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## M4 Albany Wave Energy Demonstration project soon to be deployed into King George Sound

Melissa Sheil | Albany Advertiser  
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📷 City of Albany CEO Andrew Sharpe, UWA MERA centre manager Wiebke Ebeling, Albany MLA Rebecca Stephens, mayor Greg Stocks and MERA and UWA oceans institute director Christophe Gaudin. Credit: Melissa Sheil

📷 Australia's only active wave energy project is in its final stages, with coordinators set to cast it into Albany waters in a matter of weeks.

📷 Run by the University of Western Australia, the Commonwealth-backed Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre and the State Government, the M4 Albany Wave Energy Demonstration Project is now more than 90 per cent complete.

The 24m-long, 9.5m-wide sunflower yellow device kept afloat by four buoys consists of a hinged steel frame, which is the length of the average wave in the King George Sound and generates clean energy with a hinging motion.

Project coordinators will deploy the device into the ocean for six months over the summer as a prototype to measure its efficiency and collect data on how much energy it produces before they create a larger scale device.

Marine Energy Research Australia and UWA Oceans Institute director Christophe Gaudin said he hoped the project would kickstart more renewable wave energy projects in Albany.

“The site here is just magnificent, it’s energy all year long, very consistent and very dispatchable in a grid system,” he said.

“So then the idea is (to) take advantage of these resources, the research capabilities in WA, which is in ocean engineering in general which is quite unique and the legacy of the oil and gas development over the last four decades.

“When you look at research standing in ocean engineering in WA we are in the top five in the world.”



📷 The yet-to-be-added buoys. Credit: Melissa Sheil

MCB construction project manager Michael Stephens – whose business built the main frame of the device and is housing it at their yard on Roundhay Road – said he was grateful to join such an innovative project.

“Our normal scope of works is building agriculture, mining and commercial buildings so building something like this was a huge opportunity,” he said.

“We were a bit sceptical at first, but it’s all gone really well.

“It was such a cool and innovative opportunity for us, in terms of upskilling our fabricators and workshop, and knowing it was all built locally.

“We feel like we all have our names on it, so hats off to all parties involved.”



📷 MCB Construction project manager Michael Stephens, SMC Marine head contractor Manuel Grosshans and Albany project lead and MERA manager Wiebke Ebeling. Credit: Supplied.

The coming weeks will see the buoys and anchor installed and the electrical infrastructure assembled and added to the frame before being deployed into King George Sound by late August, then towed to the site in early September.

The data produced by the M4 project will be open-source, meaning the information collected will be publicly available to all stakeholders in industry, government and academia.

Research from [CSIRO](#) shows that wave energy could contribute up to 11 per cent of Australia’s energy by 2050.

Albany project lead and MERA manager Wiebke Ebeling said the community could be proud of the M4, built entirely in Albany using locally sourced materials and labour by local companies.

“This project will put Albany on the map for renewable energy from ocean waves and for innovation in a new, diversified regional economy,” she said.

“It is very exciting, now and going forward.”



📷 Local businesses MCB Construction, RMI Engineering, Jemco Engineering, Steel Solutions WA, A1 Sandblasting, Everett Consulting, Coastal Cranes, Albany Tug Service were all involved in the device’s construction. Credit: Melissa Sheil