

**Presentation of Credentials to Governor General His Excellency
Major-General Philip Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC (Retd.)
Government House, 25th October 2007**

Your Excellency, the Governor General, Fellow Excellencies, Gentlemen, Ladies

It is an exciting time to be the High Commissioner for India in Australia. Indeed, it is an exciting time to be an Indian.

India is in the middle of a process of profound socio-economic and political change and is increasingly making its presence felt on the world stage.

We are working in India today towards nothing less than a transformation of our economic and social landscape. In this endeavour, we constantly break new ground - there is no precedent in human history for a democracy of over one billion people moving towards development and prosperity.

The guiding principle behind India's drive for sustained and higher rates of economic growth has been to ensure that the improved performance of the economy must contribute to poverty reduction, employment generation and human development. The fundamental objective of our economic reforms is to ensure that growth is more equitable and that it empowers each and every one of our citizens, and especially the most deprived.

India and Australia are both vibrant democracies with highly dynamic economies, seeing sustained periods of high economic growth.

Your Excellency has cited several statistics. I would like to add to that - our bilateral trade has been growing by 30% per annum over the past few years; we are the 6th largest destination for Australia's exports and the fourth largest for Western Australia's.

Excellency, India and Australia are not countries far away from each other, but countries in each other's extended neighbourhood.

The growing economic linkages between our two countries present a solid foundation for us to build further on the many commonalities that exist between us. We both nurture a deep respect for fundamental rights, rule of law and human freedoms. Both our countries have a strong and independent judiciary, a free press and strong civil society. We are both multiethnic, multilingual and multi cultural societies and we share a common language and a common passion for a great and mysterious game that hardly any country outside the Commonwealth understands. In fact I must admit that I am probably the first

Indian High Commissioner to Australia who does not have cricket running in her blood. This might however, actually turn out to be an advantage - I would be looking for something other than cricket to serve as a strategic underpinning for our bilateral relationship.

We are both young nations with mature democracies, in the process of finding solutions to the economic and politics of globalisation and managing its cultural and intellectual consequences.

Another factor that draws us together is a presence of a vibrant Indian community in Australia, nearly 200,000 strong, and a student community of over 40,000 and growing, which has contributed significantly to the Australian economy, including in the agricultural and service sectors.

Our people are by nature hard working, industrious and peace loving. They integrate well into local communities and are welcomed wherever they have settled across the world. We are proud of our Indian communities and the contributions they have made in the countries that they have put down roots in. I have no doubt that they will play an important role in our two governments realising the full potential of the India-Australia bilateral relationship.

Excellency, it will be my attempt, during my tenure, to strengthen and intensify relations across the entire gamut of bilateral interactions between India and Australia. I look forward to working with all of you towards this end and in taking our relations forward from strength to strength in the years to come.
