

Press Release

30 September 2010

New WMD identified in Melbourne

Leading environmental and Brownfields experts from around the world learnt of a new WMD threat and were challenged to involve all stakeholders in brownfield redevelopment projects during the OTEK SRR Conference – an International Learning Experience held in Melbourne this month.

The US Consulate to Australia Political/Economic Officer, Dan Callahan, coined the phrase ‘WMD’ or ‘Weather of Mass Destruction’ to highlight the real and present danger caused by environmental issues to international and national security. He noted the CIA now has a *Center on Climate Change and National Security*, and the US military studies the impact of extreme weather on installations around the world.

Rick Marmur, Chief Executive Officer OTEK, also challenged delegates to embrace all stakeholders, in the environmental and Brownfields debate, especially the community and local councils, in looking at ways to successfully progress brownfield redevelopment in our own backyard.

He said, “During the four year history of the OTEK SRR conference, we have seen environmental issues rise to the top of political agendas locally, and globally, and the power of the people having a profound effect on the realisation of commercial projects.”

Speaking at the OTEK-SRR conference dinner about China’s role in the environment, the Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Junsai Zhang, highlighted that, despite still been a developing country with many challenges, China already had 9.9% of its energy coming from renewable resources - a figure far higher than most developed countries, including Australia.

Beatrice Schaffrath, a Partner at legal firm Baker and McKenzie – Beijing office, further highlighted China’s proactive approach in many areas of the environmental space, including the fact that the government has emphasised that persons and entities from China should be environmentally responsible for their operations/activities even outside China.

New methods for helping Brownfield projects become a reality were showcased including how the new ‘R20’ group of more than 20 states and regional governments from around the world, including Australia, will be the beneficiaries of a multi-billion dollar “green bank” being formed in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program.

The investment program will help to commercialise low carbon development around the world and will be formally announced in November in the USA.

In describing the “R20” green bank program, key note speaker Terry Tamminen, former Environmental Policy Adviser to California Governor Schwarzenegger, called upon a ‘coalition of the willing’ to come together and make tangible progress where national governments and the Copenhagen Summit had failed.

The pioneering concept of Positive Liability Transfer was discussed by Grant Scott, Director OTEK. This insurance product enables new owners of polluted sites to be indemnified against any future contamination costs once they have been effectively cleaned, and consequently helps make Brownfield development programs commercially viable.

Charlie Bartsch, from the USA Environmental Protection Agency, talked about how the US has many public tools and strategies available to support Brownfield redevelopments. These include tax incentives and traditional federal programs which have helped the overall increase the financial attractiveness of redevelopment projects.

The OTEK SRR conference, held in Melbourne in September, was a practical hands on forum for leading world experts from Australia, America and China to discuss Brownfield redevelopment issues from many perspectives including financial, legal, regulatory, insurance, governmental, environmental, infrastructure, redevelopment, innovative land use, technical and construction.

Notes for editors

The conference saw additional insight from leading experts into the following topics.
(Further information/quotes etc can be obtained on request)

- Regulatory requirements - State and Country comparisons from Australia, US and China
- Legal implications - Navigating today's world of regulations and litigation
- Financing options - The money side of things
- Insurance insights - Minimizing the short and long term risks of polluted sites
- Environmental impact advice - How to avoid a disaster and minimize risk
- Corporate perspective - Through the eyes of a company and "pockets"

THE CONFERENCE WEB SITE CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.SRR-OTEK.COM.AU

OTEK

OTEK is a leading environmental, engineering and remediation consultancy company established in 1991 whose foundation was based on petroleum hydrocarbon assessment and remediation projects. It has offices located across Australia and in China.

OTEK is an innovative and dynamic team of professionals with extensive experience, who pride themselves in offering quality and practical environmental solutions to the petroleum, chemical, agricultural, communication, utility, defense, aviation, transport, marine, manufacturing and mining industries throughout the region. OTEK has active involvement in major associations and organisations, strong relationships with regulators and research organisations.

OTEK has demonstrated world's best practice in environmental projects utilising innovative technologies not used previously in Australia. This has led to OTEK advising and defining benchmarks for environmental regulators throughout Australia.

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