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Asialink

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Victoria State Office

Australia
India
Chamber of
Commerce

South Asia Conference 2023

Trade and Security

Thursday 13 July 1:30pm – 7:30pm (AEST)
Investment Centre Victoria, Level 46, 55 Collins Street, Melbourne

In partnership with **Global Victoria, the Australia India Institute, Asialink, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Victoria State Office, and the Australia India Chamber of Commerce**, AIIA Victoria welcomes both new and returning 2021 and 2022 South Asia Series attendees to the inaugural South Asia Conference 2023, followed by a reception.



The theme this year is **Trade and Security**.

The Conference will focus on India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and consider trade and security concerns for each of these countries, within the context of the Indo-Pacific region. The relationship between these countries and Australia will be examined within the trade and security concerns of the region, including the war in Ukraine, the rise of China, and the heightened tensions in the region.

As the economic and trade relationship between Australia and China continues to be problematic, what are the potential opportunities for increased trade and investment between Australia and these South Asian markets? What are the security concerns for these countries in a situation where China is increasing its profile in the region?

Join AIIA VIC and our partners for an engaging afternoon of workshops with keynote speaker **The Hon Tim Watts MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs** to discuss key trade and security issues facing the three countries.

Please see program overleaf:

[BOOK ONLINE HERE](#)

Entry is free, but pre-registration is essential. Registrations close Wed 12 July at 2pm AEST.

MS Teams webinar access link will be emailed to online participants beforehand.

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Time	Activity		
13:30 - 14:00	Registration and Check-In		
14:00 - 14:05	Welcome Remarks & Acknowledgement of Country Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria Ms Fiona Letos, Executive Director, Trade and Global Engagement, Global Victoria		
14:05 - 14:20	Keynote Address The Hon. Tim Watts MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs		
14:20 - 14:30	Introduction Martine Letts FAIIA HonLLD		
14:30 - 14:40	Break		
14:40 - 15:35	India Panel The Hon. Lisa Singh, CEO Australia India Institute (<i>Moderator</i>) Tully Smith, Australia India Chamber of Commerce Norm Duce, REA Michelle Wade, Commissioner - South Asia, Global Victoria		
15:35 - 15:50	Q&A		
15:50 - 15:55	(5-minute Introduction to Global Victoria's Activities in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh)		
15:55 - 16:15	Afternoon Tea		
16:15 - 17:15	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Sri Lanka Panel Prakash Mirchandani, AIIA Victoria <i>(Moderator)</i></p> <p>Dr. Chulanee Attanayake, National University of Singapore and Swinburne University</p> <p>Murtaza Jafferjee, CEO JB Securities and Chairman, Advocata Institute (Sri Lanka)</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Bangladesh Panel Dr. Mike Moignard, AIIA Victoria <i>(Moderator)</i></p> <p>Dr. Lutfun Nahar Lata, University of Melbourne</p> <p>Prof. Lailufar Yasmin, University of Dhaka</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Reshad Ahsan, University of Melbourne</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Sri Lanka Panel Prakash Mirchandani, AIIA Victoria <i>(Moderator)</i></p> <p>Dr. Chulanee Attanayake, National University of Singapore and Swinburne University</p> <p>Murtaza Jafferjee, CEO JB Securities and Chairman, Advocata Institute (Sri Lanka)</p>	<p>Bangladesh Panel Dr. Mike Moignard, AIIA Victoria <i>(Moderator)</i></p> <p>Dr. Lutfun Nahar Lata, University of Melbourne</p> <p>Prof. Lailufar Yasmin, University of Dhaka</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Reshad Ahsan, University of Melbourne</p>
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17:15 - 17:30	Q&A		
17:30 - 17:45	Wrap Up Prof. Michael Wesley FAIIA		
17:45 - 19:30	Networking Reception		

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The Hon. Tim Watts MP is the Federal Member for Gellibrand and has served as the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Albanese Government since 2022. Tim was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2013 and for a decade has served one of the most diverse electorates in Australia. Before entering Parliament, Tim worked in the technology sector, as a Senior Manager at Telstra and a Solicitor at Mallesons Stephen Jaques (now King & Wood Mallesons). Tim worked on critical tech issues including the roll out of the National Broadband Network, the auction and distribution of sections of the radio communications spectrum and network pricing regulation. He also worked as the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Minister for Communications and a Senior Adviser to the Victorian Premier. Tim is the author of two books, "The Golden Country: Australia's Changing Identity" and "Two Futures: Australia at a Critical Moment" (along with co-author and fellow MP, Clare O'Neil). Tim holds a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from Bond University, a Master of Public Policy from Monash University and a Master of Science (Politics and Communications) from the London School of Economics.

