



## Australian Institute of International Affairs

### **National President's Forum** *India 2020*

#### **Outcomes Report**

The Australian Institute of International Affairs' National President's Forum 'India 2020' was held in Perth from 23-25 August 2011.

The Forum was held at the Parliament of Western Australia and involved the participation of a select group of 40 Australian and international speakers, including Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Former Foreign Secretary of India, T.N. Ninan, Chairman and Chief Editor of *Business Standard* and HE Mrs Sujatha Singh, the Indian High Commissioner to Australia.

It was preceded by an event at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia. It was then followed by a reception held at Government House and a business breakfast hosted by the Western Australian Club.

Highlights of the Forum included:

- Expertise and insights of leading Indian and Australian government, academic and business figures
- Involvement of 40 participants from key government departments, business, state government, academic, media and community representatives
- Participation by more than 500 people through associated events in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, including viewing by four school groups
- Coverage by local and national media and the recording and broadcasting of the event by the Australia's Public Affairs Channel (A-PAC)
- Preparation of a Rapporteur's Report by Murdoch University's Professor Garry Rodan
- Distribution of reports and recommendations to relevant policy-makers
- The announcement of the formation of the WA Parliamentary Friends of India Group





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## Objectives

The National President's Forum is the AIIA's premier annual event. The main objective of the 2011 Forum on 'India 2020' was to bring together a select group of experts from India along with leading Australian government, academic and business figures to engage in a debate on developments in India and their impact on India-Australia relations.

The Forum was divided in to four sessions which focused on:

- **Understanding India's Strategic Environment:** Threats and opportunities in India's neighborhood
- **India's Internal Dynamics:** Internal constraints and long term determinants of growth
- **India Towards 2020:** India's emergence as a significant political and economic global power
- **Implications for Australia:** Developments in India and their implications for the future of the Australia-India relationship

Specific objectives of the Forum included:

- To create a platform for dynamic discussion of developments in India and their implications for Australia
- To provide a thorough understanding of the strategic issues and social, political and economic climate in India and promote a discussion of solutions to current and future challenges
- To analyse Australia's current engagement and strategic interests regarding India
- To debate, share ideas and formulate recommendations for the future direction of Australia's engagement with India
- To assist public education about India's strategic environment, international relations, internal dynamics and Australia's engagement with India
- To establish a platform for future collaboration between Australia and India



**Ambassador Lalit Mansingh**



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### Associated Events

Prior to the National President's Forum, the AIIA held a public event entitled '*India Now-And What It Means for Australia*' at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia. Dr. Sue Boyd, WA Branch President of the AIIA, moderated a distinguished and engaging panel consisting of Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Professor Amitabh Mattoo, Professor Ramesh Thakur and Professor Samina Yasmeen. These presentations were followed by lively public engagement with the panelists, and greatly contributed to the AIIA's promotion of a wider public understanding of Australia-India relations. More than 90 people attended this event.

Following the National President's Forum, participants were invited by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia Mr Malcolm James McCusker AO QC for a reception at Government House. The outstanding contributions of former Secretary of Defence Ric Smith AO PSM to international relations were acknowledged by the AIIA's National President John McCarthy AO FAIIA, and Mr Smith was awarded fellowship of the AIIA by the Governor of Western Australia.

On 25 August, a Business Breakfast was hosted by the Western Australia Club. This breakfast brought together academics, interested members of the public and important members of the business community and featured the expertise and insight of T.N. Ninan, Chairman and Editorial Director of *Business Standard* and Alan Davies, President of International Operations, Rio Tinto Iron Ore.

Events were also hosted by AIIA branches in Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide and attracted 45-60 people each to hear T N Ninan on "India 2020: Will it Achieve its Potential?" and Ambassador Lalit Mansingh on 'India's Regional Strategic Priorities' and 'A Rising India's Global Goals'.



**Ric Smith AO PSM FAIIA being presented with his AIIA Fellows Award by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Mr Malcom James McCusker**



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## Participants

Speakers and participants came from a variety of organisations that included:

### Government

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- AusAID
- Parliament of Western Australia
- Western Australia Department of Agriculture and Food

### Academic Institutions and Think Tanks

- Australia-India Institute, University of Melbourne
- Australian National University
- National University of Singapore
- University of Western Australia
- University of New South Wales
- Griffith University
- La Trobe University
- Murdoch University
- Curtin University
- Lowy Institute for International Policy

### Business and Media Enterprises

- *Business Standard*
- Rio Tinto Iron Ore
- Australia-India Business Council



**Public Forum: “India Now-And What It Means for Australia”, 23 August 2011**



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### Feedback

Feedback from participants indicated that the Forum was a great success, with the overall quality scoring an average of 4.7 out of 5.

