



AJBCC



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AJBCC's Infrastructure Initiative

The past six months has seen significant development in the AJBCC's initiative so that it can be said that the relevance of the vision enunciated three years ago is now recognised broadly within the infrastructure sector in Australia and in Japan and acknowledged by government in both countries.

The Inaugural Australia-Japan Public-Private Infrastructure Dialogue held Tokyo on Monday 7th March, 2011

The Dialogue stems directly from the activities of the AJBCC in Japan and the recognition by the Government of Japan that its existing Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is inadequate for the current times. Consequently there has been a much heightened interest in the Australian approach to Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs).

The Australian Group at the table included representatives from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (Andrew Jagers, Executive Director, Nation Building); DFAT (Peter Rowe, First Assistant Secretary, North Asia Division); Embassy in Tokyo (Ambassador MacLean); Austrade (Peter Grey, CEO) together with eight or nine business representatives led by Sir Rod Eddington, President of the AJBCC and Chairman of Infrastructure Australia. Mr Mimura led the Japanese Business delegation.

The dialogue received reports on the AJBCC – JABCC activities, as well as a detailed commentary from the Australian private sector on matters that it would like to see addressed by Japan to facilitate Australian style PPP's in Japan. Australian participants agreed that the dialogue should become a regular event but that it would be helpful if future dialogues were planned sufficiently in advance to enable presentation and discussion of more substantive issues. The next dialogue is planned to coincide with the 49th Japan Australia Joint Business Conference in October in Kyoto.

Subsequently, an amendment to the PFI Law has been tabled in the Japanese Diet aimed to give effect to the Government's flagged intention in December 2010 to open 'Economic Infrastructure' to the private sector. The amendments remain to be considered and the important draft regulatory changes remain to be gazetted. There is a view that the considerable earthquake damage to infrastructure might be the catalyst for an earlier liberalisation of the existing PFI regulations and processes.

The Second Australian Infrastructure Mission to Japan – 8th - 11th March 2011.

Thirty three Missioners participated in a programme that began **Day One** with a confidential update to the Missioners on developments in Japan following the Government of Japan's changes in policy. During an afternoon Forum that attracted 180 from the Japanese Infrastructure Sector, there was discussion of developments in Australia over the past two years.

Day Two commenced with three parallel sessions on 'Road', 'Rail' including the Energy and Resources dimension, and 'Water' developments and capabilities. These sessions had Joint Australian and Japanese Convenors and each attracted 70-90 persons. In the afternoon, the focus was on 'Financial' issues. This session attracted over 260 persons.

Day Three involved establishing four streams amongst the Missioners and despatching them to two visits in the morning and a further two visits in the afternoon to various Japanese Infrastructure Sector companies or organisations including banks, constructors, trading houses and government organisations.

Day Four of the Mission involved smaller groups of the Missioners in round-tables or workshops and twenty-eight one-on-one meetings between Missioners and representatives of various Japanese Infrastructure Sector personnel.

Joint Australia Japan Infrastructure Mission to Indonesia – 23rd – 25th May, 2011

The Australian Delegation led by Sir Rod Eddington, AJBCC's President, numbered 26. The Japanese Delegation led by Mr Mimura on Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th and by Deputy Leader Mr Nakatomi on Wednesday 25th numbered 48. The composition of the Mission included constructors, design professionals, operators, trading houses, banks, professional advisors to government and the private sector and government agencies. There was a good spread amongst the Australian Missioners of persons who travelled from Australia, from around the region including Japan, and based in Indonesia. The Japanese Missioners similarly had a good balance including five being Australian based.

Including 'Welcomes' from the Australian and Japanese Ambassadors to Indonesia and Mr. Sony S Harsono, Chairman, Indonesia-Japan Economic Committee, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KADIN) the Joint Mission was addressed by 30 authoritative speakers – mostly Indonesian including the Vice Ministers for Public Works and Transportation. In addition, on Monday 23rd May, President Yudhoyono nominated H.E. Mr. Ir Hatta Radjasa, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs as his nominee for Guest of Honour and Guest Speaker at the Joint Mission Dinner. On Tuesday 24th May, the Cocktail Reception that followed the Australia-Japan-Indonesia Infrastructure Forum – the only segment of the three day programme opened beyond the Missioners - was addressed by H.E. Mr. Djoko Kirmanto, Minister for Public Works. ■

49th Japan-Australia Joint Business Conference – 9th – 11th October, 2011 – Kyoto

A very interesting programme has been offered by the counterpart JABCC and speakers are now being approached by the Australian and Japanese Executives. The host city of Kyoto has marvellous attractions for those who arrive early or delay their departure by a few days. Anybody who weakens and allows themselves that little luxury of an extra day or two will not be disappointed.

The full programme and Registration and Accommodation Reservation Forms have been mailed to all AJBCC Members and recent attendees at our Joint Business Conferences.

His Excellency Mr Murray MacLean OAM Retires

H.E. Mr Murray MacLean OAM, who has been Australia's Ambassador to Japan since November 2004, leaves Tokyo early in July. The AJBCC has expressed its sincere appreciation to His Excellency for the many courtesies conveyed to the AJBCC and its membership during his term. Murray certainly has participated and guided a substantial improvement in the quality of the bilateral relationship. It would have been fitting to have been able to top this off with the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

The Foreign Minister has announced Mr Bruce Miller as Ambassador Designate. ■

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