

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **China and India lead strong growth in tourism and migration: 2013 Asia engagement Index**

**MELBOURNE, Thursday 5 December** - Big increases in tourism and migration engagement between Australia and Asia were the key performers in the latest PwC Melbourne Institute Asialink Index launched today.

The 2013 Index was released at the annual Asialink Chairman's Dinner in Melbourne, where the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, delivered the 2013 Asialink Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop Lecture.

This year's Index shows that inbound tourism from Asia increased by more than 12 per cent in 2012, despite the strong Australian dollar, while outbound tourism to Asia rose by nearly 9 per cent. Inbound Chinese tourism rose by 24.4 per cent, its biggest annual jump in the history of the Index.

Migration from Asia to Australia increased by nearly 17 per cent, with strong growth in migration from India (40.8 per cent), Japan (16.3 per cent) and China (10.8 per cent).

The Index showed a marginal fall of 0.4 per cent in Australia's overall engagement with Asia in 2012. This was mostly driven by a drop in engagement with China – not unexpected after a big spike in 2011 – and big fluctuations in investment engagement, which is known for being volatile.

The Viewpoint section of this year's Index provides the insights of some of Australia's leading business people, academics and trade officials on Australia's diverse FTA activities in Asia.

"The new Government's priority to finalise a range of Free Trade Agreements has the potential to energise our engagement with Asia on many levels," said the CEO of PwC Australia, Luke Sayers.

"FTAs have the potential to increase trade and investment links with the countries profiled in this year's Index – China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea – and in turn foster people-to-people links through migration, education and other key indicators," Mr Sayers said.

The Chairman of Asialink, Sid Myer, said: "The Index shows the breadth of Australia's relationships with Asia – not just the importance of China but also our deep and enduring relationships with countries such as Japan and the nations of ASEAN. Our engagement with ASEAN nations when counted together is on par with, or greater than, Japan and China by some measures.

"A rise in engagement with Indonesia of 9.7 per cent in 2012, the biggest recorded increase among the major Asian countries, is a promising development in one of our most important bilateral relationships.

"Australia-Asia engagement is being fuelled by the acceleration in top-level delegations to Asia at federal, state and city government levels, with visits by State premiers, trade missions, business teams,

ministers and senior officials. These visits will have significant flow-on across the various components of the Index," Mr Myer said.

The PwC Melbourne Institute Asialink Index is the only comprehensive, long-term measure of Australia's engagement with Asia. It assesses the level and rate of change across seven components and 25 economies.

Other highlights of this year's Index are:

- Trade engagement continued upward in 2012, largely defying the global slowdown for the year
- Education engagement rose by 2.1 per cent – a modest recovery after a decline in 2011
- Engagement with China, Japan and Korea decreased, mostly due to the fall in investment engagement.
- Engagement increased with Indonesia, India and ASEAN countries.

**View the full Index online at: [www.asialinkindex.com.au](http://www.asialinkindex.com.au)**

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