

Attachment 1

Turning to India: Investing in our future, Inquiry into Western Australia's economic relationship with the Republic of India

Western Australian Government response

Summary

The Western Australian (WA) Government welcomes the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's *Report No. 1: Turning to India: Investing in our future, The findings and recommendations of Report No. 10 of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee in the 40th Parliament No. 10 – Turning to India: Investing in our future, Inquiry into Western Australia's economic relationship with the Republic of India*. The 37 recommendations provided are comprehensive and represent a detailed review of the relationship between India and WA.

The WA Government provides a supported response to 31 of the recommendations and a response of noted to 5 recommendations. The remaining recommendation has been addressed to the WA Parliament.

The WA Government considers the key findings and recommendations for the WA Government to be consistent with 5 themes:

1. Ensuring WA is well represented both in the Indian market and through engagements run by the Australian Government
2. Leveraging the Indian diaspora and businesses in WA
3. Marketing of opportunities and the accessibility of information regarding the economic relationship between India and WA
4. Ensuring the focus of the trade relationship is on the priority sectors
5. Improving WA's capability and understanding of India to successfully navigate the Indian market

The WA Government, through the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, maintains a close relationship with the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) to ensure WA is included in, and represented appropriately in, engagements where the focus aligns with WA Government priorities. The WA Government's representation occurs in formal engagements and visits and informal collaboration with Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The COVID-19 pandemic has made international engagement challenging. However, the WA Government has maintained a presence in India through its Investment and Trade Office in Mumbai (the Mumbai office) and by undertaking engagements via virtual means.

There have been a number of ministerial visits to India in recent years, including:

- November 2019: Premier Hon Mark McGowan MLA visited Mumbai and New Delhi. The mission focused on international education, tourism, mining and mining equipment, technology and services (METS), agri-services, energy (with a focus on LNG and lithium) and

direct flights to WA. The Premier met with government officials, industry groups, education institutions and business leaders.

- January 2019: Hon Sue Ellery MLC, Minister for Education and Training visited Mumbai, New Delhi and Ahmedabad (Gujarat). The Minister met with universities, education agents and government officials to promote Perth as an international student destination and to identify partnership opportunities between institutions.

A number of recommendations closely align to the current efforts and priorities of the WA Government in the Indian market. These activities are outlined in the 2020-21 India Market Outlook, which is currently being updated for 2021-22 to incorporate the latest information and opportunities for WA industry.

The Invest and Trade WA website, launched in January 2021, has increased the accessibility of information on WA for the Indian market, and opportunities in India for WA businesses. The website includes information for investors and buyers of WA goods and services, and profiles the state's key industries including mining and METS; energy; primary industries; defence industries; tourism, events and creative industries; international education; and health and medical life sciences.

The WA Government currently partners with businesses and groups based in WA which are actively engaged with India, including: the Perth USAsia Centre; the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA; the Australia India Business Council: WA Chapter; Asialink; and the Indian Society of WA. In addition, the WA Government, through its Mumbai office, has close working relationships with the Australian Embassy in Delhi and the Australian consulates in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.

The Mumbai office maintains strong relationships at senior levels within government and the private sector in India, and has developed close relationships with industry groups including the Indo-Australian Chamber of Commerce; the Australian and New Zealand Business Association in Mumbai; the Indian Merchants' Chambers; and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

On 1 October 2021, the WA Government hosted India Connect, an investment and trade event to strengthen the strategic economic relationship between India and WA. This event provided an opportunity for key government and industry representatives from WA and India to discuss investment and trade priorities, complementary capabilities, and opportunities to develop synergies between key industry players. The event featured 'Sector Connect' sessions that focused on shared areas of strategic economic importance, including batteries, critical minerals, mining and mining equipment, technology and services; primary industries; international education and tourism; and advanced manufacturing and technology.

The WA Government is committed to increasing the capability of both the government and WA businesses to engage with India. Efforts in this area are focused on learning from our business and industry partners, the Indian diaspora and Indian businesses located in WA. In addition, the WA Government is rolling out cultural capability workshops to support government officials and WA businesses in their international engagement activities.

Recommendation 1: That the State Government ensure that Western Australia maintains a strong presence at high-level Commonwealth Government events and on advisory groups and entities promoting the bilateral economic relationship. Where practicable, ministers should represent the State at significant Commonwealth-led business missions and other trade delegations to India.

Supported

The WA Government works closely with Austrade and DFAT to ensure WA is represented at relevant Commonwealth Government trade and investment events. The Mumbai office is well networked to ensure bilateral missions are conducive to improving trade and investment outcomes. The Investment and Trade Commissioner for India-Gulf also engages with relevant business bodies as appropriate; for example sitting on the advisory board for the 5th World Energy Storage Day Conference.

