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TOWARDS THE SDGs: AN ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIA-INDIA RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

Towards the SDGs: An Analysis of Australia-India Research Collaborations uses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a lens to examine past and ongoing research collaborations between Australian university researchers and their counterparts in India.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Australian Government has made commitments in its National Sustainable Development Goals Summits of 2016 and 2018 towards achieving key targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda across states, cities, and regional communities. The Government of India has also embraced the United Nations SDGs as a strategic framework for addressing the nation's diverse socio-economic challenges. It has integrated the SDGs into its national development agenda and formulated a priority index of 62 key indicators to achieve India's SDG targets by 2030 at both national and state levels.



"Australia and India enjoy a strong and mutually beneficial relationship in education and university research. We will continue to seek opportunities for collaboration between Australian and Indian universities to work on shared projects which, among other goals, advance the Sustainable Development Goals."

THE HON JASON CLARE MP
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
December 2024

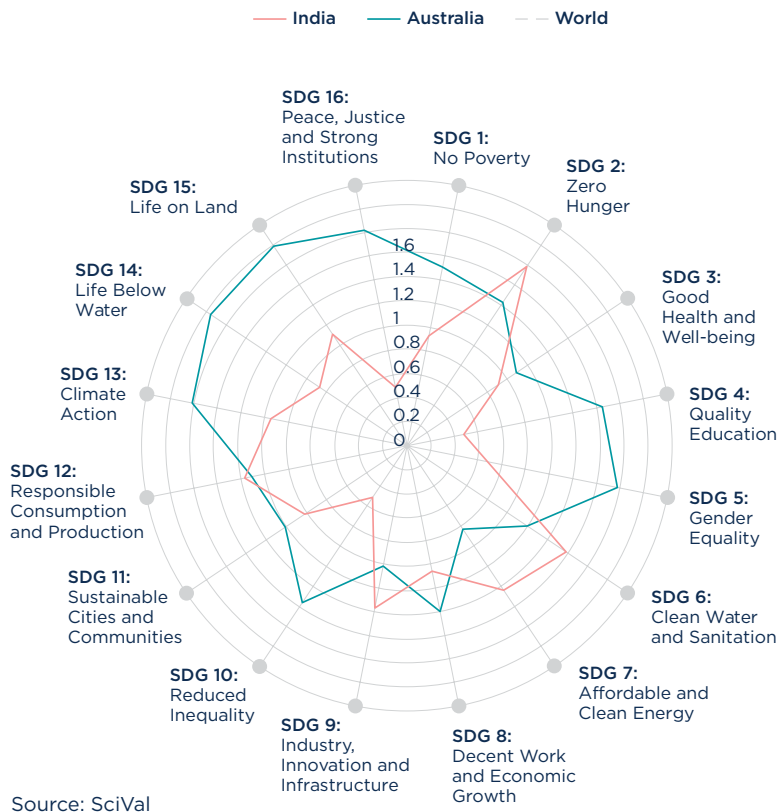
Towards the SDGs: An Analysis of Australia-India Research Collaborations focuses on three aspects of bilateral research collaborations:

- How do the national research priorities identified by each country align with the seventeen SDGs?
- How do the joint-authored research publications of Australian and Indian collaborators advance the SDGs for both countries?
- How do the leading Australian university researchers identified from the mapping of joint-authored publications by SDGs view the challenges and opportunities of expanding and leveraging Australia-India research collaborations?

