

# La Trobe University India Country Strategy

June 2016



## La Trobe University

### India Country Strategy

#### *Why an India Strategy?*

India will have the world's largest population within the next decade and is likely to continue to grow until at least the middle of the century. If the economic reform program launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is successful its economy will also grow rapidly. It is investing heavily in its research and development sector as the government seeks to improve the country's skills base and more generally wants to see innovation and productivity drive long-term economic development.

India has become a significant foreign policy priority of the Australian government. As a democracy and key member of the Commonwealth, with whom Australia shares not only values but increasingly a geostrategic outlook, India is fast becoming an important bilateral partner for Australia in both the Indian Ocean region and the world more generally. It is now Australia's fifth largest export partner, and it is the homeland of more than 400,000 Australian residents. In short, India matters for Australia's future.

Since its foundation, La Trobe University has made the study of India and South Asia an academic priority. Its extensive Indian and South Asian collection is an important feature of the Borchardt library. The collection comprises more than 38,000 items and is the third largest in the country, after the National Library of Australia and ANU. As a result of its stature, Indira Gandhi visited the campus to open the library and La Trobe remains the only university in Australia to have been visited by a sitting Indian prime minister.

La Trobe is the only university outside Canberra to teach Hindi and our partnership with Lady Shri Ram College for Women celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 2016. La Trobe is also a foundation member of the Australia India Institute (AII), which provides an important platform to advance Australia-India academic partnership and to contribute to national debate about India.

## **Goals**

Through this India country strategy La Trobe is seeking to achieve four macro-level goals which will in turn be advanced by pursuing a series of specific strategies. They reflect a whole-of-university perspective and are informed by the broader strategic objectives of *Future Ready* (FR) and the *Internationalization Plan 2014-17* (IP). Crucially, if these objectives are to be achieved La Trobe's various organisational components will need to collaborate over a sustained period of time and to understand the role each plays in the University's larger objectives.

### Goal 1:

**La Trobe will be recognised as among the top three centres nationally for its research and teaching excellence in the study of contemporary India.**

### Goal 2:

**La Trobe will be recognised in India for three particular areas of expertise and excellence: Sport; Health Sciences; and the study of contemporary India.**

### Goal 3:

**La Trobe will have a wider range of productive research collaborations with Indian partners in areas of recognised strength.**

### Goal 4:

**La Trobe students will have a rich range of opportunities to engage with India in their curriculum as well as through mobility programs, exchange and internships.**

## **Strategies**

1. Invest in La Trobe University's capacity for the study of contemporary India over five years to achieve a set of academic assets that makes La Trobe among the top three universities in Australia for research and teaching on India.
2. Focus our academic engagement with India, particularly in-country activity, on three areas Sport; Health Sciences; and the study of contemporary India.
3. Establish three to four strong research collaborations linking interested researchers in La Trobe with India-based counter-parts.
4. Improve student mobility and engagement with India.

## STRATEGY 1

**Invest in La Trobe University's capacity for the study of contemporary India over five years to achieve a set of academic attributes that makes La Trobe among the top three universities in Australia for research and teaching on India.**

One of La Trobe's significant points of comparative advantage in relation to India is our commitment to Hindi and the study of contemporary India more broadly. La Trobe enjoys an excellent reputation because of these factors.

Our initial membership of the Australia India Institute (All), the long term commitment and strategic funding of Hindi, and continued efforts of La Trobe Asia has increased the visibility and tempo of our work.

### *Specific Tasks*

- Make a number of India-focused academic appointments in areas of teaching and research strength. This should include newly established roles and a strategic priority for new appointments through the normal cycle of recruitment.
- Establish dedicated PhD scholarships for students working in topics relating to contemporary India.
- Ensure the study of India is strategically represented in core major sequences in the BA and cognate disciplines and made widely available across the Colleges.

## STRATEGY 2

**Focus our academic engagement with India, particularly in-country activity, on three areas Sport; Health Sciences; and the study of contemporary India.**

### *Specific Tasks*

#### **Profile building**

- Participate in the All Next Generation Network Postdoctoral Fellowship with at new appointments in these priority areas as part of the network.
- Develop a communications plan to ensure consistent messaging of these three areas in international marketing and broader University activity.
- La Trobe Asia and La Trobe Sport will collaborate to develop a systematic plan for academic engagement with India in relation to Sport.
- La Trobe Asia and the College of Science, Health and Engineering (SHE) will develop a systematic plan for academic engagement with India in relation to Health Sciences.

#### **India Visibility**

- Hold four All-La Trobe joint events each year with at least one high profile event with media interest.
- Host at least one event annually in India based at the All Delhi office showcasing research and teaching expertise in India.
- Explore the feasibility of a 'La Trobe India Update' annual publication/event in collaboration with partners in India that makes La Trobe a 'go to' place for India focused scholarly work.
- Hold at least one annual India focused public lecture/event separate from All.
- Dedicate at least four Asia Rising podcasts each year to India issues and events.
- Establish an India section of La Trobe Asia website to showcase India focused activity.

### STRATEGY 3

#### **Establish three to four research collaborations linking interested researchers in La Trobe with India-based counter-parts.**

Forming sustainable and meaningful collaborations with India-based partners should be a priority. We should focus both on traditional university based researchers as well as those based in industry and private research institutes.

#### *Specific Tasks*

- Establish a dedicated scholarship program awarded to high achieving Indian students. These should be weighted to favour our strengths in Sport, Health Sciences and the study of contemporary India with the remainder located in fields of comparative strength.
- Establish an Indian research collaboration fund to help La Trobe researchers to develop partnerships with Indian based collaborators.
- Develop a mobility program for researchers to promote joint programs, particularly for PhD students, post-docs and ECRs.
- Broaden the remit of the LTI Delhi Office to support research collaboration and partnership development.

## STRATEGY 4

### **Improve student mobility and engagement with India**

Although La Trobe students travel in large numbers as part of their studies, relatively small numbers travel to India for an entire semester.

Study tours in a number of areas have been reasonably popular, with a total of around 75 students over the past two years.

#### *Specific Tasks*

- Establish three institutional partners to develop a solid foundation for sustainable exchange programs.
- Develop a male equivalent of the LSR relationship as well as several other links to high quality institutions in key metropolitan centres
- Provide capacity to support development of study tours, internships and other in-country study and WiL opportunities.
- Develop curriculum opportunities using new staff in the study of contemporary India to enthuse students about India.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Broad directions set out in this strategy will be further developed into initiatives that reflect the particular interests of colleges, schools and departments.

This strategy will be supplemented by a detailed implementation plan that interprets the broader direction of the strategy reflecting specific interests across the university.

The co-ordination of strategy implementation will be overseen by La Trobe Asia (TBC).