidly growing skills needs. It was also the opportunity to develop relationships with Indian industry and **fir** was invited by both the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to visit their offices and to meet with retailers in India.

The objective of the visit was to identify the level of commonality between the Australian and Indian retail industries and the nature of retail work and the skills and knowledge required. This was critical in assessing to what extent the Australian Retail Training Package would be relevant to the Indian context, both in the breadth of skills and the levels to which these are required in various positions, in terms of alignment with Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) outcomes.

The research was planned over a two week period in which two **fir** Directors, Sue Freeman and Sandra Rawlings, would meet with six major retail organisations and three industry associations in Delhi and in Bangalore. In addition to this, the Directors conducted independent study tours of a range of retail formats and settings, including markets, malls and high street strips. This also provided for observation and reflection on the outcomes of the formal meetings.

A qualitative survey format was developed that would form the structure of these meetings. Each meeting lasted for around two to three hours and was held with senior officials from the organisations concerned. The Directors were struck by their openness and willingness to share information. The survey questions related to the nature, size and recruitment practices of the organisations, as well as analysing the job tasks and their relationship to units of competency from the Retail Training Package (see Appendix 2 for details).

This identification spanned from entry level customer service skills, through to human resource management, marketing and business development. It addressed how tasks are distributed amongst different levels of employees and therefore covered the breadth and depth of skills required. (See Appendix 3 for an example of one task area covered).

Summary of Findings

The survey addressed a number of key areas with the purpose of defining the individual organisational environment and establishing similarities across the sector. Individual differences were examined in the same context. There was also an opportunity to directly observe workplace practices in several retail environments, providing an opportunity to confirm survey findings.

With the exception of the fast-food retailers (or *quick service restaurants*), the retailers interviewed were part of large groups that operated across a range of product lines and retail formats. In some cases their companies were very diversified and operating in areas such as telecommunications, construction and energy. Our interviews were therefore focussed on one specific brand from their portfolio and may not therefore represent their entire business model. All retailers were however large businesses, often employing 100 – 500 staff per store, with multiple store locations.

The survey findings can be broadly grouped under the following categories:

- ◆ Recruitment and retention of staff
- ◆ Skills needs and skill similarities
- ◆ Education and training methods and systems
- ◆ Community and social issues

Recruitment and retention of staff

A high degree of similarity was found between Indian and Australian retailers in many areas, including hierarchies and job titles, although there was a prevalence for the specific function of a cashier with whom the retail customer would have their only direct contact. Another difference was a significantly lower proportion of female retail workers when compared to Australia. There was certainly a desire to employ more female workers, however cultural and other issues were seen as inhibiting this.

“...we can only employ women up to 8pm as after this we must arrange their safe transport home”

Summary of Findings [Continued]

Recruitment practices are quite similar to Australia with all retailers receiving unsolicited job applications at their stores as well as advertising for staff. In some cases relationships with Government agencies or other employment service providers exist and in one case, a direct relationship with schools. In another case there is an open approach to “poaching” staff from competitors.

There is also a common practice of recruiting MBA graduates into mid-tier positions, such as a trainee departmental manager, with opportunities for their advancement into management roles. One fast-food retailer recruits trainee managers directly from hospitality colleges. In these cases there was a desire for graduate employees to undertake some level of practical work experience before being employed and the absence of this currently is seen as a problem.

The attributes sought in new recruits varied to some extent however attitude, presentation and a customer service orientation were common. In most cases English language abilities were also identified as important, particularly in metropolitan areas, although one retailer identified the need for English language everywhere if India is to develop an international orientation and a mobile labour force.

As in Australia, the aspirational career profile of the retail industry in India is not high and competes with more attractive sectors such as call centres for skilled recruits. This also has implications for staff retention, although all retailers identified a preference for internal promotion to more senior positions and, with the level of growth anticipated, this may provide career pathways for staff. This in itself however demands a level of up-skilling within existing staff to equip them for more senior responsibilities. The miss-match between young employees’ career aspirations and their current capabilities was identified as a problem.

