



Centre for  
**Australia  
India  
Relations**

# Australia-India Relations Sentiment Survey Snapshot

July 2025

The Centre for Australia-India Relations at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade commissioned the **Australia-India Relations Sentiment Survey** to understand the attitudes of the Australian community towards India and the bilateral relationship. The data collected will inform future initiatives to build India literacy within Australia as part of fostering strong people-to-people ties and supporting trade and investment interests with India.

The Australia-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was initiated in 2020, signalling a new level of cooperation between Australia and India based on shared interests.

The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, developed alongside the Quad (a partnership between Australia, India, Japan and the United States), has seen an expansion of two-way trade facilitated by the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA). Deep people-to-people links underpin the relationship – Australia is now home to almost a million Indian Australians, and the Indian diaspora is Australia's fastest growing large diaspora community.

Public opinion is a key ingredient in sustained and consistent international engagement. The general population play essential roles in informing the range and depth of cooperation, and the opportunities and constraints for foreign policy. Stronger awareness about Australia's international partners makes it less likely that Australians will be influenced by misinformation, disinformation, or that Australians will respond to geopolitical events based on outdated stereotypes.

Gauging public opinion is particularly important among groups with strong interest in the issues, such as Indian Australians, or those that have close business, family, or other ties with the country. In spite of this, knowledge of the beliefs, preferences, and concerns of the Australian and Indian public regarding their countries' intensified cooperation is limited.

The Centre engaged the Social Research Centre (SRC) in collaboration with the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR) at the Australian National University (ANU) to conduct quantitative and qualitative research with Australians aged 18 years and over.

A total of **2,158 Australians were surveyed** in September and October 2024, drawing on a nationally representative sample consisting of 1,864 non-Indian Australians and 294 Indian Australians (defined as those born in India or with a parent born in India or those with Indian ancestry). Three virtual focus groups, with seven respondents in each group, were also conducted to delve deeper into the experiences of younger and middle-aged Australians as well as Indian Australians.





# Key Findings

## Economic and strategic importance

### Experience with India and general knowledge about India

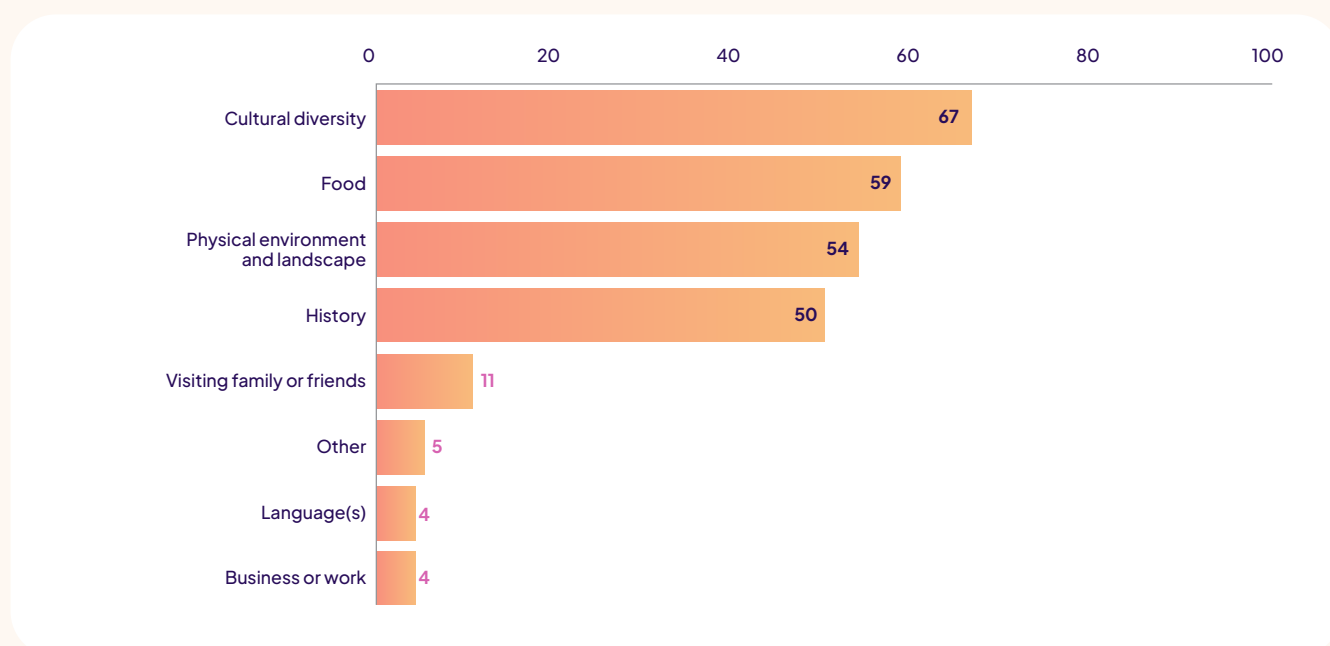
The research shows that only a minority of Australians have travelled to India (12 per cent), but that almost half would like to travel to India in the future. Of those that have travelled to India, only a very small percentage had a negative experience (less than one in five).

