

Australia-India Business Engagement Program

**India Cultural Awareness for Business
Wednesday, 1 April 2026**



Australian Government



Centre for
**Australia
India
Relations**

The Australia-India Business Engagement Program is supported by the Centre for Australia-India Relations. Australian Industry Group is proud to be a Centre for Australia-India Relations grant recipient.



Australian Industry Group acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.



Introduction



Australian Industry Group

Australian Industry Group is the nation's largest and most experienced employer organisation representing traditional, innovative and emerging industry sectors.



Introduction and Housekeeping

Housekeeping — Tips and Tricks of ZOOM

Chatham House Rule

Discussions will take place under the Chatham House Rule, and the event will be recorded.

Zoom chat

Use Zoom chat — to ask questions or interact with the Trainers/Facilitators.

Zoom Q & A

You can use the Q&A to ask questions, and we will try to answer them during the session.

Zoom screen sharing (including phone)

Occasionally we will use the screen sharing function in Zoom with our computers or phones. This will not require you to do anything but be attentive.

Slide Deck

A copy of the slide deck will be shared with those who registered.



**This session is
being recorded**



Australia-India Business Engagement Program Survey



- With the support of the Centre for Australia—India Relations, we are conducting a national business engagement survey to better understand the opportunities and challenges Australian businesses face when engaging with the India market.
- The insights gathered will help shape future support services, resources, and initiatives aimed at helping businesses make informed decisions about entering or expanding in India.
- Link to survey: <https://survey.aigroup.com.au/index.php/576214>

Please Introduce Yourself (or Use Chat)

Who are you

What company are you from

What product/service are you exporting or planning to export



Divya Skene

Centre for Australia-India Relations - DFAT

- Divya Skene is a senior trade and business engagement professional with over two decades of experience advancing Australia's international business, investment, and economic relationships across the Indo-Pacific.
- She is currently Head of Business Engagement at the Centre for Australia-India Relations, where she works to strengthen commercial links between Australian and Indian businesses, industry bodies, and institutions.



Our Facilitator — Tasneem Chopra

- Tasneem Chopra, OAM A Cross-cultural Consultant, Tasneem addresses issues of equity and belonging through an intersectional lens in leadership of government, corporate, arts, academic and NGO sectors, within Australia and overseas. She assists clients refine their D&I policies as an industry expert and advisor, executes workshops, curates exhibitions and promotes social change towards greater cultural inclusion. Tasneem is also an accomplished emcee and keynote speaker.
- Tasneem has featured on numerous platforms including BBC, SBS, ABC's Q&A and The Drum. She co-hosts the podcast Colour Outside the Lines with Leah Vandenberg, and has previously hosted Strengths Untold.
- For further information:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tasneemchopra/>



Building Culturally Intelligent Partnerships: Working Effectively with Indian Business Clients

By: Tasneem Chopra OAM,

Where do you come from?





Welcome & Workshop Overview

- *Building Culturally Intelligent Partnerships: Working Effectively with Indian Business Clients*
Beyond Business
- Mindset/ mindfulness
- Cultural agility
- Trust
- Success and sustainability





Workshop Objectives- Learn. Reflect. Apply. Connect

01

Understand key cultural and ethical nuances in Indian business contexts.

02

Communicate effectively with awareness of hierarchy, gender, and tone.

03

Navigate dynastic and family-run business structures.