Other challenges in recruitment and retention of staff related to the sheer volume of staff required. One identified a need to recruit 5,000 to 7,000 new staff in the next five years, whilst another spoke of the need for 1,000 new frontline staff when opening a new hypermarket and the variety of strategies needed to achieve this.

Summary of Findings [Continued]

A greater diversity in recruits, including women and disabled persons was identified by one retailer as being needed, as well as addressing wage structures. Restrictions on the minimum age of young workers (18 compared to 15 in Australia) is also seen as a major impediment.

“...when we open a new store we need 6 months notice for recruitment and run a 45-day recruitment program”

Skills needs and skills similarities.

Developing retail skills was seen by all retailers and industry organisations as an imperative for the industry. Customer service was an area identified as being in great need of improvement as was greater knowledge of the supply chain. One retailer explained that there was a high level of shrinkage throughout the supply chain and that staff did not have the knowledge or skills to identify where this occurred. The level at which improvement was required ranged from entry level staff through to management.

Bhupta and Vaish (2010) discuss major shortcomings in many of the shopping malls that have been developed in recent years, with retailers often entering these without a real understanding of their demographics and demand. This has resulted in many retailers suffering losses and leaving some malls, resulting in high levels of unoccupancy. This suggests a need for shopping mall management to be included in the skills needed.

Having practical skills was also seen as important, including where staff are recruited with qualifications but do not seem to have the workplace abilities needed. This included transition from school to work as well as graduate trainees. Practical assessment on the shop floor was suggested by one retailer as a possible approach to deal with this. A need for a connection between IT and retail skills was also identified.

Summary of Findings [Continued]

In discussing the range of job tasks with retailers, **fir** found that there was great similarity between India and Australia and there was quite close alignment with the competencies contained in the Retail Training Package. There is a close relationship in the industry terminology and practices, such as the use of plan-o-grams in merchandising, issuing uniforms and dress codes, and the like. There were however some differences that might affect how some units or qualifications might be structured, for example those relating to legislation, workplace health and safety and diversity.

“India can only begin to address its long-term skills demands by bridging the divide between the education system and the business world”. – Edexcel (2009).

Retailers and industry organisations unanimously support the establishment of a Retail Sector Skills Council, similar to Service Skills Australia, in which industry and enterprise develop a skills framework, similar to the Retail Training Package. This skills council needs to embrace the diversity of organised retail, including its supply chain. It would establish the range of competencies appropriate to the Indian retail industry and how these competencies combine to create accredited qualifications. Other formats may also be relevant to industry, such as skills sets rather than full qualifications. Leadership development is an example that was cited by retailers.

Education and training methods and systems

All retailers currently provide some extent of induction and skills training. As mentioned above, there is also some linkage between enterprises and educational institutions, such as universities and hospitality colleges. Some retailers have more formally established academies and some others see this as a model that they would like to pursue, or to partner in.

Summary of Findings [Continued]

There appears to be significant variance in the standards of formal education and training in India, with little consistency in educational outcomes; MBA graduates have already been mentioned, however it is clear that an MBA from some institutions is more comparable to international standards than from others. Many Diploma qualifications seem to align more with lower Australian certificate levels and there seems to be a lack of consistency in accreditation.

The delegation that visited Australia in early 2010 highlighted this as an issue and expressed an interest in working with the AQF Council in establishing a similar framework in India. This is an important step in establishing greater international mobility for India's labour force, as this provided for better comparison of skills and direct credit arrangements in educational pathways. Establishing an Indian retail training framework that is based on quality features and is consistently applied will be critical for the same reasons.

“The National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) will provide quality assured various learning pathways having standards, comparable with any international qualification framework.”

- National Skills Development Policy, 2009 (Government of India).

The education system in India has traditionally been institutionally based, targeted to higher education with limited participation in vocational education and training (VET). This system has high costs in terms of infrastructure, with significant limitations on the number of students that can be educated within it. A lack of practical work skills was also cited by a number of retail employers as being prevalent in institutional training.