Reasons for travel to India centre around a desire for cultural diversity and food, while physical environment and history follow.

Reasons for not wanting to travel to India in the future include a general lack of interest and health concerns, while concerns for physical safety and gender-based violence follow as third and fourth most mentioned.

There is a lack of general knowledge about India and its place in the world. Australians are more able to identify that India is the most populous country in the world but less able to accurately identify India's economic ranking.

Figure 1 : Purpose of future travel to India (per cent)



B6. Why would you like to travel to India in the future? Base: Respondents who would like to travel to India in the future (n=1,084).

Note: 'I don't know enough to say' (2 per cent), 'Study' (1 per cent), and 'Prefer not to say' (0 per cent) responses are not shown in the figure.

Multiple responses allowed therefore percentages may not sum to 100 per cent.

Across all charts and tables, purple text indicates higher results ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) and magenta text indicates lower results ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) as compared within sub-groups.

## Perceptions of India's economic importance

A small number of Australians (7 per cent) see India as Australia's most important economic partner, but the majority put India in the top three economic partners in the Asian region (alongside China and Japan).

Most Australians continue to see China as Australia's most important economic partner in the Asian region.

When asked about India's current importance to Australia's economy, 70 per cent of Australians rate India as very important or important. A majority of Australians (58 per cent) are also optimistic that India's economic growth prospects will be strong over the next five years.

Figure 2: Views on most important economic partners currently for Australia in the Asian region (per cent)

Per cent Base	Most important (n=2,158)	Second (n=1,945)	Third (n=1,853)	Fourth (n=1,760)
China	69	10	4	2
India	7	29	22	13
Japan	9	28	22	18
South Korea	1	7	11	14
Indonesia	2	11	18	18

C3. Which countries do you consider are the most important economic partners CURRENTLY for Australia in the Asian region?  
Base: C3\_1 (n=2,158), C3\_2, (n=1,945) C3\_3 (n=1,853), C3\_4 (n=1,760). Note: 'Prefer not to say' (0 per cent) responses are not shown in the figure.

## Perceptions of India's strategic importance

Almost seven in 10 Australians recognise that India is very important or important to Australia's national interests over the next five years.

An even greater proportion (83 per cent) believe that closer Australia-India relations are beneficial for the Asian region.

*"Having the Indian Prime Minister over just a couple of years ago...(shows) there is a lot of support between the two governments."*

Focus group quote, from young politically interested Australians

# Key Findings

## Cultural awareness and the diaspora

### Attitudes to India's international and domestic role

Australians view India's global economic integration positively, with more than six in 10 respondents agreeing to some extent that India's economy is open to international trade and investment. This is substantially higher among Indian Australians (89 per cent) compared to those without Indian heritage (61 per cent).

Forty-four per cent of respondents agree or strongly agree that India has a positive influence on world affairs, while around a third lack the knowledge to say.

Australians have strong confidence in the Indian government's economic policies – almost two thirds of respondents view the Indian government as being focussed on pursuing economic growth.

Confidence in India's focus on social policies, such as healthcare, education, and welfare programs, is lower, but a sizeable proportion of respondents (42 per cent) report they lack the knowledge to respond to this question.

Only 16 per cent of respondents believe that people in India enjoy the same level of personal freedoms as in Australia, but a further 19 per cent lack the knowledge to say.

Figure 3: Perceptions about Indian Government policies



D8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Base: All respondents (n=2,158).  
Note 'Prefer not to say' (0 per cent for D8\_a, D8\_b, D8\_c) responses are not shown in the figure.

## Cultural connections and understanding

Thirty-five per cent of Australians report having a very good or good understanding of Indian culture. The predominant form of engaging Indian culture is eating Indian food, but respondents also report that they engage culturally through Indian music and movies.

