

**JOINT STANDING PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY
INTO THE PROPOSED
ALBANY ANTARCTICA LINK**

Industry Representative - Ray Woonings – Wallace Engineering

The Great Southern Development Commission is pleased to present this brief presentation to the Parliamentary Inquiry today on behalf of industry representative and managing director of one of Albany's major marine and general engineering manufacturers, Mr Ray Woonings.

This presentation is designed to lift the awareness of the Ministers in attendance and the Government, of the ability of Albany to act as a service base for the proposed vessel that will undertake surveillance of illegal fishing activities in the Southern Ocean.

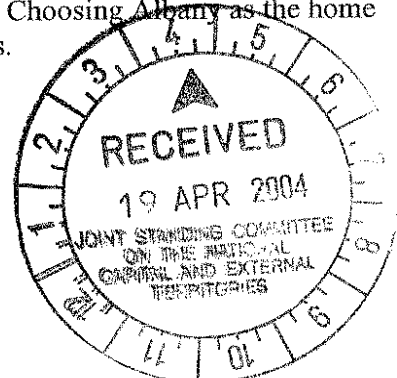
Industry representatives are aware that recommendations have been made to the Federal Government to examine the viability of Albany as a base of operations for undertaking surveillance and the potential for Austral Fisheries to be involved.

Not only does Albany's proximity to the sub-Antarctic (a distance of some 3,660 kms at its shortest point) make it geographically the most strategic location for the housing of surveillance vessels, Albany has outstanding Port facilities with a newly constructed \$21 million berth (built to service the plantation timber export trade). Albany is one of WA's major export ports and has an efficient and productive engineering industry and experienced workforce well placed to undertake maintenance of such vessels whilst in Port.

Austral Fisheries (an arm of Kailis & France) takes some 70% of Australia's annual quota of Patagonian Tooth Fish from Australia's fishing zone in the sub-Antarctic. The zone has relatively close proximity to Albany and therefore Austral currently has two vessels home ported in Albany, which are maintained and serviced by the Port, local engineers and tradespeople.

There are a number of economic benefits generated by having the vessels home port in Albany, such as:

- Due to the proximity of the fishing grounds (XXkms), an extra six days sailing (per round trip) is avoided that would be required if housed in the Port of Fremantle. Vessels already have to travel for up to one week to reach the fishing grounds from Albany. The savings as a result of this reduced sailing is considerable in terms of time, fuel and overheads.
- The population in Albany continues to grow steadily. Creation and retention of employment opportunities is therefore vital to ongoing sustainable economic development and population growth. Choosing Albany as the home port for such vessels creates these opportunities.



FOR EXAMPLE:

Austral vessels currently home ported in Albany creates employment for Carpenters, Engineers, Caterers, Cleaners and a huge host of other Tradespeople involved in major refit or general maintenance programmes. Not to mention the increased visitor spend by ships crew in the City. For example, a recent refit of an Austral ship amounted to \$1.3million dollars being spent on the refit alone and employed no less than 53 local trades- people and services.

In terms of general maintenance programmes, \$150,000 is spent per maintenance, of which there are ten per year. Resulting in a total spend of \$1.5million dollars per annum. Again, up to 53 tradespeople are employed at any one time during these maintenance programs. This does not include additional spending that occurs every 6-8 weeks when the vessels come back to port to re-fuel and re-provision before returning to the fishing grounds. It is estimated that over 500 tonnes of fuel, lubricants and oil, amounting to more than half a million dollars per year, is spent with the local BP company alone.

Further, one could argue that the environmental impacts of choosing Albany as the home port can be measured in terms of reduced fuel consumption, reduced fuel emissions and general impact to the environment.

The capacity of the Region's industry to manage large maintenance issues is well demonstrated by this example and others in view of the very strong light engineering capacity. This is due to the strong economic base of the region, with companies like Wallace Engineering servicing the wine industry, being close to the largest wine growing area in the state, the timber industry, having the largest plantation concentrations in Australia, not to mention the robust agricultural and fishing industry, hence Austral's decision to base their ships here and process due to Albany's capacity to service.

As can be demonstrated, the economic value to the region is considerable and we appeal to the Committee of the Joint Standing Parliamentary Inquiry to consider Albany as the home port for the proposed surveillance vessel and operations.

Jan Axe
For
Ray Woonings
31st March 2004