Workplace-based training and assessment has been developed and delivered in Australia over a number of years to meet the demands of industry and to provide an authentic learning experience, with skills and knowledge gained in a real situation, Competency can be assessed in the work environment facilitating more effective transfer of skills to the workplace.

Summary of Findings [Continued]

This model requires a commitment from both the training provider and the employer to ensure that the training provided is appropriately valued and supported.

India's National Skills Development Policy (2009) targets the creation of 500 million skilled workers by 2022. It is difficult to envisage how this can be achieved through a solely institutional pathway and therefore alternative and multiple methods need consideration, including workplace-based training and assessment, online learning, integration at school level and a competency-based rather than curriculum based system. The Australian traineeship model and the range of VET in School offerings might be adaptable to the Indian context.

*“It is estimated that 90 million jobs will be created over the next five years, of which almost half (45 million) are expected in the services sector...The current rate and quality of skills development in India does not have the capacity to cope with the demands of the rapidly expanding retail sector.”
(Technopak, 2010, p2)*

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is another assessment methodology that might be utilised to accelerate completion of formal and/or accredited training. For retail workers with some experience, providing recognition (through assessment) for the skills and knowledge that have been developed through informal learning, or in-house training programs, can be an effective tool in engaging and accelerating learners' completion.

This can also be used to acknowledge the range of skills that might have been developed by the worker in the unorganised retail sector, providing a pathway between the two. This was also identified by Francesca Beddie of NCVER (2009) in her address to the Global Skills Summit in New Delhi in 2009.

Summary of Findings [Continued]

Community and social issues

Industry associations in particular raised a number of community and social issues that are relevant to the retail sector. In particular is the problem of infrastructure and transport. This affects the mobility of labour within India and even within cities and also has an impact on distribution. The tradition of shopping locally with home delivery is prevalent in the Indian food sector.

There is also a cultural barrier to labour mobility which is not shared with Australia. Indian workers are inclined to stay close to their families and extended families, whereas transfer of retail staff between stores and between States is quite commonplace in Australia. These issues extend into rural areas and there is a rapid development of planned communities outside of city location which will impact upon the needs and opportunities of those communities. Consideration of industries and employment and the required skills to support these is needed at the planning stage, with locally-based solutions established.

Incorporating VET in school programs was also seen as an important benefit to rural communities and small businesses. Development of skills can be incorporated into the unorganised as well as the organised sector and would improve the productivity and viability of small and community based businesses in the face of competition.

There are a number of cultural differences between Australia and India that would need to be reflected in any adaptation of the Australian Retail Training Package and training systems. A high level of flexibility is required to ensure that a diverse range of needs and contexts are catered for, whilst maintaining a high level of quality and sufficient consistency to provide for portability of skills.

In discussions with HR practitioners it was identified that younger managers experienced some difficulty in managing older workers and that management training should incorporate strategies for overcoming this cultural barrier. A regional difference in attitude to customer service between the North and South of India was also identified as a challenge for national retailers.

The Way Forward

There are a number of key recommendations arising from this report and they are presented according to areas of involvement. Critical to the success of any of these recommendations will be the establishment of networks and gaining of support from the retail industry.

Government

1. Through the Joint Ministerial Statement, the Australian and Indian Governments gave mutual agreement to “expand the existing exchange program agreement to include greater cooperation across all education sectors....” Progress was targeted in the areas of cooperation and collaboration. The impetus generated by the first high level visit by the Indian delegation government officials and industry representatives must be maintained and encouraged.
2. The Bureau of Vocational Educational Education and Training Collaboration (BVTEC) has been established out of the Australia-India Joint Working Group in October 2009. This group must have a clear role established in maintaining an oversight of the activities at all levels. In particular, a stewardship function may be envisaged for exchange and development programs to facilitate sharing and capability building.
3. Investigate a range of options in India that enable school to work transition, such as school-based traineeships, VET in schools and work-experience. Australia has had VET in schools and school-based traineeship programs for around 13 years. This may require some amendment to legislation that prevents under 18 year olds from working. Perhaps exemptions could be made for students that are engaged in suitably accredited programs and workplaces.
4. Consideration of establishing links between further/higher education and work. These might again include work experience or internships, or work-integrated learning. Assessment in these education programs might include a competency-based element which is assessed on-the-job.