The WA Government has previously partnered with Amazon India and Austrade to hold a virtual e-commerce workshop. The webinar provided WA stakeholders with an update on the Indian e-commerce market, emerging trends, growth drivers, regulations, routes to market and opportunities with Amazon India (India's largest online platform).

The COVID-19 pandemic led to in-person international events being postponed and cancelled. The ability to visit and hold discussions in-person is likely to remain constrained until international borders open and travel is considered safe. In the interim, the WA Government will continue to engage with counterparts in India through virtual discussions.

Recommendation 2: That the State Government examine the findings of the Indian Government's Australia Economic Strategy upon its release and explore how Western Australia can be a first-mover State with the Commonwealth and Indian governments in relevant areas of implementation.

Supported

The WA Government has reviewed the Indian Government's Australian Economic Strategy (AES) released in December 2020 and will incorporate findings into the 2021-22 India Market Outlook.

There is strong alignment between the AES and the 'India Economic Strategy to 2035' (the Varghese report). Both reports recommend that the importance of the relationship between the two countries be recognised and fostered and focus on priority sectors, including mining and resources, education, energy, tourism and agribusiness.

A particular opportunity outlined in both the Varghese report and the AES that the WA Government is pursuing relates to electric vehicles. India's long-term objective is to increase its battery manufacturing capacity while importing only the cathode or its raw materials. This presents a medium to long-term opportunity for WA to export either cathode active materials or, potentially, manufactured cathodes to India.

Recommendation 3: That the State Government ensure that Western Australia's trade promotion activities and 'Brand WA' complements 'Brand Australia' in the Indian market.

Supported

The Mumbai office actively supports Austrade – including by participating in events, missions and direct one-to-one business matching – to ensure WA is represented as a part of Australia and the state's investment and trade opportunities are showcased in a way that complements the national approach.

The Brand WA initiative aims to deliver a consistent but flexible approach to the marketing of the state's products, services and investment potential to interstate and international markets.

A state brand is critical to growing the recognition of WA's value proposition and supporting local industry to diversify investment and trade markets and create new jobs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the launch of Brand WA has been postponed.

The WA Government continues to consider the appropriate timing to proceed with the launch of Brand WA, but has not set a date given the ongoing uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation 4:

That the State Government:

- continue to partner with and leverage the resources, networks and skills of India-focused institutions, such as the Perth USAsia Centre, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, the Australia India Business Council: WA Chapter, and Asialink Business;
- maximise ministerial and agency engagement with India-based organisations and institutions that are relevant to opportunities in target sectors, and support and encourage Western Australian organisations to do so; and
- consider the viability of supporting business chambers and industry institutions based in India to establish a Perth office.

Supported

The WA Government will continue to partner and leverage the resources, networks and skills of India-focused institutions such as the Perth USAsia Centre, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA, the Australia India Business Council: WA Chapter and Asialink Business.

The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI) meets with Asian business councils, including the Australia India Business Council: WA Chapter, on a quarterly basis to discuss current investment and trade priorities and opportunities for collaboration.

A further example of the WA Government supporting this recommendation is the India Connect event which was held on 1 October 2021. Held in collaboration with the Consulate General of India in Perth, Australia India Business Council, Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA and Perth USAsia Centre, this event provided key WA and Indian Government and industry representatives with an opportunity to discuss investment and trade priorities, complementary capabilities, and areas to develop synergies between key industry players. India Connect also

included four dedicated 'Sector Connect' sessions featuring a moderated panel of industry and government representatives from both WA and India focusing on the following:

- Batteries, critical minerals, mining and METS
- Primary industries
- International education and tourism
- Advanced manufacturing and technology

As part of the Asian Engagement Strategy, the WA Government provides meeting rooms and office facilities in a central location in Perth for the Asian business councils. These facilities are used by the business councils for stakeholder and committee meetings, project management and administration, and allow for networking opportunities with other businesses.

Recommendation 5:

That the State Government ensure that the Invest and Trade Western Australia website provides useful, practical and accessible information relevant to the Western Australia-India economic relationship such as:

- India market intelligence including market data and market sectors reports (see findings 102 and 103);
- workshops, programs and resources to build India capability (see finding 108);
- details of awareness-raising and networking events (see recommendations 30 and 33); and
- Details of upcoming and past inbound, outgoing and virtual trade missions (see recommendation 31).

Supported

In January 2021, JTSI launched the Invest and Trade WA website with information for investors and buyers of WA goods and services. The website profiles the state's key industries including mining and METS; energy; primary industries; defence industries; tourism, events and creative industries; international education; and health and medical life sciences.

Interstate and international audiences can learn about successful and innovative WA businesses and programs, highlighting the state's proven track record of delivering high-quality products and services to the world's major economies. The website will also include information about investment opportunities across key industries.

