



## **NEW RESEARCH SHOWS VICTORIANS VALUE THE INDIAN DIASPORA**

New research reveals Victorians overwhelmingly value the contributions of the Indian community and believe they positively enhance all aspects of Victorian society and economy.

But despite the significant contributions of the Indian diaspora, there is still a notable disparity in the representation of people of Indian descent in leadership roles across boardrooms and political landscapes.

The Australia India Institute's landmark report on *Victorian's Perceptions on India and the Indian Diaspora: A State-Wide Survey* gauged how Indian migrants were viewed in terms of their presence and contribution to the local society, economy, and culture.

Conducted in collaboration with Roy Morgan's Taking the Pulse of the Nation (TTPN) and The Melbourne Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research, more than 2,500 Victorians across urban, regional, and rural locations were surveyed over two years.

The report, the first of its kind, found that more than half of the Victorian respondents, across all age and gender groups, regularly interacted with the Indian diaspora and agreed on their positive involvement across a variety of sectors.

Almost 60 per cent believed Indian international university students contribute positively to Victoria's economy and society, while more than half expressed a willingness and intention to learn more about India and participate in future Indian public and cultural events.

The Indian diaspora is Australia's fastest-growing diaspora - within the last decade, India has surged ahead of China and the UK to become the largest source of migrants to Australia.

The Indian community is made up of skilled migrants who are highly educated and are engaged in key economic sectors of interest to Victoria's expansion of trade. The majority of survey respondents agreed that the Victorian Government should capitalise on this, acknowledging the State's role in encouraging more skilled migration from India.

The findings reflect the Victorian Government's positive engagement with India – in promoting travel and tourism for Indian visitors, attracting Indian international students and supporting the skilled migration of Indian professionals.

During times of national crisis, such as the 2019 bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic, Indian diaspora members also demonstrated responsibility and showed leadership skills by directing missions for distributing food and essentials, engaging in volunteering services, providing medical aid, and opening vaccination drives.

“With the support of the Victorian government, our Indian diaspora networks have become a dynamic and enterprising part of the fabric of Victorian society,” Australia India Institute chief executive Lisa Singh said.

“Their roles in being gateways to greater opportunities for social and economic collaboration in Victoria are held in high regard.”

Yet, more than 80 per cent of the survey respondents reported the lack of visibility of Indian Australian authoritative figures in higher levels of state and federal policymaking, in universities, large corporations and peak industry bodies.

The report found people of Indian descent are bound by “glass ceilings” and other barriers to leadership roles, with interviewees commenting that most employment programs facilitate work pathways catered towards Australian citizens only.

“This landmark report on the Indian diaspora could not be more timely. We needed it to better understand this burgeoning part of the Victorian community and shape policy discussions to promote a more inclusive Victoria,” Singh said.

**Key Statistics:**

- The Indian diaspora is Australia’s fastest-growing diaspora - within the last decade, India has surged ahead of China and the UK to become the largest source of migrants to Australia.
- About 40 per cent of the Indian diaspora in Australia call Victoria home.
- Almost 60 per cent of survey respondents believed international students from India contributed positively to society.
- 28 per cent of survey respondents observed that their employers have not hired graduates of Indian descent recently.
- With the introduction of direct flights from Mumbai to Melbourne and the improvement of air connectivity, the Indian diaspora travel has nearly doubled despite the all-time high travel costs.

**Media Enquiries:**

**Shuba Krishnan, Head of Communications**

**E: [shuba.krishnan@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:shuba.krishnan@unimelb.edu.au)**