The Way Forward [Continued]

5. International benchmarking of training packages. Further work by DEEWR in comparing Australian training packages to other areas of Indian industry and that of other countries.

Industry

6. Industry skills council - the formation of an Indian Retail Sector Skills Council can only achieve maximum effect and influence with a strong industry representation from a range of retail formats, including large, self-service retailers to more specialist full-service retailers. The very large potential target areas of education and rural youth skilling could justify a separate presence on the council. The Indian Skills Council for Retail should consider the inclusion of supply chain management and shopping mall management as areas of its responsibility.
7. Service Skills Australia should be supported by the Australian Government to give maximum benefit to collaboration and cooperation and be actively involved in sharing and advising on purpose, process, governance etc.
8. A comprehensive research study should be undertaken into the impact on Indian employers and school non-completers of increasing the minimum employment age to 18 with the implications identified and appropriate responses generated.

Educators

9. Workplace English language skills should be included in any retail training package.
10. Pilot programs be established to customise and test the implementation of the retail training package. The retail sector in Bangalore has made advances in this respect and there is a supportive chamber for local Industry (BCIC) and an enthusiastic training market to support this initiative.
11. Develop the capability of teachers and trainers to deliver competency-based training and assessment in more flexible formats, including in the workplace and the use of RPL.

The Way Forward [Continued]

- Investigate opportunities for partnerships between VET, Higher Education and Industry in developing work-integrated pathways through vocational education into university programs.

Potential projects are listed for consideration.

The following four projects have the potential to take forward some of the recommendations identified above.

Capability development of practitioners

Australia to host Indian VET practitioners to develop capabilities in competency-based training and assessment, workplace-based training and assessment, the Australian retail training package and the like. There may be opportunities for funding through DEEWR, e.g. Endeavour Awards.

Development of Indian sector skills council

Service Skills Australia and **fir** host a delegation from Indian industry and/or related bodies to provide assistance in developing a framework for an Indian retail sector skills council. There may be opportunities for funding through DEEWR, e.g. Endeavour Awards.

Pilot train the trainer program in Bangalore

Working with retailers and educators in Bangalore to develop capabilities in competency-based training and assessment, workplace-based training and assessment, in the Indian context, with results to be shared with the sector skills council.

Pilot retail course with a specific retailer

To develop a retail course with a specific retailer, adapted from the Australian retail training package, as a trial program. Results to be shared with the sector skills council.

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Appendix 1 – Joint Ministerial Statement



THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
Minister for Education
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister for Social Inclusion

THE HON KAPIL SIBAL
Minister of Human Resource Development

JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Between the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations of the Government of Australia and the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India

8 April 2010

We, the Education Ministers of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Republic of India, reaffirm our commitment to continue to expand collaboration in education, training and research between Australia and India.

We acknowledge our ongoing bilateral cooperation in education and training through the *Education Exchange Program Between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Training*, signed on 23 October 2003. This Joint Ministerial Statement supplements this Exchange Program.

We reaffirm our agreement at our meeting in New Delhi in August 2009 to meet annually.

Through this Joint Ministerial Statement, we mutually consent to expand the existing exchange program agreement to include greater cooperation across all education sectors – schools, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education including technical and professional education through:

- (i) Sharing expertise in qualification and quality frameworks and standards for education, research and training;
- (ii) Providing mutual assistance in fields of agreed benefit, with a particular focus on skills demand and emerging needs areas;
- (iii) Working together to evolve credit transfer arrangements between Australia and India;
- (iv) Actively initiating and supporting formal working groups, such as the Bureau for Vocational Education and Training Collaboration (BVETC), to improve understanding of our respective education and training systems and to discuss and periodically review progress on mutually agreed activities;