The 'WA business connect' section of the website provides information and resources for WA businesses aiming to become investor ready, or seeking information on commencing or expanding their export capability. Resources launched as part of the Invest and Trade WA website include eight market outlooks, which provide local businesses with valuable information on emerging international investment and trade opportunities in the state's priority markets – including India. The website also features the state's annual Investment and Trade Plan, which outlines the Government's approach and proposed initiatives to strengthen WA's investment and trade outcomes.

The website includes news stories about inbound, outgoing and virtual trade missions as well as information about upcoming networking events, workshops and programs for WA industry.

Recommendation 6:

That the State Government consider developing an Indian diaspora engagement strategy or plan, which could be part of the India Market Plan, and:

- continue to fund Indian diaspora organisations;
- host and support networking events and diaspora-focused programs oriented to business and trade development between Western Australia and India;
- ensure that members of the Indian diaspora are given a prominent role in bilateral relationships, such as participating in outgoing and incoming trade missions and other events; and
- establish an India group or committee with diaspora membership to provide important intelligence, insight and knowledge to the State Government.

Noted

The WA Government engages with the Indian diaspora in relation to investment and trade activities where opportunities align with the WA Government's objectives. The WA Government agrees the WA population born in India are powerful partners in deepening the state's connectivity and influence in India, as well as attracting investment, tourists and international students. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries engages with the Indian community in WA to run programs and events on an ongoing basis through the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI). Engagement also occurs through funding for projects and festivals via OMI's Community Grants Program, including the annual Diwali Mela which attracts over 30,000 attendees.

OMI supports the maintenance of culture and language through its Community Language Program. The program currently funds community language schools that teach several Asian languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent, including Bangladeshi, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tamil and Sinhala.

With the support of the WA and Australian Governments, the Indian community is planning to inaugurate a new Indian Community Centre in Willetton in October 2021. This building will be the first Indian centre in Australia.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the WA Government has provided assistance to both the Indian diaspora and India.

- In August 2020, the WA Government, through Lotterywest, provided a grant of \$188,000 to support Indian students in WA experiencing financial hardship and stress as a result of the pandemic.
- The WA Government assisted in the organisation of 3 separate repatriation flights for parents of WA Indian community members.
- The WA Government provided \$2 million in relief funding to support those directly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis in India, with funding available to local Indian community organisations with partners that were able to provide on-the-ground support in India.

- In May 2021, the WA Government provided a support package to India that included 8 ventilators, approximately 10 million masks, more than 419,000 gloves and more than 3,100 coveralls.

Recommendation 7:

That the State Government continue working with StudyPerth and relevant Commonwealth bodies to align, as much as possible, the marketing of Western Australia as a study destination with 'Brand Australia'.

Supported

The WA Government and StudyPerth work in close collaboration with Austrade as members of the Study Australia Partnership (SAP). The SAP includes key representatives of the study destination agencies in each state/territory and Austrade. Under 'Brand Australia', the focus of the SAP is to drive consistency and growth across both international student-facing platforms and government digital communications services; establish a suite of whole-of-government, industry-wide international education collaborations and projects; and is facilitated by co-creation and co-investment agreements. The WA Government is also launching a sector-wide, offshore marketing strategy for the WA international education sector and is working collaboratively with relevant Australian Government agencies to ensure best possible alignment with 'Brand Australia'.

Recommendation 8:

That the State Government pursue, in conjunction with StudyPerth, targeted, coordinated and consistent marketing of Western Australian education institutions in India. The International Education Advisory Group could provide strategic guidance for this initiative.

Supported

As part of the WA Recovery Plan, JTSI, under the leadership of the WA International Education Advisory Group, developed the WA International Education Recovery and Renewal Plan to guide the recovery and help reposition the sector moving forward. Released in December 2020, a key initiative of the Plan is the execution of a sector-wide offshore marketing strategy to raise awareness of WA as an education destination and drive the recruitment of new students to WA education providers. The WA Government has worked in close collaboration with StudyPerth on the development of the marketing strategy. India is a key target market for implementation of the strategy. It is anticipated the strategy will be launched in Q4 2021.

Recommendation 9:

That the State Government explore opportunities to provide vocational education and training in India.

Supported

As noted in the responses to **recommendations 7 and 8**, India will form a key focus for market opportunities offshore. Under the leadership of the WA International Education Advisory Group, and as a key initiative of the Plan, the WA Government will work to facilitate access to offshore opportunities to provide vocational education and training (VET) in India. This will include bringing providers together to collectively pursue VET opportunities in India via education consortia.

Recommendation 10:

That the State Government create opportunities for Western Australian secondary schools to develop sister school relationships and participate in exchange and/or immersion programs with Indian schools. Schools in Indian states with tertiary student or business potential for Western Australia should be targeted.

