

A record of exchange as the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney (Edition 10)

Western Sydney Development

19 December

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On 24 November, I participated in a briefing aimed at Japanese businesses about “Western Sydney Development” which was conducted by Urban Renaissance Agency (UR) and Bradfield Development Authority (BDA) and supported by this Consulate.

“Western Sydney Development” is one pillar of the “Metropolis with Three Cities Plan” which was devised to respond to economic and structural changes and the growing population. The population of Greater Sydney is currently 5.3 million people, but this is projected to reach 8 million in 2056. The Metropolis with Three Cities Plan establishes the “Western Parkland City”, the “Central River City” and the “Eastern Harbour City” and promotes essential investment and innovation in economic and social infrastructure.

The new driving force behind this centres around the development of Western Sydney International Airport and Bradfield. To this end, in March 2018, the Australian Government and NSW Government and 8 local governments signed the “Western Sydney City Deal”. The 24 November briefing I attended was held to coincide with opening of the Advanced Manufacturing Readiness Facility (AMRF), which opened in March this year in Bradfield City, and the forthcoming opening of Western Sydney International Airport next year. More than 100 people representing around 70 companies from diverse industries participated in the briefing, and I witnessed the high level of interest there is among Japanese businesses.

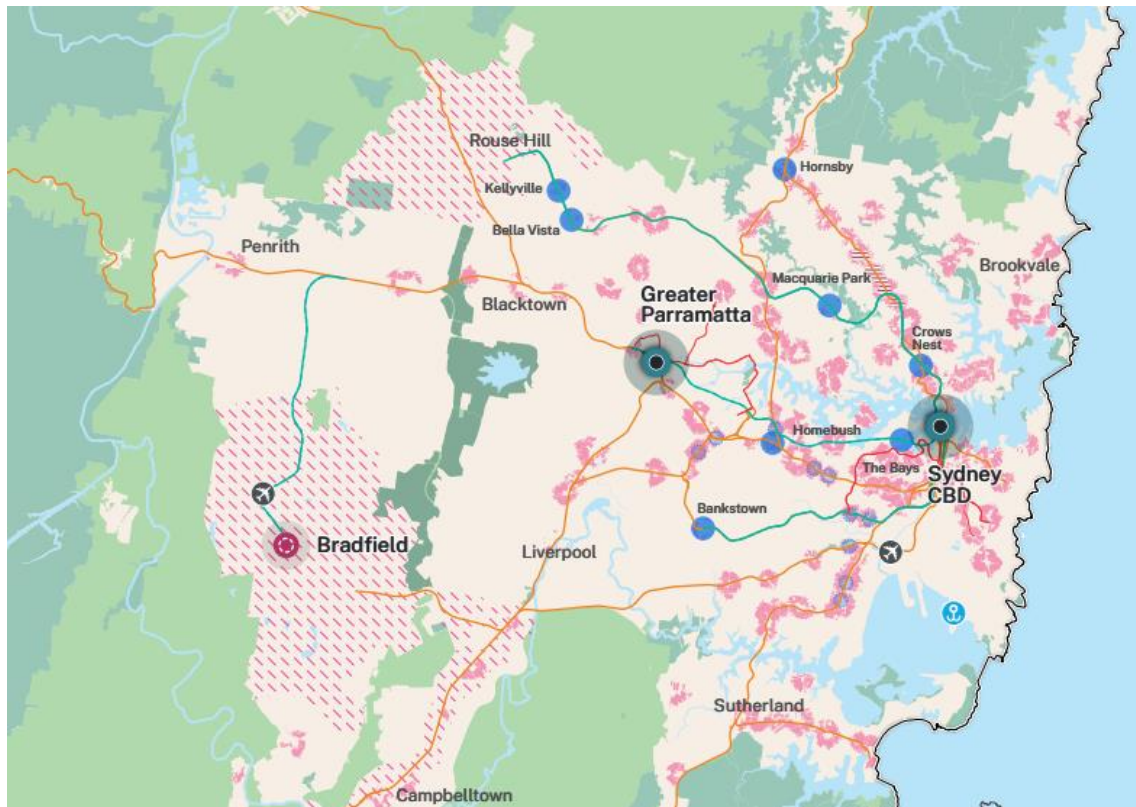


Advanced Manufacturing Readiness Facility (AMRF)



The 24 November briefing at AMRF

To give a basic overview of the locations as seen from the Sydney CBD, Bradfield is about 50 minutes by car from the CBD, Western Sydney International Airport is approximately 60 minutes, and between the airport and Bradfield, it takes around 10 minutes by car (all assuming there is no traffic congestion). At about the 30-minute mark on the trip from the Sydney CBD to Western Sydney International Airport, you pass through the City of Parramatta where high-rise buildings continue to spread. Here in Parramatta, a new NSW monument to rival the Sydney Opera House will be completed next year – Powerhouse Parramatta, which is designed by the architectural practice Moreau Kusunoki led by Japanese architect Hiroko Kusunoki and French architect Nicholas Moreau. It is one example of how Parramatta is evolving, and you can feel how development in Great Sydney is moving westwards. Heading further west, the 110,000 hectares around the airport is called the Aerotropolis, and its centre is the 114-hectare area called Bradfield.