- (v) Strengthening lines of communication for exchange of information on new policy initiatives and opportunities for development of education, training and research activities of both countries;
- (vi) Supporting the exchange of government officials and educationists for continuous professional development;
- (vii) Agreeing to establish a Memorandum of Cooperation to progress common interests in developing and monitoring standards and regulations applicable to the operations and activities of education agents and the movement and wellbeing of Indian students to Australia;
- (viii) Enabling the participation of a third party on joint activities upon mutual agreement;
- (ix) Mutual agreement on funding arrangements to cover expenses for cooperation activities, subject to availability of funds; and
- (x) Exploration of the possible agreement to set-up an India-Australia Education Council as a bi-national body with representation from academia, policy makers and industry to interact on issues related to education and to further collaboration between both sides.

This Joint Ministerial Statement supplements the *Education Exchange Program between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Training* and should be read in conjunction with it.

Context

India and Australia are at an exciting time in their relationship. As envisaged in the Joint Statement of both Prime Ministers in 2009, India and Australia are building a broad knowledge partnership, including developing collaborative projects in education. The higher education institutions (universities and vocational training institutions) in both nations have an important role to play in such partnership including cooperation in science and technology. We recognize that education is central to sustained, inclusive and equitable growth.

People-to-people contacts are at the heart of the bilateral relationship. Students studying in both countries play an important role in building bridges of friendship and understanding and are a significant resource for future development of the relationship. Both countries attach high priority to the safety and wellbeing of students as they play an important part in the knowledge partnership envisaged between the two countries.

Schools

India and Australia are both embarking on significant education reforms focussed on developing curriculum to meet the needs of 21st century learners in a rapidly globalising world.

Implementing significant reforms requires capacity building of school leaders including the exploration of relevant research and exchanging best practices. Both sides recognise the importance of Australia-India Principals/Teachers Exchange Program organised through the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) with support from Australian Education International (AEI) India. The program focuses on school leadership, school management and innovation, curriculum and assessment. Australia and India agree to examine expanding the existing program to provide more scholarships and a greater degree of exchange of principals, teachers and administrators dealing with school education.

Melbourne City Council, with the assistance of AEF and AEI India, will support eight scholarships for School Principals from Delhi (government and non-government schools) to visit Melbourne schools for two weeks in 2010 to further their professional development and links between Australia and India.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), India and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate in programs and initiatives which will apply international best practices in educational research and assessment to support educational development.

Vocational Education and Training

India and Australia recognise the valuable contribution that vocational education and training plays in improving skills to enhance employability, increase productivity, strengthen national competitiveness and support sustainable development to adapt to climate change.

The Australia – India VET Mission (31 January – 5 February 2010) was the first high level delegation of Indian government officials and industry representatives focusing on vocational education and training to visit Australia. The mission achieved its aim to increase understanding about vocational education and training in both countries and to assist in long-term engagement in vocational education and training.

Both countries are keen to build on the success of the mission and achieve progress in the identified areas of cooperation and opportunities for collaboration. The Bureau of Vocational Education and Training Collaboration (BVETC), established out of the Australia-India Joint Working Group in October 2009, will direct and facilitate continuing collaboration in vocational education and training between the two countries, including the following activities:

1. Government to government

Both Governments will work towards supporting quality vocational education and training systems in India and Australia. Australia will collaborate with India in the systemic development of National Quality Assurance arrangements. These may include developing a national qualifications framework and training quality standards.

The Australian National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and the National Council of Educational, Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Staff Training and Research Institute (CSTARI) will collaborate on vocational training and research. Both sides will engage in joint activities to work towards developing a sound and evidence based system for providing information, data and policy inputs for policy makers in India and Australia in the areas of vocational education and training.

2. Industry to industry – Industry Skills Councils

Both sides are planning to better engage industry in their vocational education and training systems.

