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DEFENCE PROGRAM

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

MEDIA RELEASE

Defence report to be launched by the Hon. Richard Marles MP

March 27, 2025

A landmark report outlining the next decade of the India and Australia defence relationship will be launched today in Canberra by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon. Richard Marles MP.

Building a Resilient Australia India Defence Relationship: Options for the Next Decade details strategic and logical steps to further the defence relationship between Australia and India.

Written by defence experts, Mr Kim Heriot-Darragh and Dr Gaurav Saini, the report examines key areas where the defence relationship can be strengthened, calling for further flexibility between the two countries; elevating ground-up ideas; enhancing mutual literacy and strengthening defence footprints.

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon. Richard Marles MP commended the report, saying it builds on the significant defence ties between Australia and India.

"Australia's defence relationship with India is profoundly important and our defence cooperation continues to reach new heights," he said. "Deepening these ties across the defence enterprise is critical to maintaining regional security and prosperity."

Australia India Institute's CEO, the Hon. Lisa Singh welcomed the launch of the report, saying it comes at a salient time for defence organisations on both sides to adapt accordingly and build resilience.

"The report provides a roadmap for what the next chapter of the strategic partnership between Australia and India could be like, amidst the backdrop of living in a contested region where both countries are navigating in uncharted waters," she said.

“Defence and security policy development on the Indo-Pacific region continues to be a growing area for the Australia India Institute and will continue to drive our research work in the decade to come.

“I commend the authors Mr Kim Heriot-Darragh and Dr Gaurav Saini – both uniquely placed to offer nuanced insights on Indo-Pacific defence issues – for presenting such rigorous and forward-looking analysis.”

The report forms part of the Australia India Institute’s Defence Program, supported by the Australian government’s Department of Defence.

Co-author, Mr Heriot Darragh, said the Australia-India defence relationship has come a long way in a short time – but the relationship must be continually rebalanced on both sides.

“To me, the most important indication is just how much more prominent both countries are in conversations about defence and strategy in Canberra and New Delhi,” he said.

“Dr Saini and I have laid down six lines of effort that we think will help better prepare Australia and India for the next decade of cooperation.

“They range from considering whether both sides should bolster their presence in each other’s country; how to ensure more working-level cooperation between both sides; taking stock of agreements and the rhythm of engagements and meetings between both sides to ensure they deliver what they need.

Co-author Dr Gaurav said resilience in the relationship needed to be built through deeper institutional integration and more sustained engagement across services.

“We need a stronger foundation of genuine curiosity about each other, he said.

“How we think, operate, and define security in our own contexts. True strategic convergence isn’t about declarations but shared operational experiences, trust, and long-term planning.

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