



Looking Ahead

Australia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)

CUTS 40th Anniversary Event
Sydney, February 2, 2024

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

February marks one year since negotiations commenced to transform the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). The two sides are channelling energies to secure broader and deeper commitments under five tracks – goods, services, digital trade, government procurement and product specific rules of origin. Discussions are also covering other areas of regulation/cooperation including Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and competition policy, as well as emerging trade-related aspects of gender, labour, innovation and sports. Seven rounds of negotiations have been held so far.

However, achieving more ambitious outcomes in this second phase of talks towards a CECA are expected to be much more challenging. The two sides have already secured commitments on aspects they were most comfortable with in the ECTA. Arriving at landing zones in the remaining areas, particularly those that are sensitive for India (and of significant export interest to Australia), such as agricultural products, will require deft handling.

At the same time, both India and Australia have realised that the quest for a perfect agreement cannot be allowed to derail progress towards a positive agreement. It is this spirit which led to the conclusion of the ECTA, and which will now guide officials of both sides as they look to ramp up negotiations in 2024 and conclude the CECA. This session will discuss the road ahead for the India-Australia CECA.

ATTENDEES:

1. Dr. S Janakiraman, Consul General of India, Sydney
2. Mr. Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International
3. Amb. Amit Dasgupta AM, Former Diplomat, Strategic Advisor India Engagement, UNSW Sydney, Distinguished Fellow, CUTS & AII
4. Mr. Tim Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Australia India Relations
5. Mr. Dipen Rughani, Chief Executive Officer, Newland Global Group
6. Mr. Maurice Newman, Former Chair, Australian Stock Exchange
7. Mr. David Harding, Executive Director, Business NSW
8. Ms. Dianne Tipping, Chair, Export Council of Australia

9. Prof. Veena Sahajwala, Director, Sustainable Materials Research & Technology Centre (SMART@UNSW) UNSW Australia, NSW State Recipient Australian of the Year 2022
10. Ms. Charishma Kaliyanda, MP, NSW Parliament
11. Mr. Grame Barty, Former Executive Director, International Operations, Austrade
12. Ms. Megan Watson, Deputy Director, DFAT NSW
13. Ms. Natasha Jha Bhaskar, Executive Director, Newland Global Group
14. Prof. Tony Travaglione, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Strategy, University of Wollongong
15. A/Prof. Shailendra Sawleshwarkar, Director, Academic Education & Postgraduate Coursework, Sydney Medical School, Faculty of Medicine & Health, University of Sydney
16. Mr. Sri Annaswamy, Founder-Director, Swamy & Associates, Prominent Advanced-analytics, AI and BPM research, thought-leadership & advisory firm
17. Mr. Peter Truswell, Director, India Branch, DFAT
18. Mr. Jay Watkinson, Assistant Director, Centre for Australia-India Relations
19. Mr. Sudhir Basavaraju, India and Middle East, Global Markets, Investment NSW
20. Mr. Hemang Shah, Partner, Jones Day
21. Mr. Nirav Sutaria, Deputy Consul General of India, Sydney
22. Dr Jocelyne Basseal, Associate Director (Strategy, Operations & Partnerships), Sydney Infectious Diseases Institute, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney
23. Mr. Sudip Bhattacharya, Trade & Investment, CGI, Sydney
24. Ms. Ramanpreet Wadhwa, Business NSW

OBJECTIVES:

1. Strengthen collaboration and invite sectoral insights to inform the negotiations going forward
2. Amplify interactions and build relationships with stakeholders in this bilateral relationship who are key facilitators and enablers
3. Open new commercial partnerships and outcomes
4. Suggestions/Recommendations to capitalise on existing opportunities and ways to navigate operational challenges

RUNSHEET (OFFICIAL):

02:30 PM	Welcome & Intro Acknowledging partners and occasion, insights on the significance of this topic	DIPEN RUGHANI Chief Executive Officer, Newland Global Group
02:33 PM	Remarks Overview on ECTA's success and planning forward for CECA	DR. S. JANAKIRAMAN Consul General of India, Sydney

02:38 PM	Remarks To set the roundtable theme and context	PRADEEP MEHTA Secretary General, CUTS International
02:40 PM – 03:40 PM	Facilitator NATASHA JHA BHASKAR Executive Director, Newland Global Group	MEGAN WATSON Deputy Director, DFAT, NSW DIANNE TIPPING Chair, Export Council of Australia MAURICE NEWMAN Former Chair, Australian Stock Exchange GRAME BARTY Former Executive Director, International Operations, Austrade DAVID HARDING Executive Director, Business NSW SRI ANNASWAMY Founder-Director, Swamy and Associates, A Prominent Advanced-Analytics, AI and BPM Research, Thought-Leadership and Advisory Firm AMB. AMIT DASGUPTA AM Former Diplomat, Strategic Advisor India Engagement at UNSW Sydney, Distinguished Fellow, CUTS & AII CHARISHMA KALIYANDA MP, NSW Parliament SUDHIR BASAVARAJU Investment NSW TIM THOMAS Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Australia India Relations PROF. TONY TRAVAGLIONE Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Strategy, University of Wollongong A/PROF. SHAIENDRA SAWLESHWARKAR Director of Academic Education and Postgraduate Coursework, Sydney Medical School, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney PROF. VEENA SAHJWALLA Director of the Sustainable Materials Research & Technology (Smart@UNSW) Centre at UNSW Australia, NSW State Recipient Australian of The Year 2022 HEMANG SHAH Partner, Jones Day

03:40 PM	Interventions & Remarks	Delegates + Observers
03:55 PM	Closing & Vote of Thanks	PRADEEP MEHTA Secretary General, CUTS International
04:00 PM	Photos & Networking	