

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan co-chairs 1st Australia India Education and Skill Council meeting (AIESC) with Australian Counterparts in Gandhinagar; holds bilateral meeting with HE Jason Clare, MP, Minister of Education, Australia

AIESC to build stronger knowledge bridges and establish knowledge vertical as one of strongest pillars of India-Australia Friendship: Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

5 MoUs exchanged between Australian and Indian HEIs to facilitate greater academic, research and skill collaborations: - Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

India to go for focussed research in identified sectors under SPARC Phase 3; sets aside 2.5 million USD for collaboration with Australia for research in critical minerals and other priority areas

Ministers welcome imminent opening of Deakin and Wollongong university campuses in GIFT City

Posted On: 06 NOV 2023 6:05PM by PIB Delhi



Shri Pradhan extended a warm welcome to Australian Minister for Education HE Jason Clare, MP. This is Minister Clare's second visit to India this year. Shri Pradhan said that the frequent meetings are a testament to the growing strength and dynamism of India-Australia knowledge partnership. He expressed his happiness for the steady progress in the areas of mutual recognition of qualifications, establishment of joint working group, joint skill collaborations, collaboration between HEIs for joint degrees, study in India, internationalisation of India's education, visa-related issues for Indian students and research scholars, among others.

Both the Ministers comprehensively reviewed the bilateral cooperation in education and skilling and agreed to further strengthen knowledge and skilling partnerships for greater mobility, employability and prosperity of people in both our countries.

Shri Pradhan co-chaired the 1<sup>st</sup> Australia India Education and Skill Council meeting with Australian Ministers HE Jason Clare, MP, Education Minister and HE Brendan O'Connor, Skills & Training Minister in Gandhinagar.





The AIESC, earlier the Australian India Education Council (AIEC), is a bi-national body established in 2011 to guide the strategic direction of the education, training and research partnerships between the two countries. The scope of this forum was enhanced in alignment with the national priorities of both countries to bring focus on promoting internationalisation, two-way mobility and collaboration in the domains of education as well as the skill ecosystem. This is for the first time that education and skilling is being brought under the same institutional forum.

During the meeting, Shri Pradhan highlighted 2023 as a landmark year for Australia and India, particularly for cooperation in the areas of education and skill development. The inaugural Australia-India Education and Skills Council meeting will act as a catalyst in charting new roadmaps for building stronger knowledge bridges, advancing mutual priorities in education and skill development, boosting people-to-people linkages and establishing the knowledge vertical as one of the strongest pillars of India – Australia ties, he stated.

He further said that education and skills as a primary and priority area of our bilateral engagements reflects PM Shri Narendra Modi's and Australian PM, HE Anthony Albanese's commitment to strengthening knowledge bridges. The immensely successful inaugural Australia-India Education and Skills Council meeting has paved the way for 'more cooperation, more collaboration and more mobility' in identified priority areas, he added.

He informed that 5 MoUs between Australian and Indian HEIs have been exchanged today to facilitate greater research collaborations in areas like, agriculture, water management, critical minerals, healthcare, AI, renewable energy and climate change. This is going to create more opportunities for advancing educational, research and innovation priorities, student and faculty exchanges, more twining programs/dual degrees, he added.





Shri Pradhan further said that focused on outcome-oriented roadmap for the decade, AIESC will be the key for envisioning a brighter future for both Australia and India. He also thanked the Australian Ministers and their team for taking this platform to the next level of engagement where Indian students and skilled workers can explore better and more meaningful avenues for their careers and livelihood.

HE Mr. Jason Clare, MP in his address mentioned how the future of the countries will be shaped with the help of meaningful partnership in the areas of education and skilling. He mentioned the 450 existing research partnerships between the two countries. He also commented that collaboration at the governmental, institutional and industry levels will further strengthen the tie-up and benefit both countries.

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and HE Mr. Jason Clare, MP also addressed a joint Press Conference after the completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australia-India Education and Skills Council Meeting (AIECS). Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Shri K Sanjay Murthy and Australia's High Commissioner to India, Mr. Philip Green, OAM were also present at the Press conference.

The Ministers welcomed the imminent opening of the campuses of University of Wollongong and Deakin University at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). Ministers also welcomed ongoing Institutional collaboration in research, between top Indian Institutes like the IITs with top Australian Universities.

Both the Ministers reaffirmed their joint commitment to implement qualification recognition arrangements under the Mechanism for the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and acknowledged the work done by the Australia-India Qualifications Recognition Steering Committee. Regarding research collaborations, Shri Pradhan mentioned that India is working on the Phase III of the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) Programme and priority areas would include joint projects in critical minerals, rare earths and other mutually agreed priority areas. India has earmarked 2.5 million USD for Joint Research Projects with Australia.

#### **Details of the MoUs exchanged are as follows:**

##### **1. Innovative Research Universities consortium campus:**

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) is a coalition of 7 public universities across Australia: Flinders University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University, Griffith University, University of Canberra, and Western Sydney University. The objective of the IRU'S MOU is to provide a framework for closer cooperation between parties in strengthening the Australia-India education partnership. Under the MOU, participating members will work together to explore the potential for a consortium approach to in-country delivery of degrees in India and expand in-country access to Australian higher education for Indian students.

##### **2. Deakin University and National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC):**

In partnership with India's National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), Deakin University has developed the 'Global Job Readiness Program' (GJRP) to address skills shortages in India. This 30-hour

program will be delivered online and aims to upskill 15 million Indians over three years. The GJRP focuses on skills in highest demand among employers. Its mission is to produce a program to address the gap in life and workplace skills that Indian employers regularly point to as a hindrance to business and ensure the program is both affordable and accessible to the majority of India's youth.

### 3. Deakin University and IIT Gandhinagar:

With the establishment of Deakin University's campus at GIFT City, the key objective through the alliance with IIT Gandhinagar is to provide support for a quality higher education and research ecosystem in the local region. The partnership will focus on collaboration in science and innovation, mobility, faculty exchange, and joint doctoral programs. It will also promote collaboration for bilateral funding opportunities and knowledge exchange through joint grant proposals, conferences and workshops. The collaboration with Deakin will provide an opportunity for IIT Gandhinagar students to transfer into higher studies and research at Deakin University both in Australia and at GIFT City. The collaboration will enable Deakin University to broaden its engagement in India through a high-quality partnership.

### 4. Monash University and Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad:

This MoU is for collaboration on academic and research activities in the area of critical minerals and other areas of mutual interest. The MoU includes the exchange of academic materials, scholars and students and cooperative seminars, workshops and other academic activities.

### 5. Monash University and International Center of Excellence in Mining (ICEM):

This MoU aims to foster research and innovation collaboration between Monash and iCEM to in support of the mining and mineral development sector in India. A focus will be cooperation in reducing the impact of mining on climate change, increasing its efficiency and on enhancing capabilities in critical minerals and rare earth elements.

Later in the day, both the Ministers and other delegates visited the Centre for Creative Learning, IIT Gandhinagar, which is a space that nurtures scientific temper and the inherent creativity in students and teachers. Centre for Creative Learning has added new dimensions to joyous and experiential learning by encouraging creative arts, toy-based activities and DIY techniques as a pedagogy. Igniting the spark of curiosity and creativity CCL is making science and math fun for children.





They also visited Pandit Deendayal Energy University (PDEU) and Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK).







\*\*\*\*

SS/AK

(Release ID: 1975103)