Supported

The Department of Education will create opportunities for WA secondary schools to develop sister-school relationships and exchange programs with Indian schools. This could include inbound and outbound study tours for students to promote intercultural understanding. The development of these relationships will be further enhanced with implementation of Hindi language into WA Government schools. The Department of Education will work in collaboration with the WA Investment and Trade Commissioner for India-Gulf to consider schools in Indian states which can also provide opportunities for the WA higher education sector.

Recommendation 11:

That the State Government investigate ways to establish a scholarship program to support Western Australian tertiary students participating in student exchange or study abroad programs in India.

Supported

Under the guidance of the WA International Education Advisory Group, the WA Government will consult with the VET and higher education sectors on the establishment of a scholarship program for WA tertiary and VET students to participate in student exchange and study abroad programs in India.

Recommendation 12:

That the State Government direct the School Curriculum and Standards Authority to assess the viability of licensing the Western Australian curriculum to Indian schools with a view to:

- identifying and attracting Indian schools that are interested and able to offer the Western Australian curriculum; and
- marketing Western Australia's onshore education offerings to Indian graduates of Western Australia's curriculum programs.

Supported

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) is currently implementing this recommendation. As a key initiative of the WA International Education Recovery and Renewal Plan, SCSA is expanding the offshore delivery of WA curriculum programs from Kindergarten to Year 12 in overseas schools, including in India, with a view to building a pipeline of students from these schools into WA education institutions.

Recommendation 13:

That the State Government investigate measures to support or develop a scholarship program to increase the number of Indian higher degree by research students attending Western Australian universities. Scholarship programs should focus on the priority sectors identified in the State Government's economic agenda.

Supported

WA universities currently offer scholarships to attract and support higher degree by research students to study at their institutions. Through the WA International Education Advisory Group, the WA Government will consult with the state's universities to investigate measures to attract and support the best and brightest higher degree by research students from India, including the pooling of scholarship funds from industry, and the WA and Australian Governments for this purpose. It is intended that the scholarships align with the priority sectors identified in Diversify WA.

Recommendation 14:

That the State Government investigate ways to support collaborative research projects between Western Australia and India that focus on the priority sectors identified by the State Government and/or sectors with future trade potential.

Supported

Through a number of its portfolios, the WA Government invests in collaborative research projects that support the development of priority sectors (e.g. primary industries, future battery industry, renewable hydrogen, defence, space and mining). Where research is industry driven, it will be linked to international market opportunities that have been identified by the relevant

sector. Such collaborations often include foreign entities and this can assist in building trade relationships.

Recommendation 15:

That the State Government, in conjunction with StudyPerth, review the Western Australian International Education Strategy, *Where bright futures begin: International education in Perth, Western Australia 2018-2025*, and expands its focus beyond onshore student recruitment.

The Strategy and StudyPerth's action plan should seek to increase Western Australia's share of student enrolments from key markets, such as India, while also diversifying the scope of Western Australia's International Education Strategy with India to extend to the other aspects of the relationship noted in this report.

This broadened scope should be reflected in the India Market Plan being developed.

Noted

International education is a priority sector for job creation and diversification of the state's economy, and WA has moved decisively to position itself as a destination of choice for international students. Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WA Government, in partnership with StudyPerth, developed and launched the state's inaugural international education strategy, *Where Bright Futures Begin: International Education in Perth, Western Australia 2018-2025*. This provided a framework to support growth in international student numbers in WA with enrolments increasing significantly in the first quarter of 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the entire international education sector due to factors such as international border restrictions which have prevented international students from travelling onshore. As part of the WA Recovery Plan, the WA Government launched the WA International Education Recovery and Renewal Plan in December 2020, which articulates practical and proactive initiatives to support the sector to reposition, recover, build capability and adopt new models of delivery over a two- year period.

The Plan's development was overseen by the WA International Education Advisory Group, a cross-sector governance group established to ensure a strategic and coordinated approach to international education in WA. StudyPerth is a key member of this Advisory Group.

Whilst overseeing the implementation of the Plan, the Advisory Group will also provide advice to the WA Government on extending existing and new actions to support and rebuild the pipeline of international students. This advice would take into account developments such as the recommendations of the Turning to India Report, and be broadened in terms of scope in line with the 2021-22 India Market Outlook for WA.

Recommendation 16:

That the State Government continue to prioritise tourism strategies and marketing to attract Indian travellers to Western Australia even if direct flights between India and Western Australia are not forthcoming.

Supported

India remains one of Tourism WA's key international markets for inbound visitation with the agency committed to developing and implementing an annual India Market Strategy with a focus on market recovery post-COVID-19. A range of innovative marketing activities will be developed to assist with growing WA's presence in-market through consumer, trade and media channels.