KEY FINDINGS

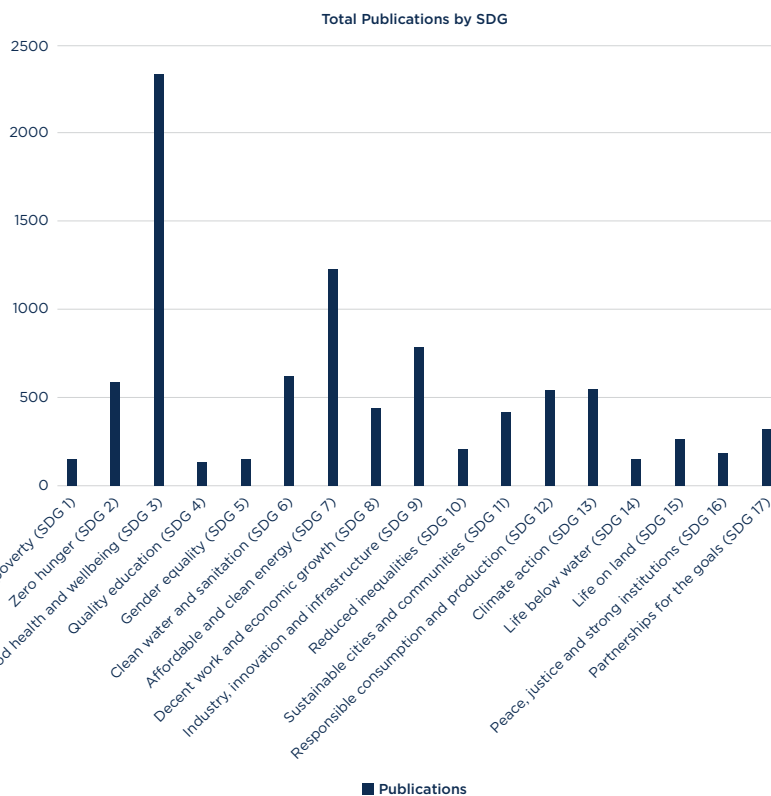
- In 2024, Australia had the highest number of universities in the top ten Times Higher Education (THE) Global Impact Rankings, which assess social and economic contributions of universities based on SDGs using research, stewardship, outreach and teaching metrics.
- India featured as the most represented country in the Global Impact Rankings of 2024, with a total of 96 higher education and research institutions.
- There is minimal correspondence between Australia-India research priority areas, the SDG areas of high global impact rankings of Australian universities, and the top SDG areas represented by joint-authored publications by Australian and Indian researchers.
- Leading Australian researchers who choose to align their research interests with the SDGs are largely self-motivated. Absence of clear incentives and standardised methodology in Australian research grant schemes for aligning research to SDGs, constrains researchers from systematically integrating the SDGs Agenda in their collaborative work.

OVERALL FINDINGS



AUSTRALIA-INDIA SDG SCORES

The Relative Activity Index chart (RAI) compares the overall number of a country's publications relative to global publications for every SDG. A score less than 1.0 implies lower output relative to the global average, while a score greater than 1.0 implies higher output. There are overlaps between the Australian and Indian RAIs in **SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production)**, **SDG 2 (Zero hunger)**, **SDG 3 (Good health and well-being)**, and **SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)**.