Martine Letts FAIIA HonLLD is an experienced executive with a strong background in government, nonprofit, and international policy sectors. She has expertise in public policy development and promotion, both in Australia and internationally. Martine has held key positions such as CEO of the Committee for Melbourne, CEO of the Australia China Business Council, and Deputy Director of the Lowy Institute for International Policy. She has also served as Secretary-General of the Australian Red Cross and as a senior Australian diplomat. Martine is currently the CEO of Asialink Group and is a member of various boards and committees. She is fluent in French, German, and Spanish and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs.

The Hon. Lisa Singh is a trailblazing former Australian Senator, recognized as the first woman of South Asian heritage to hold a seat in the Australian Parliament. She also served as a Tasmanian state member of parliament and a Minister in the Tasmanian Government. Currently, Lisa is the CEO of the Australia India Institute, driving research and policy initiatives to foster strong Australia-India relations and co-chair of the prestigious track 1.5 Australia India Leadership Dialogue. She also holds key roles as an advisory board member of the University of Melbourne's Asialink and UNSW's Australian Human Rights Institute and was the Deputy Chair of the Australian Government's Australia-India Council. Lisa's exceptional contributions in building the Australia-India relationship have been honored with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman from the President of India in 2014. With her extensive experience, she has actively strengthened Australia's ties with the Indo-Pacific region, including representing the nation at the United Nations General Assembly in 2016.

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Tully Smith joins AICC from the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia, where he served as General Manager. AmCham is currently the nation's largest international chamber and Australia's largest international business organization. Tully established his career working in strategic communication, corporate affairs and strategy, holding senior positions across government and the private sector. Prior to joining the American Chamber Tully worked for the top ten ASX-listed Telstra Corporation, the country's biggest brand both domestically and globally. As a strategist, Tully has significant experience leading organizations at both an executive and board level. He has also supported several start-up businesses, with a speciality in new and emerging technology. Tully has twice been included in the Ipsos Global Reputation Council, considered the definitive list of the world's most influential communicators. With only around 100 people included globally each year, Tully is one of only a small number of Australians to have made the list. Passionate about his community, Tully contributes through several board-level positions in the not-for-profit sector, across the Arts, Disability Services, Education, Welfare, Community and Regional Development. Tully's service has been recognised with among others a Prime Minister of Australia's Award for Service to the Community.

Norm Duce is an accomplished business executive with over 30 years of experience driving change and leading teams across various industries and locations. With a remarkable track record in managing and transforming large teams, Norm has successfully delivered complex change programs, including Global CRM, ERP Platforms, and Digital Transformations. Having held several senior executive roles with REA Group over the past 8 years, Norm currently oversees multiple integration and transformation initiatives within the company. This includes spearheading the integration of the Mortgage Choice business and driving transformational projects with the recently acquired REA India business.

Ms Michelle Wade, is State Government of Victoria's commissioner to South Asia, and is a highly experienced international trade official. She has been based in Bengaluru since late 2017 and manages the Victorian government's trade, education and investment activities in South Asia. During the pandemic, she also managed Victorian's \$45 million International Student Emergency Relief Fund, supporting over 30,000 international students. Michelle has worked for all three levels of Australian government in internationally facing roles. She held senior Australian diplomatic positions in Italy, Malaysia and Spain. She worked for the Queensland government managing their international network and business and skills migration program and devised the Brisbane City Council's strategy for G20 engagement. Michelle's early career was in classical music management with Sydney Symphony and Queensland Symphony Orchestras. She has postgraduate qualifications in law and business communications and a

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Bachelor of Arts in English and Government. Michelle is deeply proud of her lifelong links to Australia's Indian diaspora having grown up in the small town of Woolgoolga, home to Australia's first Sikh community.