04

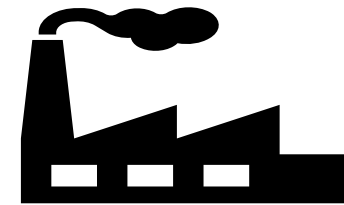
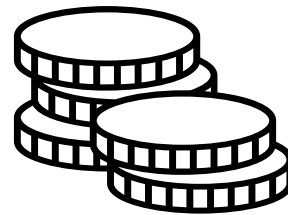
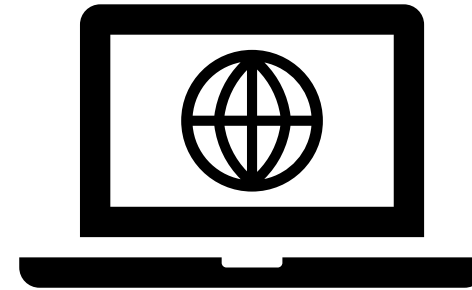
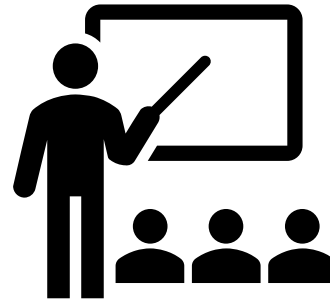
Build respectful, sustainable relationships grounded in trust.



India in Context: Diversity & Economy



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The Foundation of Indian Business Culture

- *Family → Business → Community → Nation.*
- Many Indian firms are **dynastic** — family trust governs decisions.
- Respect for hierarchy ensures stability.
- Relationships often precede contracts.



Communication Style & Etiquette

- Direct V's Diplomatic
- Indirect language signals respect, not avoidance.
- Tone: measured, calm, polite.
- Humor and slang can misfire — avoid sarcasm.
- Physical cues: respectful distance, moderate eye contact, open posture.





