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MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 1 June 2009

Australia India Business Council condemns violence against Indian Students

The Australia India Business Council ("AIBC") strongly condemns the violence against Indian students in Australia and in particular Victoria and NSW. We urge all State Governments to take strong and immediate actions to enforce the law and put in place measures to ensure personal safety of the students. Australia's reputation as a safe and hospitable place is being seriously tarnished with widespread negative publicity, a situation that is totally undesirable for both countries.

AIBC welcomes the strongest and unequivocal stand taken by Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Penny Wong and Steven Smith at the Federal level. At the same time AIBC requests all State Governments to address the issues urgently and seriously and make more efforts to ensure safety of Indian students. The AIBC congratulates the Indian Government for making representations to the Australian Government to find immediate solutions to these issues.

The AIBC also urges Indian students to remain calm and allow due process to take its course through various Government and authorities - their plea for help has now been heard at all levels of Government and society.

People of Indian origin have made significant contributions in Australia over the last 40 years and have won respect through the wider Australian community. It is important that students also conduct themselves in a manner that they retain the respect and support of the Australian public. The AIBC will continue to investigate ways of finding long term solutions that will help Indian students integrate more easily into Australian society and breakdown the cultural divide.

The education export market to India was worth A\$2billion in 2007/8 according to Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade. With close to 90,000 Indian students studying in Australia, education has become Australia's 3rd largest export to India.

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