9 July 2026

Joint Communique to the Prime Ministers of Australia and India following the meeting of the Australia-India CEO Forum

1. The Australia-India CEO Forum (the Forum) met in Melbourne on Thursday 9th July 2026, during the visit of the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, to Australia.

2. The Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and the Honourable Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi addressed the Forum. Prime Ministers outlined their priorities for the bilateral relationship and called on business leaders to support deeper economic ties.

3. The Forum recognised two-way trade had reached AUD 50.2 billion since the coming into force of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) in December 2022 and commended both governments for supporting business-to-business linkages, including the continued implementation of *A New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India*. The Forum emphasised the importance of concluding an ambitious and commercially meaningful Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in a timely manner, building on the momentum in the bilateral economic relationship.

4. The Forum acknowledged the significant contributions of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Business Council of Australia (BCA), as Indian and Australian secretariats. Outgoing Australian Co-Chair Shemara Wikramanayake was thanked for her leadership of the Forum since 2023. Current Co-Chairs, Dr Anish Shah and Paul Schroder, were commended for chairing the Forum.

5. The BCA and CII outlined the Forum's intersessional work which followed the establishment of five Joint Working Groups focused on key sectors:

a. Investment, Finance and Infrastructure

b. Education and Skills

c. Digital Economy

d. Renewable Energy, Critical Minerals and Resources

e. Agritech

At the CEO Forum held on 28 October 2024, the Joint Working Groups presented recommendations to governments on opportunities to increase two-way trade and investment. The forum attended by the Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator the Hon. Don Farrell, and the Honourable Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal. The advice and recommendations of the Joint Working Groups were instrumental to the Australian Government's *A New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India* launched in February 2025. The Forum has delivered on several of its 2024 recommendations, which are set out below for the Prime Ministers' consideration.

Key Deliberations

6. Investment, Finance and Infrastructure

The Forum confirmed growing two-way investment as a priority for members. The Forum reiterated the need to elevate cooperation on and raise awareness of investment opportunities, remove regulatory impediments to unlock greater capital flows, and build stronger market literacy.

The Forum raised the opportunity for government to create further long-term investment opportunities for institutional investors, in addition to the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund.

The Forum recognised the significant efforts of both governments to strengthen bilateral architecture in areas such as trade, education, research, energy, tourism, critical technology and critical minerals, and urged both governments to explore similar government-to-government mechanisms for growing two-way investment. The importance of strengthening economic dialogues was acknowledged by the Forum.

The BCA confirmed it would lead a senior business delegation to India in December 2026, providing an opportunity to advance investment discussions in areas including infrastructure, logistics, the digital economy, critical minerals and clean energy value chains.

7. Education and Skills

The Forum recognised education as a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship and a critical enabler of economic growth, noting that eight Australian universities have been approved to establish campuses in India, supported under *India's National Education Policy 2020*.

The Forum recognised the significant progress made on its 2024 recommendation to develop partnerships between industry and Australian universities in India to create pathways to employment and work integrated learning opportunities.

The early commitment from six Australian member companies of the Forum to partner with Australian universities in India was welcomed along with the earlier signing of a

Statement of Collaboration between CII and the BCA in the presence of the Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP to support Indian companies in creating similar pathways for Indian students, including international students educated in Australia and returning to India.

In addition to acknowledging the collaboration between the BCA and CII, the Forum identified dedicated industry engagement platforms, innovation clusters, and academic exchange as areas to pursue to facilitate access to higher education for graduates.

Given the importance of education to the economic partnership, the Forum recommended that governments include industry and education partnerships as a standing item in the annual Australia-India Education and Skills Council meeting.

8. Digital Economy

The importance of enhanced cooperation on the digital economy has been identified by both governments as critical to advancing national agendas. The Forum acknowledged the rapid pace of change across cyber security, artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum and the opportunity for business to support capabilities that increasingly drive economic growth and competitiveness.

The Forum recognised complementary strengths including India's scale, deep technology capability and world-leading digital public infrastructure, and Australia's trusted institutions, research and education strengths and regulatory capability.

The Forum discussed AI, and the infrastructure behind it, as the most immediate opportunity, noting early cooperation gives both countries the rare chance to influence direction rather than adapt to choices made elsewhere.