India has historically had good aviation access to Perth through both low-cost and full-service carriers via stopovers in Singapore or Dubai. Advocacy at a state level for direct flights between India and WA will continue in partnership with Perth Airport.

Recommendation 17:

That the State Government be proactive during the COVID-19 travel restrictions and promote Western Australia as a tourism destination in the Indian market.

Supported

Research has indicated that whilst international borders remain closed, there is still a strong desire from international travellers to dream and plan a holiday.

Tourism Australia, together with all states and territories, have worked together to ensure that Australia remains top of mind in an extremely competitive international tourism environment.

Several destinations have recommenced aggressive destination marketing activities that will ensure a competitive advantage once international restrictions are lifted. This includes Maldives, Dubai, Europe and the United States.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in December 2019 WA recorded its peak level of international visitation and spend. This was achieved through targeted marketing campaigns that focused on increasing destination awareness and demand for holiday travel to WA.

To ensure WA maintains market share into the future and has the ability to build on its previous success globally, it is important that Tourism WA continues with brand awareness campaigns that encourage international visitors to 'dream now and book later'.

India is an existing priority international market for the state. Pre-COVID-19, there were 31,000 visitors from India, with India ranking 11th for visitation. Indian visitors spent \$62 million ranking equal 10th with Japan.

Recommendation 18:

That the State Government prioritise exploring how Western Australia can:

- encourage India's investment in the exploration and mining of critical minerals, including lithium, in Western Australia;
- partner with India to process lithium; and
- attract other supply chain and value chain benefits presented by the growing demand for battery technologies.

Supported

Recommendation 18 is consistent with the WA Government's actions under the WA Future Battery and Critical Minerals Industries Strategy Update published in November 2020. The aim of the WA Future Battery and Critical Minerals Industries Strategy is to grow the state's participation in global supply chains and promote investment opportunities across the value chain.

India is identified as a key market for this work and is included in the WA Government's actions of developing battery and critical minerals investment attraction strategies, marketing the state's capabilities and comparative advantages, and exploring partnership and promotional opportunities.

Recommendation 19:

That the State Government advance existing and explore new Western Australia-India mining sector technology and capacity building programs, possibly led by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, with a view to supporting Western Australian mining and mining equipment, technology and services companies to export and operate in the Indian market.

Noted

As a part of the WA Recovery Plan, the WA Government announced it would provide financial assistance (\$350,000, plus in-kind support of \$50,000) to support Austmine's WA METS Digital Mining Export Hub (the Hub). The Hub will leverage WA's reputation as a world leader in digital mining solutions to grow export opportunities for regional METS businesses. Services provided by the Hub include providing export advice and guidance, training and mentoring depending on an individual company's needs. Capabilities will then be matched to overseas market opportunities and connections developed between those markets and the Hub members.

Austmine is Australia's leading not-for-profit industry association for the METS sector and aims to drive the success of their members by providing opportunities to build relationships, understand industry needs, boost their industry profile and access domestic and international supply chains.

Recommendation 20:

That the State Government develop a strategy to attract Indian investment to Western Australia's resource and energy sector, and consider mechanisms to support Indian companies seeking to invest in Western Australia.

Supported

The WA Government's strategy to attract Indian investment in WA's resource and energy sectors falls within the remit of JTSI through Invest and Trade WA and the Investment and Trade Office in Mumbai. The actions to attract investment from India in the resource and energy sectors are included in the 2020-21 India Market Outlook. The majority of these opportunities relate to offtake arrangements rather than direct investment.

There are mutually beneficial opportunities for India and WA in the resources and energy sectors. To date, the WA Government has seen strong investment into these sectors and is involved in ongoing discussions with potential new investors from India.

As noted in the response to **recommendation 4**, the WA Government hosted the India Connect event on 1 October 2021. This event provided the opportunity for key government and industry representatives from WA and India to discuss investment and trade priorities, complementary capabilities, and areas of opportunity to develop synergies between key industry players. The event included a dedicated 'Sector Connect' session focused on batteries, critical minerals, mining and METS.

Recommendation 21:

Noting the recommendations made in the Economics and Industry Standing Committee's Taking Charge: Western Australia's Transition to a Distributed Energy Future, the State Government should:

- examine how Western Australia can pursue opportunities in renewable energy and associated technologies in India, leveraging Western Australia's public and private expertise;
- consider how the Government Trading Enterprises can commercialise and maximise their intellectual property and microgrid delivery capability, and investigate the viability of 'sister utility' relationships with Indian utilities, potentially brokered between state-level governments;
- ensure that renewable energy and Smart Cities are State Government priorities in India; and
- incorporate petroleum equipment, technology and services, electrical energy services, and renewable energy and microgrid technologies into its India Market Plan.