In the short term, Australian industry skills councils are keen to build mutually beneficial relationships with Indian industry as follows:

- Business Forums in India, with support from the Government of India, will link with Service Skills Australia, in the retail sector, to customise qualifications and competencies to meet the needs of the Indian industry.
- Service Skills Australia seeks to partner with Indian industry and government in the hospitality and tourism sectors,
- The Construction and Property Industry Skills Council will continue to link with the Confederation of Indian Industry and/or the National Academy of Construction, Hyderabad to further their already established relationship. The aim is to promote cooperation in areas such as setting up quality processes and staff training in the Indian building and construction industry.

The experience gained in these collaborations will form the basis for long term partnership between the Australian Government, Australian industry skills councils and the Indian Government and Indian industry to develop sector skills councils in India.

3. Institution to institution

Australian institutions are keen to work with comparable institutions in India to complement existing expertise, support innovation and implement projects. The training of teachers, organisational governance, recognition of prior learning and engaging youth through innovative models of training delivery are examples of areas of mutual focus. The intention is also to better integrate learning between vocational training sectors and higher education institutions.

The Bureau of Vocational Education and Training Collaboration (BVETC) will continue to bring together Australian and Indian institutes and identify suitable partner institutes for further development of collaboration at the institutional level.

Higher Education

The Governments of Australia and India recognise that the relationship between our higher education systems is a mature and productive one and is based on a long standing history of cooperation and exchange to the benefit of both countries.

We are pleased to be able to announce a range of collaborative activities to help build on this strong foundation and note that beyond those activities announced today, new institution to institution links will continue to develop and grow. We aim to ensure that our students, academics and institutions continue to reap the benefits of cultural and knowledge exchange and collaboration. Cooperation in quality assurance, dialogue between sector representatives, research collaboration and institutional partnerships will all help to progress this aim.

The Governments of Australia and India will work with UGC and other relevant bodies, including the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Universities Australia (UA), in developing methods for facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications and credit transfer arrangements between Australia and India.

To encourage academic exchange, both sides agree to hold joint seminars on mutually agreed themes to be inaugurated in India in 2010 and coordinated by DEEWR and the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The UGC will provide necessary financial support on a reciprocal and sharing basis for the agreed schemes and programs for collaboration between India and Australia.

We agree to facilitate the organisation of an Australia-India Inter-University Convention of Vice-Chancellors and Academia to interact on issues of mutual concern among academics.

We are also pleased to note the commitment by Universities Australia to co-sponsor a national education forum in New Delhi in late 2010 with its partner organisation, the Association of Indian Universities and interested others to discuss a number of topics including regulation and governance, transnational education issues and collaborative research.

Australia and India also agree to continue to expand cultural and academic ties through the Australia India Institute (AII) and the Australia India Council (AIC) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India.

Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) universities have opened a dialogue with Indian Institutes of Technology about establishing a staff exchange program between the two groups of leading higher education institutions.

The Go8-IIT staff exchange program will underpin longer-term relationships, such as in research collaboration. It will also improve understanding between Australian and Indian universities and increase the level of student, staff and research exchange between our two countries.

In addition, we agree to facilitate the initiation of a Joint Faculty Development Program through regular exchange of faculty for mutual learning in areas of teaching, research and curriculum development.

Both sides acknowledge and support the increasing partnerships between our education institutions in research, such as:

- activities under the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) – a joint undertaking of both governments which the Prime Ministers of Australia and India agreed in November 2009 to extend and expand with an Australian contribution of A\$50 million (Rs 200 crore) over the next five years, matched by the Government of India; and
- Australia and India agree to explore suitable partnerships with one or more of India's proposed 14 Innovation Universities and the proposed Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development to be set up in Delhi.

We are pleased to note that the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) will undertake joint research workshops, seminars and exchange of personnel for mutual learning and benefit on quality assurance in higher education. This builds on the strong relationship between AUQA and NAAC, as expressed through successive Memoranda of Cooperation.