**The 3 areas of urban development centred around Sydney, Parramatta and Bradfield
(From the NSW Government's draft "The Sydney Plan")**

The NSW Government established the Bradfield Development Authority (BDA) to initiate the development of industrial, employment and residential infrastructure from Bradfield, investing 1 billion AUD, and aiming to create employment for more than 20,000 people and construct 10,000 new dwellings. Over the last several years in Bradfield, large expanses of land have been opened up, and it is here where you will find the brand-new building housing the AMRF. The purpose of the AMRF is to support small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing industry around Parramatta when they are developing cutting-edge manufactured products. More specifically, the focus of AMRF is supporting products in development, by providing access to the latest technologies, whose cost would normally make them unaffordable to SMEs. Next year on the neighbouring site, construction will begin on the second AMRF building which will support the growth of semiconductor packaging technologies. Furthermore, it is understood that the industry partner for the development of the first section will soon be announced. Nearby, construction work is progressing on the metro station which will connect AMRF with Western Sydney Airport.



View of the area around AMRF and the metro station under construction
(Source: BDA presentation materials)

At the briefing, NSW Minister for Industry and Trade Anoulack Chanthivong gave the opening remarks. He stated that there were great expectations for investment in Western Sydney Development, explaining that the opening of Western Sydney Airport was an opportunity for Western Sydney to become a hub in international supply chains and for a shift in the centre of economic activity. Also in his speech, anticipating further investment, Minister Chanthivong noted that Japan is a most trusted business partner, sharing values over many years.



Minister Chanthivong



BDA Chair Westacott



BDA CEO Morrison

Next, BDA Chair Jennifer Westacott (also Western Sydney University Chancellor) spoke and she explained that Bradfield Development also connects with several Australian Government federal policies (National Reconstruction Fund, Future Made in Australia, AUKUS Pillar 2, among others), and that going forward, Bradfield would foster industrial development in semiconductor packaging, aviation, space defence, modular housing and more. In addition to stimulating Western Sydney's economic activity, given the Australian economy is aiming to diversify industry, next year's opening of Western Sydney Airport will leverage infrastructure development in the surrounding area and construct global supply chains, and this is expected to lead to new business and job creation, as well as stimulating rapid development of housing in Western Sydney with around 100,000 new homes estimated to be developed. Furthermore, NSW has comparatively more engineering students than other states, and Western Sydney University can continue to strengthen its research and development in cooperation with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).



During a study tour of the advanced manufacturing equipment in the AMRF

We also heard from BDA CEO Ken Morrison. He explained that BDA's mission had three points: developing the first new city in 100 years, attracting investment and fostering industry. Further: the Aerotropolis has been granted more than 28 billion AUD in government infrastructure investment, and 20 billion AUD of private investment is planned; the first private development partner for the first private sector development in Bradfield is about to be announced; and the AMRF First Building houses cutting-edge manufacturing equipment and the AMRF Second Building will house high-level cleanroom space for semiconductor packaging.

In my remarks, I recalled that during Japan's period of rapid growth, Narita Airport was constructed and Tsukuba Science City was developed. Over several years, Tsukuba attracted research facilities and raised its profile domestically and internationally when it hosted an international exposition. Private investment followed, and today, Tsukuba is a centre of research facilities and hi-tech manufacturing; housing and business facilities have also been developed. I said that I believe Western Sydney Development can gain many insights from UR which has extensive knowledge of these experiences.

After the briefing, I went with fellow participants to observe the brand-new terminal building at Western Sydney Airport. We heard the powerful explanations of airport staff whose commitment was clear to see as they are working towards becoming the open-24-hours entrance to Greater Sydney in October next year when the airport is scheduled to begin operations (the airport is scheduled to open for freight in July next year).



Briefing participants in the lobby of Western Sydney International (WSI) Airport

What I gained from this day, from both the briefing and the observations of this large-scale project – the first new city in 100 years and the global links that will connect the city via Western Sydney Airport, was a sense of dynamism that cannot be hoped for in Japan which is facing population decline. As a new large-scale project, I felt there are also details in some parts that must be fully worked out as things progress, but there is

no doubt that there is potential for deeper and broader economic ties between Japan and NSW, and by extension with the whole of Australia. Together with the Sydney office of UR, which co-organised the briefing, the Consulate will do all it can to support participation by Japanese companies interested in the project.