Supported

Renewable energy is featured in the 2020-21 India Market Outlook as a key sector. There are increasing opportunities for India in WA's traditionally strong industries of mining and energy,

as urbanisation and industrialisation in India lead to higher demand for export commodities, such as iron ore and LNG. Investment opportunities are emerging in the mining and energy sectors as India looks to secure long-term supply sources.

India’s demand for LNG is expected to grow over time to complement its domestic gas production as it reduces its reliance on coal. India is likely to rely on LNG for its gas import needs as importing gas via pipeline remains unfeasible for geographic and political reasons.

WA’s expertise in energy storage systems, for example micro-grids, virtual power plants and standalone power systems, presents an opportunity for collaboration with India on the supply of cost-competitive, reliable, battery-based energy supply.

JTSI will continue to pursue opportunities in renewable energy and associated technologies with India. Opportunities in petroleum equipment, technology and services, electrical energy services, and renewable energy and microgrid technologies will be considered in the 2021-22 India Market Outlook.

Recommendation 22:
That the State Government continue to fund export market development, including technical capacity building activities for the grains industry.

Supported

The WA Government through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), in collaboration with JTSI, continues to fund export market development for India for selected WA agri-food and beverage products identified as having potential in the market. This commitment is contingent on engagement from WA export-ready agribusinesses that have capacity to supply. Any technical capacity building activities for the grain industry will be delivered through the Australian Export Grain Innovation Centre, which is 50 per cent funded by DPIRD.

Recommendation 23:
That the State Government:

- review Western Australia's strategy to attract Indian investment to Western Australia;
- develop and promote a tailored Investment Prospectus for Indian investment into Western Australia, focusing on priority sectors; and
- resource department/s to enable them to proactively identify and provide a high level of support to companies seeking to invest in Western Australia, particularly in priority sectors such as mining, renewable energy and agribusiness.

Supported

The 2021-22 Market Outlook for India will use the latest market information and intelligence from industry to tailor WA's investment opportunities with India.

JTSI is resourced through the Invest and Trade WA team to identify and provide high-level support to Indian companies seeking to invest in WA; with DPIRD providing specific support for the agribusiness sector. This capability is complemented by the Invest and Trade WA website, which was launched in January 2021 (see response to **recommendation 5**).

Under the hub-and-spoke model for the WA Investment and Trade Office network, the WA Government is reviewing resource requirements within the India-Gulf region to ensure it is responsive to existing and emerging market and industry requirements.

In relation to an Indian investment prospectus, Invest and Trade WA works closely with Indian investors to provide specific advice based on their sector of interest and needs, rather than through the publication of a prospectus. This approach allows the WA Government to tailor resources and information to each client, rather than providing market-wide, generic information to potential investors that may not suit their particular needs.

Recommendation 24:

That the State Government explore opportunities to further integrate Western Australia's Business Migration Program with the State's broader Indian economic engagement and investment facilitation programs, to attract Indian investment to Western Australia.

Supported

India is ranked in the top two nations for providing skilled workers in most jurisdictions across Australia, but does not rank in the top 10 markets for business migrants coming to Australia. Of the 1,327 new business migrants nominated by WA in the past five years, fewer than 30 were from India.

The Small Business Development Corporation's strategy for the WA Business Migration Program is to work through and grow a network of both local and international migration agents and other organisations that can refer business migrants to the state.

The issue with the Indian market, which is similar to the Chinese market, is to identify suitably qualified business and investment migrants who also have the necessary documentation to satisfy the Australian Government of the legitimacy of their financial and management background.

In 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Small Business Development Corporation has been working with agents of Indian background based in Perth to create awareness of WA as a business migration destination and qualify Indian applicants for state nomination. In 2021-22, this engagement will

be extended to include local Indian business and community groups to assist with the attraction of business migrants from India.

Recommendation 25:

That the State Government:

- provide greater transparency on trade and business engagement between Western Australia and Andhra Pradesh under the sister state relationship, and the opportunities in Andhra Pradesh, to the extent that this is possible; and
- examine how to enhance and support the sister state relationship to ensure that it is achieving maximum value for Western Australia.

Supported

WA and Andhra Pradesh established a sister-state relationship in 2016, committing to work together in mining, mining services, agriculture, fisheries, energy and education and training. Water management is also a priority.

The Mumbai office is building relationships with the current Andhra Pradesh Government, which took office in May 2019. The former Trade Commissioner for India visited Andhra Pradesh in July 2019 and met with ministers, including the Chief Minister, and officials to begin discussions on projects that align with the Andhra Pradesh Government's focus on rural development. There have been subsequent communications regarding possible initiatives identified during this visit.