Signed in Melbourne on 8 April 2010 in two original copies

For the Government of Australia

For the Government of the Republic of India

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Hon Julia Gillard MP
Deputy Prime Minister

Hon Kapil Sibal
Minister for Human Resource Development

Appendix 2 – Survey Job Task Categories

Survey Job Task Categories
<p>Administration</p> <p>This includes completing and processing paperwork in the store. It ranges from completing basic documents such as filling in simple forms to managing all of the store’s paperwork and administrative processes which may be paper-based and/or electronic.</p>
<p>Communication</p> <p>This includes verbal and written communication related to dealing with customers and other staff. At a management level, it includes sharing information within the store and with external organizations.</p>
<p>Customer Service</p> <p>This includes staff members dealing with simple customer queries and complaints. It extends to the role of managing complicated queries and complaints. It also includes leading & monitoring staff when they deal with customers & their problems.</p>
<p>Display & merchandising</p> <p>This section ranges from building basic arrangements of merchandise to managing the overall display, arrangement and pricing of stock to attract customers.</p>
<p>Grooming and appearance</p> <p>This section includes staff members’ personal presentation consistently meeting company requirements, and the supervision of staff to ensure that they maintain business standards.</p>
<p>Governance and legal compliance</p> <p>This section refers to the activities involved in checking that all legal requirements are met in the store.</p>
<p>Human Resource Management</p> <p>This section includes human resource roles including recruiting and organising staff to meet business needs, giving formal feedback to staff on their performance and counselling/terminating staff when necessary.</p>
<p>Innovation & continuous improvement</p> <p>This section includes identifying, devising and implementing improvements in the business.</p>
<p>Learning & self management</p> <p>This section includes all staff taking personal responsibility for their own development and learning.</p>

Survey Job Task Categories

Maintenance

This section includes keeping the store facilities in good condition, including equipment servicing and storage facilities.

Marketing and business development

This section involves developing marketing plans to attract customers, and implementing planned marketing/promotional activities.

Operational and strategic planning

This section relates to planning.

- Operational plans – planning and monitoring the day-to-day operations of the store.
- Strategic plans –forward planning for future months and trading periods

Problem solving & innovation

This section relates to identifying and solving problems to better achieve store objectives.

Point-of-sale/register/terminal use

This section relates to transacting sales using a register/computer terminal, taking the customer's money or payment method when they purchase goods and giving correct change, dockets etc

Safety

This section is concerned with all staff reducing the risk of hazards and injury. It also includes monitoring and managing safety for the entire store, and training staff in safety procedures and equipment use.

Security and loss prevention

This section includes staff preventing the theft of stock, money and store equipment by customers and suppliers. It also includes management of theft for the entire store including theft by staff members.

Selling

This section includes actively interacting with customers to encourage them to buy.

Stock control & stock movement

This section includes the receipt, marking and organising of stock to keep it in good condition, properly recorded and stocked to required levels.

Team work

This section includes staff members being effective members of the team. It also includes managing teams effectively so they perform well.

Survey Job Task Categories

Product knowledge – non-food related areas

This section relates to knowing products thoroughly so they can be correctly explained to customers and properly cared for and displayed while in the store.

Food product Knowledge

This section relates to knowing food products thoroughly so they can be correctly explained to customers and properly cared for and displayed while in the store.

Food preparation, cooking and serving

This section relates to the skill required to organize, prepare and cook food for sale to customers; and to display/pack it for sale.

Food hygiene & safety

This section refers to the procedures to ensure that food is stored, handled, cooked and served hygienically so it is fit for human consumption.

Appendix 3 – Survey Tool Question Example

14. Customer Service

This includes staff members dealing with simple customer queries and complaints. It extends to the role of managing complicated queries and complaints. It also includes leading & monitoring staff when they deal with customers & their problems.

Please indicate below who in your business is most often involved in the following tasks:

	Sales person	Supervisor	Manager	Other	No such task
Personally provide customer service to customers such as responding to waiting customers and offer to assist them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Build relationships with key customers or client organizations to develop business opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solve simple customer problems and complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refer customer complaints to more senior personnel when necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independently manage serious customer complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervise some other staff members to ensure that customer service standards are met	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manage the store's service standards by leading the staff team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise delivery of products for customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				