Media release

The Hon Ted Baillieu MP
Premier
Minister for the Arts

Tuesday 21 February 2012 (New Delhi, India time)

New partnerships developed in historic meeting to strengthen Victoria-India education sector

Premier Ted Baillieu has led an historic bilateral education meeting in New Delhi today that was attended by Indian and Victorian government leaders, university Vice-Chancellors, pre-eminent TAFE Institutes and leading education providers.

Mr Baillieu said Victoria was the leader in education in Australia, education being one of Victoria’s great competitive strengths, and international education was also Victoria’s largest export sector currently worth $4.8 billion to the economy each year.

“There is a growing demand in India for high quality education and Victoria is extremely well placed to meet this demand, boost exports and assist India in its next stage of development,” Mr Baillieu said.

“The Victorian Coalition Government is focused on growing the partnerships between India and Victoria’s higher education sector, for mutual benefit that will strengthen research and development, deliver new global partnerships with industry and generate economic benefit.”

Following the meeting Mr Baillieu announced and witnessed seven partnerships between Victorian and Indian institutions, including:

- Deakin University and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore Partnership;
- La Trobe University and HCL Partnership;
- La Trobe University and Birla Institute of Technology (BITS) – Pilani Partnership;
- The University of Melbourne and the University of Calcutta Partnership University of Calcutta;
- The University of Melbourne and the University of Delhi – joint-teaching program;
- Swinburne University and AutoCRC Jaypee University of Information Technology Research Project Launch; and
- Victoria University and Ganpat University expansion of twinning programs.

Mr Baillieu said education institutions in both countries played a substantial role in fostering links between countries.

“It is through these education collaborations that India and Victoria will share knowledge and best practice, drive new research and help to equip students with the skills needed for future innovation and economic growth,” Mr Baillieu said.

“Victoria attaches great importance to its relationship with India and is committed to strengthening education and industry links.”...
Mr Baillieu said among new Victorian Government initiatives to build and strengthen education ties with India was the *Victoria India Doctoral Scholarships* program which will see ten Indian PhD students receive scholarships to study at Victorian universities.

The *Victoria India Doctoral Scholarships* are administered by the Australia India Institute on behalf of the Victorian Government.

Mr Baillieu said the London-based organisation QS had recently announced its first global grading of major international student cities, ranking Melbourne fourth in the world – behind only Paris, London and Boston.

Mr Baillieu also announced an expansion of the collaborative Victoria-India Vocational Training Programs, similar to those already in place in the States of Karnataka and Maharashtra.

“It is anticipated that this initiative will enable thousands of people to be trained,” Mr Baillieu said.

“This is a strong commitment to the Victorian Government working in partnership with the Indian Government and industry to support their mandate to skill 500 million people by the year 2022.”

Mr Baillieu also announced that the Victorian Government would establish Victorian International Education awards to recognise best practice and outstanding international education providers.

“These awards will recognise international education providers that deliver outstanding educational content and best practice student care,” Mr Baillieu said.

“The Victorian Government takes the issue of providing a high quality student education and education experience very seriously and these awards are part of encouraging educational providers to set new standards and recognise best practice.”

The Victorian Government has taken a number of measures to strengthen Victoria’s reputation in international education and support international students.

“Under the *Victoria: Leader in Learning* initiative the Victorian Government has committed an additional $2 million to support Victoria’s international education sector,” Mr Baillieu said.

Victorian Government initiatives include a 24-hour International Student Care Service, a Welcome Desk at Melbourne International Airport at the start of each semester, a free Culture Card that provides access to the many great experiences on offer in Victoria, and up-to-date information at [www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au), now available in Hindi.

Mr Baillieu said the Victorian Government was committed to ensuring the safety of all communities in Victoria, including international students, and was working with institutions and students to provide strong support for all international students.

“International students add immense value to our community and they are an important part of our rich multicultural tapestry,” Mr Baillieu said.
“They also contribute to the learning experience of all students who are in higher education.”

Mr Baillieu said the Victorian Government was also advocating reform to the student visa regime at a national level.

The delegation of Victorian higher education leaders at the meeting was the strongest ever to travel to India and included representatives of eight universities, six Vice-Chancellors from Victoria’s most prestigious universities, 14 of Victoria’s pre-eminent TAFE Institutes (including dual-sector), and other leading education providers.

The Indian higher education sector representation included Professor Amitabh Mattoo, Director of the Australian India Institute and former Vice-Chancellor of Jammu University, senior representatives from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Indian universities (including Delhi, Calcutta, Ganpat, Jaypee, Lovely Professional and TERI Universities), the Chairman of the Indian University Grants Commission, the Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education, the Indian Institute for Science, Education and Research - Bhopal, and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science.

The trade mission, which includes more than 200 Victorian companies, is focused on Victoria’s competitive strengths including automotive, aviation and aerospace, cleantech, education, food and beverage, ICT, life sciences, professional services, sustainable urban design and tourism.

The trade mission is part of the Coalition Government’s economic strategy which has a major focus on trade engagement in new markets to generate more jobs for Victorians and substantial new export opportunities and investment for Victorian businesses.

The mission commenced in New Delhi on 21 February 2012 and will showcase the best of Victorian industry capability in key centres including Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Pune.

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