The sister-state relationship is due for renewal in December 2021. The renewal process will provide an opportunity to discuss and identify further investment and trade opportunities between WA and Andhra Pradesh.

Recommendation 26:

That the State Government:

- develop an annual visits program that ensures a regular and sustained pattern of ministerial visits to India;
- consider inviting the Governor of Western Australia to lead or participate in visits;
- encourage Western Australian departments, chambers of commerce, industry, and institutions to visit India for the purpose of building relationships;
- encourage Indian ministers, departments, chambers of commerce, industry, and institutions to visit Western Australia;
- pursue virtual visits as an alternative to travelling to India (and vice versa) in the COVID-19 environment;
- ensure that members of the diaspora and, if appointed, a Western Australia Indian 'champion' participate in outbound and inbound visits; and
- focus visits on fostering trade and investment opportunities in priority sectors.

Supported

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the ability for WA to undertake in-person investment and trade engagement in India. As outlined in the response to **recommendation 4**, the WA Government hosted the India Connect event on 1 October 2021 to strengthen economic ties with India.

Where travel is not possible, the WA Government is committed to a program of virtual investment and trade missions (such as the virtual workshop on e-commerce opportunities in India, noted in the response to **recommendation 1**).

Recommendation 27:

That the Parliament of Western Australia:

- increase the frequency of parliamentary delegations to India; and
- invite Indian state parliamentary delegations to visit Western Australia.

This recommendation is addressed to the Parliament of Western Australia.

Recommendation 28:

That the State Government consider appointing India champion/s.

Supported

The WA Government recognises that other jurisdictions have appointed 'India Champions' and this has helped raise the profile of the economic relationship between their jurisdiction and India. The WA Government will consider appointing India Champions where there is a genuine opportunity to enhance the relationship between WA and India.

Recommendation 29:

That the State Government provide relevant ministers and public sector employees, including appropriate local government officers, with access to training to build India capability.

Noted

JTSI held a series of Asia Business Capability workshops in 2020-21 to support small and medium enterprises to export to Asia and work more effectively with Asian partners and investors. A dedicated India workshop was held on 30 November 2020. These workshops were open to public sector employees.

The WA Government has engaged AsiaLink Business to develop a program for WA businesses and government officials to navigate the cultural differences involved in international business negotiations.

Invest and Trade WA is considering training options for WA public sector staff to help build their capability and understanding of India and Asia more broadly.

Recommendation 30:

That the State Government host and/or engage with India-focused institutions to deliver:

- dialogues such as the Australia India Leadership Dialogue and the Australia India Youth Dialogue in Perth and other prominent Australia-India events; and
- India trade and investment forums and other events including webinars.
- The aim of such events should be to build awareness of the opportunities in India, with a focus on Western Australia's priority sectors.

Supported

As outlined in responses to other recommendations, the WA Government will continue to partner with India-focused institutions and is committed to holding investment and trade forums, with a focus on WA's priority sectors.

Invest and Trade WA and India-focused institutions have been making use of web-based resources to ensure the dialogue between WA and India continues while COVID-19 travel restrictions remain in place.

Recommendation 31:

That the State Government:

- support and resource regular trade missions to India;
- ensure that trade missions are focused on priority sectors;
- ensure that members of the diaspora have opportunity to participate in outbound and inbound visits;
- encourage inbound trade missions; and
- deliver virtual trade missions and/or virtual sessions, especially while borders are closed.

Supported

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the WA Government has maintained a presence in India, through staff based in the Mumbai office.

The WA Government has strong ties to Austrade and provides representation on trade missions where the agenda of the mission aligns with the WA Government's investment and trade priorities. The Invest and Trade WA team within JTSI, which includes the Mumbai office, is responsible for organising the calendar of trade missions and events. As outlined in the response to **recommendation 30**, Invest and Trade WA has been using technology to conduct events where in-person attendance is not feasible.

The WA Government also actively participates in Austrade's Australia India Business Exchange, which enables WA companies to be notified of events and related activities.

When it is possible, the WA Government will re-commence outbound missions to India that are focused on sectors of strategic economic importance.

Recommendation 32:

That the State Government establish working groups with Indian counterparts following high-level meetings that identify opportunities to engage with India.

Noted

The WA Government seeks regular feedback from Indian stakeholders following investment and trade missions and other engagements through de-brief meetings and emails. The WA Government considers current communication channels are adequate, however it will re-evaluate these methods over time to ensure all possible opportunities are identified and communicated appropriately.