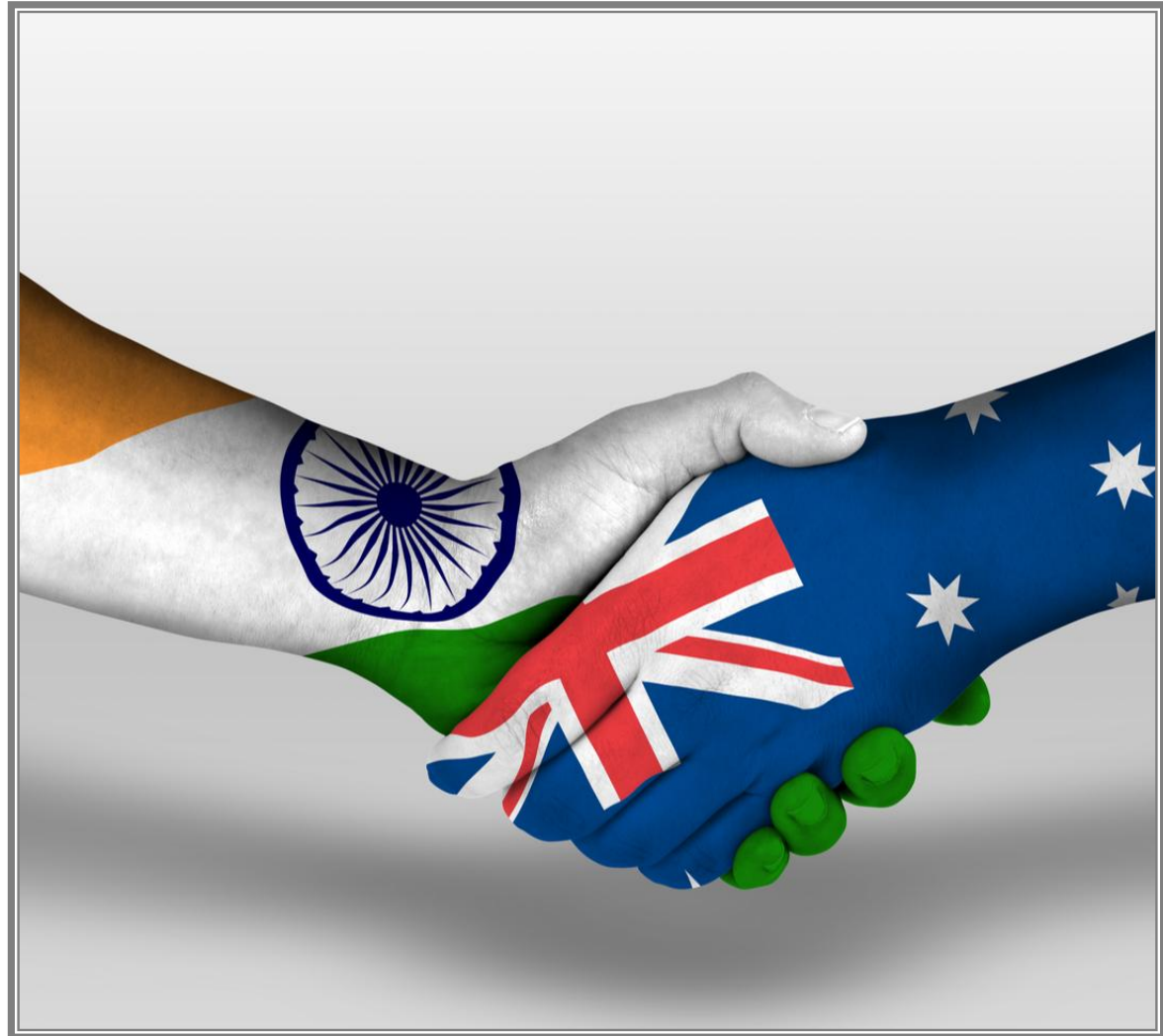
Gender & Professional Norms

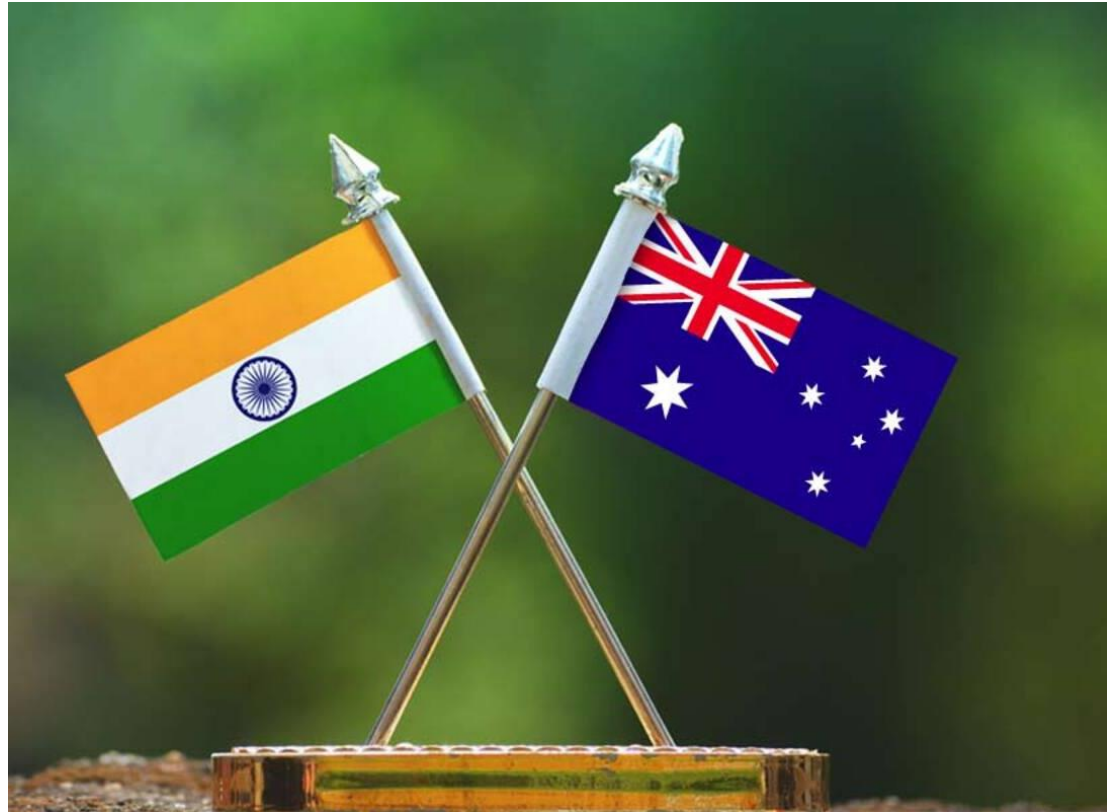
- Gender dynamics and etiquette
- Gender equality varies by region and industry.
- Maintain professionalism and avoid overly familiar gestures.
- Respect hierarchy regardless of gender — focus on role, not stereotype.