Both countries are investing heavily in data centres and infrastructure that AI depends on. The Forum noted this shared investment is a natural starting point, including cooperation on the sustainable development of AI infrastructure, spanning environmental management, community benefit, and the security of critical infrastructure. Both countries are also developing governance frameworks and standards for safe and responsible AI including where existing laws apply, where new protections are needed, and where adoption can lift productivity while keeping workforces engaged and the benefits broad.

The Forum noted that the intent and the foundations are already in place, but the task ahead is in connecting existing efforts, bringing industry alongside government, and translating shared ambition into coordinated action.

The Forum reiterated an earlier recommendation that governments support mapping of both countries' Core Technology Workforces to understand current skills, future needs, the ability to access talent, and cross-skilling and upskilling opportunities. This would also assist in the delivery of key actions in the Statement of Collaboration between CII and the BCA.

Members also reflected on an earlier recommendation to strengthen collaboration on Digital Public Infrastructure, including India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

The Forum identified space technologies as a high-growth area for cooperation.

9. Renewable Energy, Critical Minerals and Resources

The Forum acknowledged a shared ambition on clean energy, investment opportunities, and support for their respective Future Made in Australia and Make in India agendas. The India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP), launched in November 2024, elevates bilateral climate and energy cooperation and emphasises the importance of renewable energy investment.

The Forum viewed the REP as an important vehicle for engagement with business and encouraged governments to progress a formal structure on growing two-way investment agreed to under the REP.

The Forum also discussed the importance of closer collaboration between Australia and India on critical and strategic minerals, particularly in the context of India’s push for Rare Earth Permanent Magnets to achieve self-reliance in high-tech manufacturing.

The Forum discussed emerging opportunities for partnership in carbon market cooperation and low carbon technologies, including through two-way investment, technology collaboration and the sharing of expertise.

The Forum acknowledged the completion of administrative arrangements under the Australia-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement for the export of uranium for peaceful purposes, and encouraged Australian industry to support India’s decarbonisation agenda, including through supply of critical minerals.

10. Agritech

The Forum recognised agritech as a critical pillar within the broader agribusiness and technology relationship between Australia and India, reflecting shared priorities of improving farm productivity, strengthening supply chains, and advancing climate-resilient agriculture.

The Forum welcomed the *Australia–India AgTech Business Opportunities Report*, commissioned by the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), as a key outcome of an earlier CEO Forum recommendation to map sectoral needs and identify strategic areas of collaboration. Developed through extensive industry consultation, supported by Forum members in Australia and India, the report highlights complementary strengths including Australia’s innovation, and advanced farm technologies and India’s scale, rapid digital adoption, and evolving agricultural value chains.

The Forum also recognised the *India Agtech Playbook* developed by CII through a Maitri grant from the Centre for Australia India Relations as furthering the work of the CEO Forum.

The Forum recommended that both governments adopt the following areas as a shared priority for agritech advancement:

- Precision AgTech
- AgBiotechnology
- Climate AgTech
- AgTech Supply Chain Innovations
- Allied sectors including livestock, meat, dairy, poultry, and aquaculture

The Forum further recommended greater collaboration on integrated AgTech supply chains, including digital traceability, blockchain-enabled logistics and cold-chain infrastructure. Members also supported expanding cooperation in crop nutrition solutions, precision technologies, as well as livestock, dairy and aquaculture by leveraging Australian expertise in IoT-enabled dairy systems, precision feeding and disease monitoring through joint industry-government collaboration.

11. Conclusion

Forum members, the Business Council of Australia and the Confederation of Indian Industry reaffirmed their support for the Forum as the pre-eminent bilateral platform for engagement by business leaders.

The Forum secretariates will now work with both governments to develop a work program that reflects the Forum's deliberations and the shared priorities of government and industry.

The Forum wished both Prime Ministers well for their forthcoming Leaders' meeting and asked that the deliberations of the Forum be considered in those discussions.

Paul Schroder	Dr Anish Shah
Chief Executive	Chief Executive and Managing Director
AustralianSuper	Mahindra Group
Australian Co-Chair	**Indian Co-Chair**