

Department of Municipal Affairs wrap up successful Australian visit with meetings in the nation's capital

28 October 2008

The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA), Undersecretary, H.E. Ahmed Shareef's delegation wrapped up their Australian visit with meetings in the nation's capital of Canberra about sustainable models for integrated planning.

H.E. Ahmed Shareef and a delegation of senior municipal executives from the DMA have been meeting with Queensland government and municipal officials in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast and will this week meet with government representatives from the National Capital Authority.

H.E. Ahmed Shareef, Undersecretary of the DMA, said,

'The city of Canberra provides an excellent model for Abu Dhabi in how to plan a capital city's administrative and integrated planning structures to ensure development is both sustainable and well thought out. Our meeting with the National Capital Authority will not only be informative, but also provide the opportunity for further collaboration with government representatives from Canberra.'

Canberra's National Capital Authority manages the Australian Government's continuing interest in the planning, promotion, enhancement and maintenance of Canberra as the nation's capital.

H.E. Ahmed Shareef said, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi's desire to focus on developing efficient and sustainable growth had created the immediate need to look at other government models or structures, with Canberra, Brisbane and the Gold Coast being rated highly as part of international benchmarks.

The delegation's visit to the Gold Coast last week included a meeting with Gold Coast City Council Mayor Ron Clarke MBE and a tour of the Bond University campus, which is Australia's first university to offer a School of Sustainable Development.

H.E. Ahmed Shareef, said 'Abu Dhabi shares much in common with the Gold Coast, with both cities experiencing extraordinary growth and urban development in a coastal environment. Our briefings with Mayor Clarke were very productive, with him providing examples of the Gold Coast's experience in balancing urban development with environmental and social matters.'

The delegation's trip to Bond University campus included a tour of their new green educational building, which has received top star ratings and is at the forefront of world's best practice in sustainable design.

The building design minimizes energy consumption by making use of water tanks, maximum natural light, solar heating, wind turbines, a water recycling system and recycled materials.

H.E. Ahmed Shareef stated, 'Our briefing about Bond University's green building and its sustainability education programs have been very beneficial with a view to planning for Abu Dhabi's government restructure'.

'DMA is responsible for ensuring a high standard of building construction and safety in Abu Dhabi and our briefings will help us to develop government programs that provide for ecological and environmentally sustainable buildings.'

The senior municipal executive team accompanying H.E. Shareef on this visit to Australia included: Dr Abdullah Ghareeb, Executive Director Property Management; Mohammed Al-Hadremi, Executive Director Municipal Affairs Support; Denis Burke, Advisor/ Acting Executive Director Municipal Governance; Jalal Al Khaled, Division Manager HR; Abdallatif Al Shamsi, Divisional Manager Municipal Council Affairs, and Yousif Yousif, Municipal Planning.

He added, 'our visit to Australia has been highly informative and will provide the opportunity for collaboration and business opportunities well into the future.'

The delegation has also had briefings with government representatives in Queensland's capital city of Brisbane and are finishing their tour in Canberra from 27 to 29 October.

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