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## Careers Australia eyes partnership for India

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NEW DELHI

Careers Australia group, the biggest private provider of vocational training in Australia, wants to enter India, where industries need millions of trained workers every year, and is looking for a local partner.

The company hopes to start its business as early as next year and is in talks with prospective partners, said chairman Trevor Rowe, who was in India last week. "We are very interested in coming to India given there is a huge skill training opportunity here," said Rowe. "I have been talking to a number of groups about a partnership. The way we would approach this is to partner with someone, either one of the big companies or one of the industry players."

The Indian government plans to impart skills training to 500 million people by 2022 to meet the workforce needs of the world's second fastest growing major economy.

**Vocational training in the country is an opportunity worth \$20 billion annually, according to a July report by Kotak Securities Ltd.** Some 475 million people will need training by fiscal 2022, the report said, particularly in industries such as auto, building and construction, textile and organized retail, and the unorganized sector.

Careers Australia earns \$25 million annually offering diploma and graduate courses in electrical work, welding, nursing and other specializations to around 9,000 students across 11 campuses in Australia.

Rowe, who also heads Rothschild Australia, a unit of the global financial advisory group, said he is looking for a partner who knows the country and understands the vocational training business.

“Even the big companies Birlas, Essar and Tatas have their own training programmes. So, should we either go with them and complement them, or we go with an established firm that has colleges and polytechnics here,” he said. It’s yet to decide.

He said he had met a few firms and educational trusts and held preliminary discussions, without naming any. “I will brief my board and senior management (in Australia) and narrow down what we envisaged down here and what sort of corporate structure we should have.”

Rowe said he also held talks to partner the National Skill Development Mission (NSDM), a central government body created to oversee skills training.

**A spokesperson of the National Skill Development Corp. (NSDC), a company formed by the finance ministry and industry lobbies that reports to the NSDM, said talks were going on with Australian and Swiss skills training providers who want to enter India.**

**“As far as Australia is concerned, talks are under way on train-the-trainer initiatives and Australian vocational training providers undertaking large-scale training programmes in India,” the spokesperson said.**

**NSDC signed an agreement with International Marketing of Vocation Education (iMOVE), a body under the German ministry of education and research, in May to promote native skills training in overseas markets.**

**Vocational training providers from Australia, Germany, England and Switzerland are interested in the India because of the huge opportunity, said Ashok Reddy, managing director of the Indian Institute of Job Training, a unit of staffing and training firm TeamLease Services Ltd.**

**“They have the product knowledge and required knowhow of the segment,” Reddy said. “Though there are several Indian players, I don’t think we are going to compete with them. They will seek collaboration with native players to understand the Indian market.”**