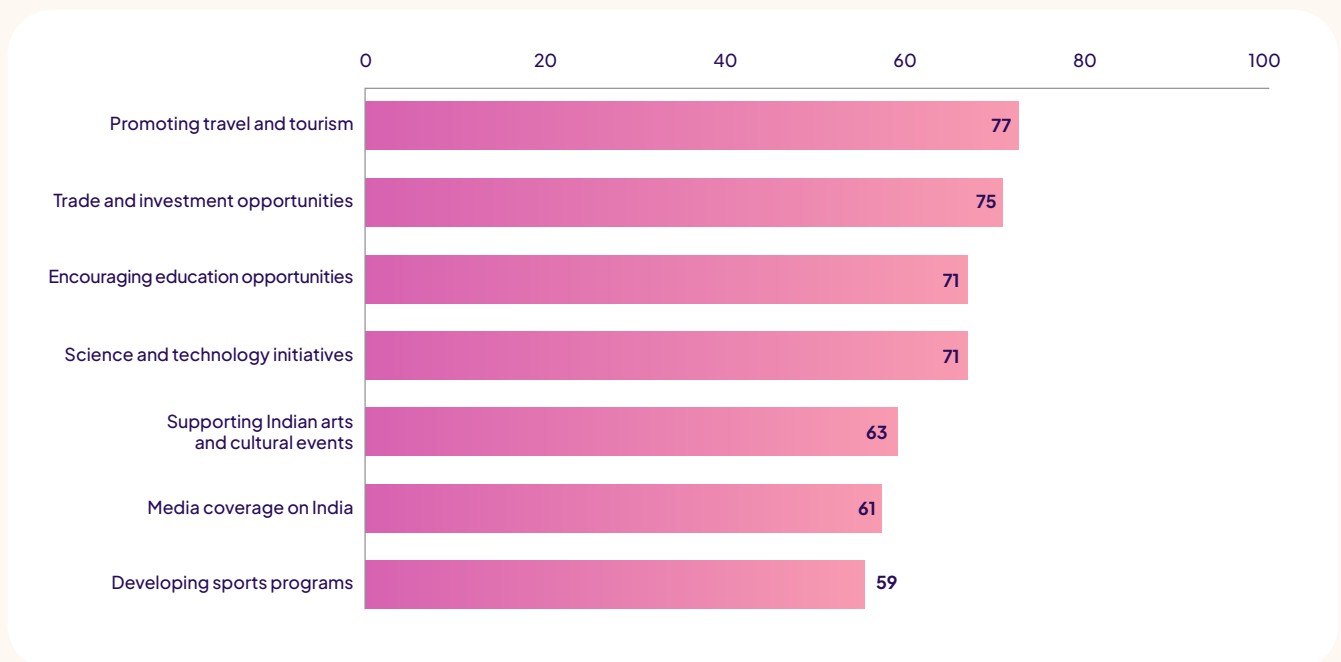
Around three in five Australians feel they have either poor or very poor understanding of Indian culture.

Importantly, 81 per cent of respondents recognise that understanding Indian culture is crucial to economic ties.

Australians were specifically asked what they believe is most necessary to build stronger people-to-people ties between Australians and Indians. The activities they rate most highly are travel and tourism, trade and investment opportunities, education opportunities, science and technology initiatives, and arts and cultural events.

Fifty-five per cent of Australians feel that news and events from India are underreported in the Australian media and 29 per cent report to some extent that the Australian media tends to portray news and events about India negatively.

Figure 4: Activities needed most to build people-to-people relationships between Australia and India (per cent)



E2. Which of the following, if any, do you think is needed most in order to build people-to-people relationships between Australia and India? Per cent yes shown. Base: All respondents (n=2,158). Note: 'I don't know enough to say', 'Other', and 'Prefer not to say' responses are not shown in the figure.