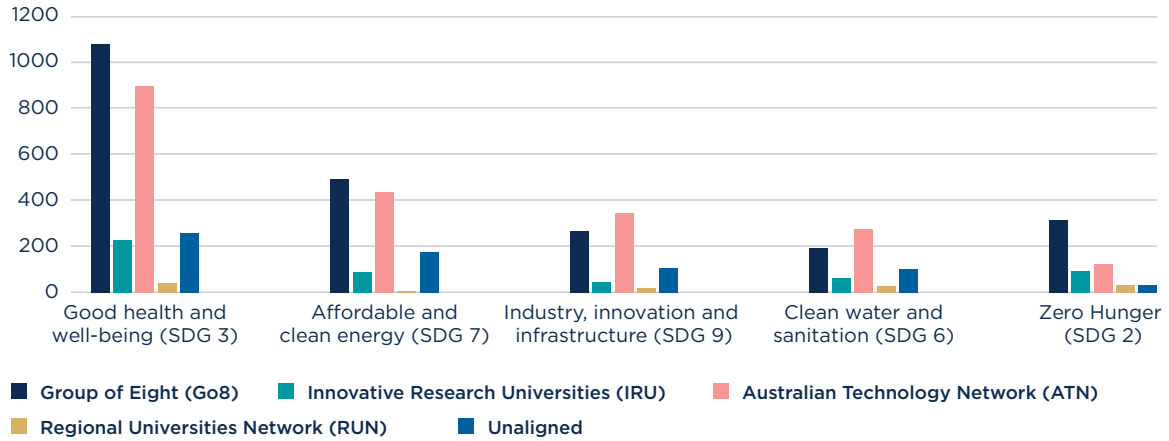


KEY SDGs

The top five SDG areas emerging from the bibliometric analysis are (in order of ranking): **Good health and well-being (SDG 3)**; **Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7)**; **Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9)**, **Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6)**; and **Zero hunger (SDG 2)**. The top three overlap with key national research priorities of each country and represent well-established themes of Australia-India bilateral research collaboration priorities and engagement.

GROUPING-WISE FINDINGS

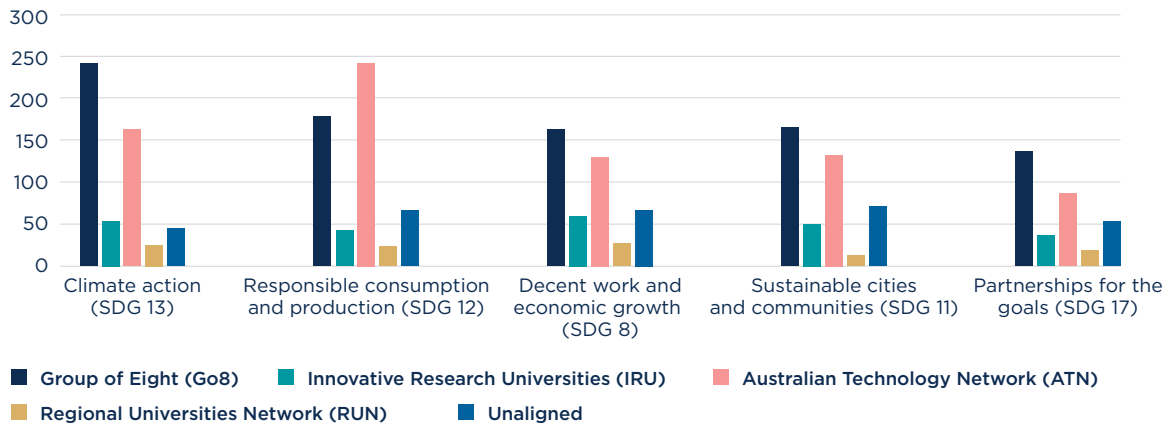
Total publications by university grouping



TOP FIVE SDGs BY UNIVERSITY GROUPINGS

Within the top five SDG areas identified, Go8 universities lead with the number of joint-authored publications in **Good health and well-being (SDG 3)**, **Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7)**, and **Zero hunger (SDG 2)**. ATN universities lead in **Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6)** and **Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9)**.

Total publications by university grouping



MIDDLE FIVE SDGs BY UNIVERSITY GROUPINGS

Within the middle five SDG areas identified by the bibliometric analysis, Go8 universities lead in **Climate action (SDG 13)**, **Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)**, **Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)** and **Partnerships for the goals (SDG 17)**. ATN universities lead in **Responsible production and consumption (SDG 12)**.

THE WAY FORWARD

SDGs for interdisciplinary collaboration



The SDGs offer a useful framework for expanding bilateral research collaboration in high and emerging areas of global impact for Australia and India

Supporting emerging researchers through SDGs



Using the SDG framework helps identify motivated early and mid-career researchers in both countries to address shared challenges. This promotes interdisciplinary research and innovative partnerships with industry, government, civil society and community-based organisations.

Diversifying funding through SDGs



Aligning bilateral Australia-India research collaborations to SDGs can expand and diversify opportunities for researchers to secure funding. This funding may come from multilateral organisations, international research programs and philanthropic foundations.



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