Ethics, Trust, and the Pace of Business

- Trust-based, relationship-first approach
 - Decision-making may be slower — consensus-driven.
 - Rushing may appear disrespectful.
 - Trust before transaction.





Common Cross-Cultural Missteps V's Better Approach

Misstep: Pushing for immediate decisions.

Better: Allow time for family consultation.

Misstep: Overly casual tone.

Better: Warm formality.

Misstep: Public disagreement.

Better: Private clarification.



Scenario 1: Reflection Exercise (Individual)

Scenario:

Your Indian client hasn't responded for two weeks after receiving your proposal. What's happening beneath the surface?

Activity:

- Reflect individually (5 mins).
- Share responses (chat or short debrief).



Scenario 2: Group Exercise (Breakouts)

Scenario:

You're hosting a delegation of Indian business leaders. One senior man dominates discussion; a younger woman is silent but capable. How do you engage inclusively?

Activity:

- Small groups discuss (10 mins).
- Share one respectful inclusion strategy.

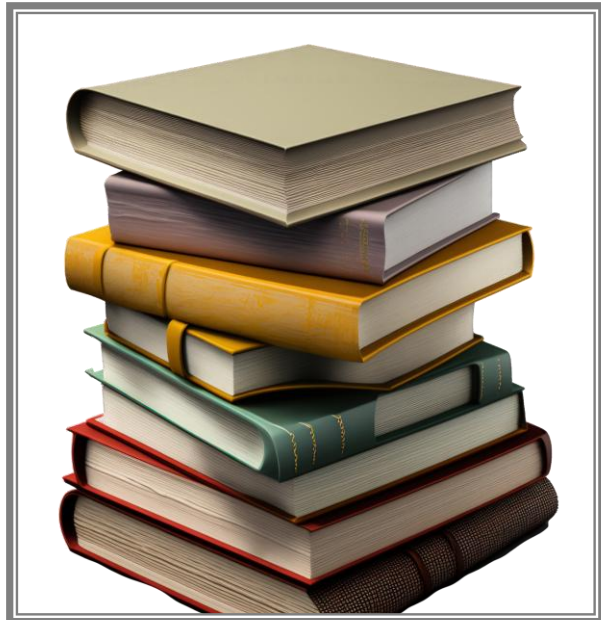


Key Takeaways & Implementation

1. Relationships precede results.
2. Respect hierarchy and patience.
3. Adapt tone and communication.
4. Acknowledge family influence.
5. Lead with humility and integrity.
6. Questions?



Closing & Resources



Cross-cultural intelligence isn't about perfection — it's about presence

Recommended readings:

- *Doing Business in India* (PwC)
- *Culture Smart: India* by Becky Stephen
- *The Culture Map* by Erin Meyer
- Salaam Institute's follow-up module on *Advanced Intercultural Leadership for South Asia Engagements*



Thank you



Questions & Next Step?

Stay Updated:

Register to receive updates on future events and activities.

<https://www.aigroup.com.au/services-and-advice/business-improvement/australia-india-business-engagement-program/#block-48873>

Share Your Feedback:

We'd love to hear your thoughts to help us improve.

Complete the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AIBEP1Apr26>

Contact:

Tel: 1300 776 063 or E: big@australianindustrygroup.com.au

Share Your Feedback
Webinar – Indian Business
Culture 1 Apr 26



Upcoming Activities

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