## Engaging Indian Australian communities

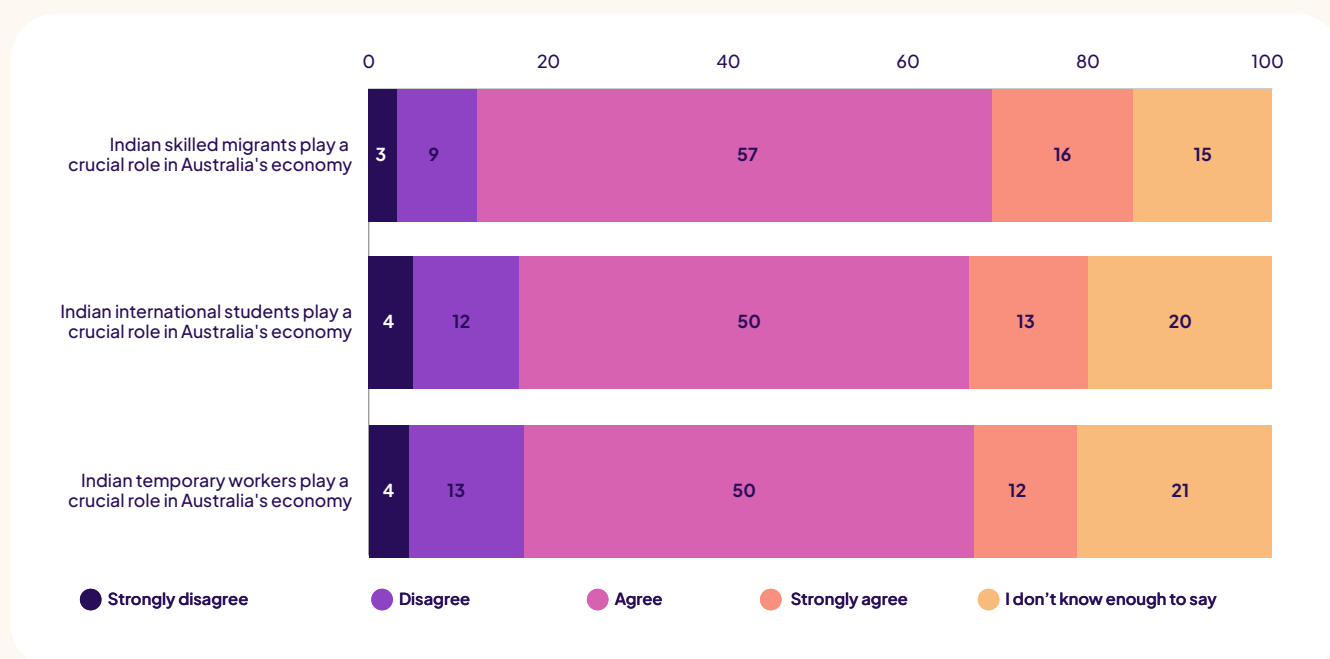
Interactions with the Indian Australian community are reported most frequently in workplace and retail trade and services settings.

Australians readily recognise the crucial role the Indian diaspora plays in the Australian economy. Seventy-three per cent recognise this with respect to Indian skilled migrants, 64 per cent acknowledge this for Indian international students, and 62 per cent recognise this crucial contribution of Indian temporary workers.

They also see the Indian Australian community as enhancing the bilateral relationship, with 72 per cent believing the Indian community has a positive impact.

There is a general recognition that Indian Australians, like other diaspora communities in Australia, may continue to experience discrimination in Australia. When Australians are asked to nominate what challenges members of the Indian community face in Australia, the most prevalent challenge identified by a quarter of them is racism, but 39 per cent do not know enough to say.

Figure 5: Perceptions about role of the Indian community in Australia's economy (per cent)



F3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Base: All respondents (n=2,158).  
Note: 'Prefer not to say' (0 per cent for F3\_a, F3\_b, F3\_c) responses are not shown in the figure.





# Conclusion

The Australia-India Relations Sentiment Survey research finds that most Australians recognise India has a large and growing economy and see India as an important country for Australia's security and prosperity now and into the future. There is optimism about India's economic prospects in the next five years and support for enhancing business engagement. Many Australians also view arts and cultural events, tourism, sports, education, science and technology initiatives, and media coverage on India as necessary to expand people-to-people ties.

Even though their engagement may have been somewhat superficial through Indian cuisine, many Australians have engaged with Indian culture and have an interest to engage more in the future.

Importantly, Australians appreciate the role of cultural competency in establishing trade and investment relationships with India, even if the base level of cultural understanding is currently low.

The positive contributions made by Indian Australians to Australia's society, its economy and the relationship with India are widely recognised.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the research shows very clear differences between the responses of Indian Australians and those of Australians without Indian heritage, reflecting their varying levels of interest and awareness.

One of the clearest findings that emerges from the research is that there is a large proportion of Australians who do not feel they have sufficient knowledge to respond to questions about various dimensions of the Australia-India relationship.

This knowledge gap presents an opportunity for government, universities, and civil society to make India and its relationship with Australia more accessible to the public, and to foster mutual understanding through greater cultural exchange. The knowledge gap also suggests a larger role for Indian Australians in initiatives to enhance India literacy, informed by their appreciation of the mutual benefits in stronger bilateral ties and India's place in Australia's future.





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