BARANGAROO: BREAKING NEW GROUND ON SUSTAINABILITY

A leisurely 10 minutes’ walk from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Barangaroo, the city’s newest landmark, is redefining sustainability.

Barangaroo is the AUS$6 billion waterfront renewal project transforming a long neglected part of Sydney’s Central Business District. It’s also the Australian capital’s largest urban renewal project since the Olympics 15 years ago. After decades of being closed off to the public and years of contentious debate about its future, the western edge of Sydney Harbour is being brought back to life.

The ambitious development is divided into three project areas: Barangaroo Reserve, Central Barangaroo, the cultural heart of the precinct which is still at the planning stage, and Barangaroo South, its economic powerhouse. Once finished in 2022, half of Barangaroo will be public space.

Aside from the pioneering scale of urban regeneration, Barangaroo is also breaking ground in sustainable development. “Many people talk about innovation, but at Barangaroo South, there is a constant desire to push the envelope and do something extraordinary,” says Andrew Wilson, managing director of Barangaroo South.

Barangaroo is aiming to be one of the world’s leading sustainable urban developments and Australia’s first large scale carbon neutral community: it is committed to reduce the embodied carbon in the development by 20 per cent. Australia’s unique weather patterns and vulnerability to climate change have been at the forefront of its design. For Rowan Griffin, Lend Lease’s Head of Sustainability for Investment Management, taking account of this issue is a critical factor in the strength of the Barangaroo project as an asset. “Allowing for future weather events makes good investment sense,” he said.

The project’s energy efficient design is supported by low carbon and renewable energy. Smarter buildings, which are designed to perform better, will target the highest available Green Star and NABERS ratings. Precinct-wide infrastructure for power, cooling, water and waste management provides greater efficiencies and economies of scale. Rain water from 90,000-litre tanks in each of the commercial towers will be used for irrigation of landscaped areas. As Australia seeks to make it drought-proof, Barangaroo’s objective is to be “water positive”, which means exporting more recycled water than the potable water it uses on site.

Half way through the ten year build, Barangaroo Reserve opened in August, marking the transformation of one of the city’s oldest and ugliest industrial sites into a spectacular, six-hectare headland open space. The entire Reserve has been developed to showcase Sydney as a world leader in innovative sustainability. Using innovative, industry-first technology renowned father and son landscape architects Peter and David Walker wanted to create a ‘naturalistic’ park of brand new bushland.

The concept behind the design was the re-imagination of what the land would have looked like when the Aboriginal Gadigal people still lived there. 75,000 native plants, from 83 species of trees and shrubs were planted. “It’s made out of plants that are native, not to Australia but native to Sydney,” said Peter Walker. This month the architects won the prestigious NSW President’s Award which recognises outstanding landscape architecture.

Developed by multinational property company LandLease, Barangaroo South is the commercial side of the development and will be a vibrant new waterfront financial district, with a mix of world class office space, premium residential buildings, as well as shopping, dining, hotel, hospitality and public places. The 7.5 hectare development is made up of three commercial towers which are being marketed as an upcoming financial and professional hub for Asia Pacific.
One of the towers, T2, is now complete with Australian Bank Westpac taking 60,000m² of office space. Later this year the three residential towers designed by Renzo Piano, the acclaimed Italian architect behind the Shard in London, will start to open, while the remaining two office towers will be finished in 2016 and 2017; Lend Lease and KPMG are locked in as tenants. To date Tower 2 and Towers 3 have been awarded 6 Star Green Star Office Design v3 ratings by the Green Building Council of Australia, making them Australia’s most sustainable high rise office buildings. A new landmark hotel is also proposed, and the waterfront will have a wide-range of retail and dining outlets, including, for the first time out of its native Copenhagen, world-famous restaurant Noma which is relocating to Sydney for a residency.

The precinct will eventually be home to around 1,800 residents and 23,000 office workers and contribute an estimated AUS$2 billion every year to the local economy.

LendLease wants Barangaroo South to serve not only as the poster child for green buildings now, but as a blueprint for developments in the future. “There’s little doubt that Barangaroo South is acting as a beacon to other developers and cities, to show what can be done in terms of sustainability,” said Anita Mitchell, General Manager Sustainability at Barangaroo South. “Suppliers are starting to offer the market solutions we have piloted with them at Barangaroo. Some now offer a carbon neutral product or an embodied carbon assessment of what they produce based on what they have learnt through working with us. It is this genuine change that will be one of the many lasting effects Barangaroo has on our industry,” she added.

Earlier this month, many ULI members attended the annual ULI Fall Meeting, which this year was held at the Moscone Center in San Francisco. As usual the event was a great opportunity for every sector of the real estate industry to get in one place, build relationships, exchange ideas and learn about the most important topics and trends in real estate. If you couldn’t make it this year, make sure you catch the highlights from the event across our social media platforms and online at http://fall.uli.org

At the event, two urban parks, including Thousand Lantern Lake Park System in Foshan, China, were selected as winners of this year’s Urban Land Institute (ULI) Urban Open Space Award. For more details on this spectacular project, and all the finalists, please be sure to check out the story below.

About the Urban Land Institute
The Urban Land Institute (www.uli.org) is a global nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the Institute has more than 35,000 members representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines.