



**COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENT
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**NEW AUSTAL VESSEL TO ENHANCE WIND FARM SUPPORT
OPERATIONS**

Building on its initial success in the renewable energy market, Austal has confirmed a contract for a fourth wind farm support vessel for Turbine Transfers Limited. The order is the first for a new Austal design which will enable safer and more efficient offshore wind turbine service.

Welcoming the follow-up order from the UK-based company, Austal Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Bellamy, said the shipbuilder had continued to refine and enhance its Wind Express vessel range following its launch in mid-2010 as part of a strategy to pursue new commercial vessel markets.

"There is clearly an increasing desire in the industry for vessels with enhanced capability, particularly in terms of performance in rough conditions," Mr Bellamy said.

"This is a challenge that we have already successfully addressed in the ferry and naval markets with our unique trimaran technology. We have now applied that expertise to develop and prove a new hullform that provides a step change in capability for the offshore industry."

The new design enables wind farm personnel to be successfully transferred in considerably higher sea states than is practical with catamarans of similar size.

"For offshore wind farm industry operators seeking to maximise productivity and safety in rough seas, this new hullform provides the highest possible levels of seakeeping, passenger comfort and fuel efficiency," Mr Bellamy said.

Mr Bellamy said the new design would improve the viability of offshore wind farms by overcoming the seakeeping limitations of the support vessels currently used in the industry.

"To date most wind farms have been relatively close to the coast, and serviceable with fairly basic boats. Now as they move further offshore there is a need for a second generation of vessels that can address the significant challenges this brings.

"Being able to transport wind turbine technicians comfortably in the rougher sea conditions over longer distances is the key requirement, and we have produced the solution to that need," he said.

As well as minimising seasickness amongst personnel and providing safer transfer conditions, the new design's enhanced seakeeping performance can improve the economics of offshore wind farms.

"Being able to operate in a broader spectrum of sea conditions increases overall operability which means there is the potential to reduce the number of vessels and personnel required to support a given site; reducing capital and operating costs without sacrificing power generation reliability," Mr Bellamy explained.

The order is part of Turbine Transfers' ongoing fleet expansion plans which already includes three 21 metre catamarans ordered from Austal in July 2011. Construction of those vessels is progressing well, with delivery scheduled for May this year.

The contract is notionally valued at GBP4 million. The vessel will initially be chartered to Turbine Transfers for a period of up to five years. It is scheduled for completion in November.

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About Austal

Austal is a global defence prime contractor. The Company designs, constructs and maintains revolutionary platforms such as the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) for the United States Navy, as well as an extensive range of patrol and auxiliary vessels for defence forces and government agencies globally. Austal also designs, installs, integrates and maintains sophisticated communications, radar and command and control systems.

Austal benefits from its position as a world leader in the design, construction and support of customised, high performance aluminium vessels for the commercial high speed ferry market, an achievement gained over a period of nearly 25 years.

Austal's primary facilities comprise a combined defence and commercial shipyard in Henderson, Western Australia; a dedicated defence shipyard in Mobile, Alabama; and a dedicated commercial shipyard in Balamban, Philippines. The Company also provides vessel support services from its facilities in Australia, the United States, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

For further information contact:

Austal, Public Relations

Tel: +61 8 9410 1111

Fax: +61 8 9410 2564

Email: pubrel@austal.com

Website: www.austal.com