

Atlantis boat-builders warn on land tender

Siseko Njobeni

Trade and Industry Correspondent

BOAT builder Robertson & Caine says plans for a new boat-building yard in Atlantis, outside Cape Town, depend on government making land in the area available.

Land in the area has been put out to tender, which could potentially jeopardise construction of the 200 000m² yard, the company said.

City of Cape Town's acting manager: disposals and acquisitions, Andre Human, said the Atlantis land would be released to the market by the end of next month.

Robertson & Caine says this puts its plans at risk.

Human said that while the municipality was excited about the company's plans and was keen to accommodate the project, it had to follow tender procedures to release the land.

Robertson & Caine director

Ellian Perch said yesterday: "We want to engage government at all levels to try to reach a solution to our desire to start building in Atlantis as soon as possible."

Perch said the provincial government could demonstrate its commitment to the development of the boat-building industry by making the land available.

Robertson & Caine said the project would create 700 new jobs. The company exports boats worth R140m a year and, according to Perch, is the world's second-biggest manufacturer of sailing catamarans.

Boat designer Gino Morrelli said yesterday: "What impressed me most when we were investigating the potential for expanding the operations of Robertson & Caine in the Cape was the high level of skilled labour here.

"It ultimately made the most financial sense to build a new facility in Atlantis."