Recommendation 33:

That the State Government increase efforts to connect Western Australian people and businesses with each other, businesses from other Australian states, and Indian businesses or governments to seize opportunities in priority sectors in India. In particular, the State Government should:

- host, partner and/or engage with India-focused institutions to deliver networking events;
- publicise and leverage Commonwealth Government activities, events held in India, and other events that provide an opportunity to network;
- organise one-on-one or larger industry meetings between Western Australian businesses, Western Australian and Indian businesses and/or government to discuss particular opportunities; and
- ensure that the Western Australian government departments and businesses link with interstate businesses where a combined effort to seize opportunities in India will yield better outcomes.

Supported

As outlined in the response to **recommendation 4**, India Connect is a good example of an India-focused event which was delivered by the WA Government.

The Invest and Trade WA website, as outlined in the response to **recommendation 5**, provides a dedicated section to publish upcoming events. This section is regularly updated to ensure investors are able to access the latest information.

The WA Government also has strong ties with Austrade and engages with other jurisdictions where it makes sense to do so.

Recommendation 34:

That the State Government review the program developed by the Local Government Association of Queensland and Asialink Business and consider whether a similar program, focused on increasing India literacy amongst Western Australian local governments and encouraging appropriate sister city agreements with India, could be implemented in Western Australia.

Supported

The Local Government Association of Queensland worked with Asialink Business to provide a comprehensive program aimed at helping councils to navigate the delicate cultural differences involved in international business negotiations.

As outlined in the response to **recommendation 29**, the WA Government has engaged Asialink to develop a program for WA businesses and government officials to navigate the cultural differences involved in international business negotiations.

Recommendation 35:

That the State Government consider mechanisms to support research and development partnerships with India, with a focus on partnerships that build strategic relationships and may create commercial opportunities in priority sectors. (See findings 53, 54, 56, 75, 79, 84, 89, 123, and recommendations 13 and 14).

Supported

The Premier's Science Fellowship Program is an existing program that universities can use to attract leading international research talent (and their networks) to WA, in a priority area for the state. WA universities have significant international linkages, partnerships and collaborations which offer informal and formal network opportunities that can be activated for research and development projects where it makes sense for the project and sector.

Recommendation 36:

That the State Government continue to pursue securing direct flights between Western Australia and India as a priority.

Supported

Securing a non-stop direct flight from India to Perth remains a key focus for the WA Government. Tourism WA has worked in partnership with Perth Airport as 'Team Perth' over the past four years on this mutual objective.

A number of in-market visits occurred over 2017 to 2019 to India to meet with target airlines, led by the previous Minister for Tourism with representatives from Tourism WA and Perth Airport. These senior delegations helped garner interest for the India-Perth flight opportunity,

predominantly from Air India, Vistara and SpiceJet. Letters of offer were issued to all three, although none were accepted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aviation development and securing recovery or commencement of new air services takes time. A typical lead time to secure a new air route is 2-5 years. The current global aviation environment, and in India itself, has impacted this timeline.

Tourism WA and Perth Airport have paused active business development discussions with target airline given India's recovery from COVID-19. Instead, a monitoring and relationship maintaining position is being taken. When the timing is considered appropriate, Tourism WA will seek to actively re-engage with Indian carriers to advance the attraction of a non-stop Perth air service from India. Tourism WA is also participating in the Perth Airport-facilitated India Round table with industry leaders in Perth.

A direct flight will help grow and expand existing tourism, education, business and investment between India and WA. A key message of the India-Perth business case viability is the proximity to Perth – an eight to 10 hours medium-haul flight sector, feasible to operate within a 24 hours return trip providing a good aircraft utilisation rate. Perth is also 30 per cent closer to India than the east coast of Australia and provides seamless domestic and New Zealand connections.

Tourism WA also partners with Tourism Australia, Singapore Airlines and AirAsia to influence consumer sentiment and bookings to WA. These third party partnerships will help restart and grow inbound visitation from India to WA once borders re-open.

Recommendation 37:

That the State Government, working with the Small Business Commissioner, explore and support ways to increase the marketing of the Business Migration Program (including investment visas) in India, and ways to increase the number of Expressions of Interest in a Western Australian business and investment visa nomination.

Supported

As part of its core role to attract new investment into WA through the Business Migration Program, the Small Business Development Corporation participates in an annual Business Migration International Travel Plan delivering a series of presentations, migration agency staff updates and client appointments with agents and other referral organisations in countries that are the state's main source of business migrants.

Representatives from the Small Business Development Corporation normally participate in six business migration international visits each year, usually in the months August, October, December, February, April and June with more than one country included in each visit.

India had not been included in past travel plans due to the low number of applicants and therefore has not been ranked in the state's prime, secondary, growing or emerging markets.

Due to the increasing number of business migration enquiries from India, the country was included as a trial market for one visit in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of international borders resulted in postponement of overseas marketing visits to any market over the past two years. In the interim, the Small Business Development Corporation plans to arrange a series of online presentations with referral organisations in WA overseas markets, including India.