Participants noted the following as highlights of the Forum:

- “The collection of such an eminent list of speakers in one forum who have the wisdom, vision and experiences of dealing with India”
- “The quality of the speakers and the range of topics covered”
- “The quality of discussion and diversity of views”
- The “opportunity to broaden perspectives of Australia-India relationship” and “develop a basis for better relationships between Australia and India”

Participants also made the following general comments regarding the Forum:

“A genuine contribution to the bilateral relationship and the quality of understanding in this country about India”, *Rory Medcalf, Lowy Institute for International Policy*

“Found it very useful to connect with a lot of people with common interest”, *Professor Robin Jeffrey, National University of Singapore*

“Besides listening to some great speakers, the Legislative Chamber was a magnificent venue for such ideas, and Western Australia the site of enduring interest in India and the Indian Ocean Region”, *Dr Auriol Weigold, Fellow, Australian Prime Ministers Centre*

“Thank you for everything - the hospitality, the flawless arrangements, the opportunity to meet so many interesting people, and the chance to better understand Australia”, *T.N. Ninan*

“I wish to thank you and your colleagues for the superb arrangements not only in Perth but in Canberra and Melbourne as well... I was most impressed with the high level of expertise and interest in India among the Australian participants. It is a good signal for the future of the India-Australia strategic partnership”, *Ambassador Lalit Mansingh*



**T.N. Ninan, Chairman and Chief Editor of *Business Standard***



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### Outcomes

The National President's Forum produced a number of recommendations for Australian policy.

A summary of the proceedings was prepared by Professor Garry Rodan and distributed to participants and key decision-makers, as well as posted on the AIIA's website:

<http://www.aiaa.asn.au/events/national-events>

Media outcomes included local coverage in the Subiaco Post and WA News and attendance by senior media figures including from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and Radio National at events. Participants subsequently spoke about Forum outcomes including on ABC Radio with Margaret Throsby.

### Involvement

The 2011 National President's Forum was made possible through the generous support of:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Australia-India Council
- Rio Tinto Iron Ore
- The Perth Mint Australia
- The Centre for Muslim States and Societies, University of Western Australia
- Howling Wolves Wines
- Australia India Business Council
- Parliament of Western Australia
- The Western Australian Club



**Public Forum: “India Now-And What It Means for Australia”, 23 August 2011  
Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia**



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## Acknowledgements

The Australian Institute of International Affairs would like to thank all participants in the Forum, particularly speakers, moderators, chairs and the Rapporteur.

The organising Sub-Committee was comprised of:

- John McCarthy AO FAIIA, National President, AIIA
- Zara Kimpton OAM, National Vice-President, AIIA
- Melissa Conley Tyler, National Executive Director, AIIA
- John Robbins CSC, National Deputy Director, AIIA
- Dr Sue Boyd, WA Branch President, AIIA
- Ian Dudgeon RFD, ACT Branch President, AIIA
- Colin Chapman, NSW Branch President, AIIA
- Michelle Marginson

The event would not have been possible without the dedication of the following:

- Mr John Robbins CSC, National Deputy Director, AIIA National Office
- Ms Danielle Rajendram, Intern, AIIA National Office
- Ms Olivia Boyd, Intern, AIIA National Office
- Mr Christian Dietrich, Intern, AIIA National Office
- Mr James Reid, Intern, AIIA National Office
- Ms Fiona Teo, Intern, AIIA National Office
- Mr Solvin Mathew, Intern, AIIA National Office
- Dr Sue Boyd, WA Branch President, AIIA
- Mr Andrew Pickford, WA Branch
- Ms Anne-Marie Balbi, WA Branch
- Ms Martina Ucnikova, WA Branch
- Mr Sian Churcher, WA Branch
- Mr Ben Dahlstrom, WA Branch



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**Ambassador Lalit Mansingh; Dr. Sue Boyd, President, WA; HE Mrs Sujatha Singh, Indian High Commissioner to Australia; Alan Davies, Rio Tinto Iron Ore; Mr John McCarthy AO FAIIA, National President, AIIA; Ms Zara Kimpton OAM, National Vice President AIIA, at the Business Breakfast hosted in Western Australia Club, Thursday August 25, 2011**