Prakash Mirchandani has many years of business experience in Sri Lanka and the USA and currently runs a boutique international trade and marketing strategy practice (with a focus on South Asia) in Melbourne. He holds a degree in Economics from Columbia University (New York City) and an MA in International Affairs from the Fletcher School at Tufts University (USA) and is a Council Member of AIIA Victoria.

Dr Chulanee Attanayake, Swinburne University of Technology and National University of Singapore, is a Researcher with expertise in China and South Asia, Politics, Geopolitics and Security in the Indo-Pacific, and Sri Lanka's Foreign Relations. Her current research focuses on maritime security and maritime sovereignty of small states. She was a Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, and still holds affiliation as a Non-Resident Fellow at the institute. Her expertise and insights have been disseminated through her publications, including the comprehensive analysis "China in Sri Lanka" (2013) and the edited volume "Maritime Sri Lanka: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives" (2021). She also frequently appears as an expert commentator on international news channels such as CNN, BBC, Channel News Asia, and Bloomberg. She is currently pursuing a PhD by Publication at Swinburne University of Technology on underwater security and its implications for small states.

Murtaza Jafferjee is the CEO of JB Securities and Chairperson of Advocata Institute, a public policy think tank. He previously has been a board member in publicly listed companies and a director of the Colombo Stock Exchange.

Dr. Michael Moignard spent 35 years as an Australian public servant working in trade and resources policy and trade promotion. Michael spent close to 7 years in India, as Senior Trade Commissioner for South Asia with the Australian High Commission. He also served with the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) in New York, Santiago de Chile, Manila, and Singapore. In 2014 he established EastWest Academy Pty Ltd, which assisted Australian businesses in India. Michael is a director of Ryder Cheshire Australia, and is President of its Victorian chapter. He is an Adjunct Research Fellow at La Trobe University, and a Fellow of the Australia India Institute. He is a Council Member of AIIA Victoria.

Dr. Lutfun Nahar Lata is a Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy in the School of Social and Political Sciences. Lutfun's primary research area focuses on the Sociology of work and

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employment including the gig economy and the future of work. She has written about gig economy, urban marginality, poverty governance, housing and place-based disadvantage. She is a mixed-methods researcher with extensive experience in conducting and publishing qualitative, quantitative and digital research and working with multidisciplinary teams that include stakeholders from academia, industry and local and central governments. Lutfun is the author of Spatial Justice, Contested Governance and Livelihood Challenges in Bangladesh (Routledge 2023). Her research has been published in journals such as Current Sociology, The Sociological Review, Sociology Compass, Gender, Work & Organization, Cities, Geographical Research, Housing Policy Debate, Journal of Contemporary Asia, and Government Information Quarterly.

Reshad Ahsan is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Melbourne. His interests are at the intersection of International Trade and Development Economics. His research explores the labor-market effects of trade in developing countries, with a focus on understanding the impact of trade on inequality and workplace safety. He also studies the link between trade and firm innovation and productivity in developing countries. His research has been published in leading academic journals such as the Journal of International Economics and has been funded by major local and international funding bodies. He has written for and been interviewed by many leading newspapers, including the Sydney Morning Herald.

Dr. Lailufar Yasmin is Professor and Chairperson at the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She has undertaken her studies at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA, and Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. She has been a recipient of the US Fulbright, the British Chevening, and the Australian International Post-Graduate Research Scholarship (IPRS). Her recent fellowships include FIPSS—Fellowships in Indo-Pacific Security Studies— at Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Hawaii, USA and Fellowship on Women in Conflict 1325 Fellowship Programme, offered by Beyond Borders Scotland. Her latest publications are on the Rohingya issue, disciplinary history of International Relations in South Asia and on the Indo-Pacific. Her areas of research include Bangladesh's politics, economy and foreign policy, South Asian Affairs, China's Rise, maritime security and the Indo-Pacific Region, and women's participation in the UN Peacekeeping, among others.

Dr. Michael Wesley FAIIA is an expert in international affairs with extensive experience in higher education, government, and the private sector. He specializes in international strategy, relations, and the politics of state-building interventions. Previously, he served as the Professor of International Affairs and Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University (ANU), as well as the Director of the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs at ANU.

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He has also held positions such as the Executive Director of the Lowy Institute for International Policy, Director of the Griffith Asia Institute at Griffith University, and Assistant Director-General for Transnational Issues at the Office of National Assessments. Dr. Wesley has a PhD in International Relations from the University of St Andrews.

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