



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

AUSTRALIA INDIA INSTITUTE 10TH ANNIVERSARY MORNING TEA

Thursday 29th August 2019

The Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC, former Governor of Victoria

The Honourable Ted Baillieu, Former Premier of Victoria

Mr Raj Kumar, Consul General of India

Mr Allan Myers AC QC, Chancellor, The University of Melbourne and **Professor Duncan Maskell**, Vice Chancellor

Professor Craig Jeffery, CEO, Australia India Institute

Mr Andrew Cumpston, Director, DFAT Victoria

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this morning.

I am delighted to welcome you to Government House to celebrate the Australia India Institute's 10th Anniversary, and to support its contributions to the important connections between Australia and Victoria with India.

In the course of those 10 years, there have been many high-level exchanges and visits, including between our Prime Ministers, and last year the Australian Federal Government launched its India Economic Strategy that places India centrally in its international agenda.

Naturally, I view the Institute's work most particularly through the lens of Victoria's Governor.

The Institute is no stranger to this House. In its decade of life, its importance has been keenly appreciated by Governors who have hosted a wide variety of events involving the Institute. In my time, they have included welcome receptions for the Australia-India Leadership Dialogue, the Australia-India Youth Dialogue and the Australia-India Early Careers Visit.

It is wonderful to see former Governor, the Hon. Alex Chernov AC QC, who was so instrumental in the Institute's founding.

I know we have each been motivated by our understanding of the importance of the Victoria-India relationship.

We have more than 230,000 Victorians of Indian ancestry, (and the highest population of Indian born people of any State in Australia). More than 200,000 Indian students have been educated here in the last 10 years (and we host more than any other State, with 44% of all Indian students who study in Australia choosing to study in Victoria).

The people to people links are strong and genuine.

Early last year, the Victorian Government launched its Victoria-India Strategy, aptly entitled, '*A shared Future*'.

I say 'aptly', because during our official visits to India at the behest of Victoria's Premier in both 2017 and 2018, we have experienced first-hand the emphasis on our respective needs and respective strengths. And an emphasis on shared interests and enduring partnerships.

That emphasis was also very much at the heart of discussions with His Excellency President Ram Nath Kovind when he visited us in November last year.

In this, just its first decade, the Aii has had a significant impact as the nation's hub for students and academics, policymakers and businesses, to learn and act together.

Its vision for the next decade will ensure that Australia and Victoria will be identified as the home of a world - leading program in Indian teaching, research and engagement.

I have no doubt that Aii's annual flagship event - bringing together leading figures from business, public life, civil society and the media from India and Australia – will continue to flourish.

And it will be wonderful to see a network of 30 post-doctoral scholars studying different aspects of contemporary India, extensive student exchanges, the establishment of a Chair in Contemporary India and the creation of a new Centre for Policy Studies bringing together the Commonwealth, State and Indian Governments.

Congratulations to current and past Directors, Professor Craig Jeffrey and Professor Amitabh Mattoo, current and past members of the Board, including Chair and former Governor of Victoria The Hon Alex Chernov AC QC and current Chair Robert Johanson and the new Director of the Aii@Delhi, Tanya Spisbah.

Thank you to staff, partners and sponsors.

The vision and commitment shown by you all has ensured that this anniversary is one to be genuinely celebrated.

A special thank you must be extended to the University of Melbourne for its leadership role, and it is now my pleasure to say 'Congratulations Aii on your first decade', as I have the pleasure to introduce the University of Melbourne's Vice-Chancellor Professor Duncan Maskell to say a few words.