

## Press Release January 2009

### Perth rowers aim for a record in Indian Ocean crossing.

Four WA men with an ambitious plan to row from Geraldton to Mauritius in April will today test the new boat they hope will safely see them through the daring 6000km voyage across the Indian Ocean.

The only Australian team among 22 crews from around the world to attempt the crossing as part of the first official Indian Ocean rowing race, the Sandgroppers said yesterday they planned to take first place and set a world record for the fastest Indian Ocean crossing.



Crew spokesman Matt Hort said Team West had decided they would put their new 8.9m ocean rowing boat through its paces along Perth's foreshore on Australia Day because they planned to win the race for their State and country. "We are aiming for 45 days, which will cut the world record in half," he said.

Hort said he and team mates Andrew Taylor, David Louw and Peter Tomic had each put on an extra 20kg in weight as part of an intensive 12-month training regime leading up to the race. "People talk about the Tour de France being physically the hardest competition in the world," he said. "They are on their bikes for six hours. We'll be rowing 12 hours a day for 45 days straight."

The team's \$130,000 boat, which was built in England, will be fitted with a reverse-osmosis Spectra Ventura 200T Watermaker to purify sea water for drinking, a GPS navigation unit and life raft. Though the men expected to face unpredictable weather and 15m waves, Woodvale Challenge race organiser Simon Chalk, who set the 107-day world record for an Indian Ocean crossing in 2003, said part of each team's \$50,000 entry fee would go towards insurance to pay for a rescue, should it prove necessary.

Mr Chalk said power boats would accompany the rowers at the start and end of their voyage, and support yachts would travel at the front and rear of the pack for the entire race.

Spectra Watermakers Australian distributor Hybrid Energy P/L are proud to be associated with this challenge, and wish the boys all the best for the journey and will be watching their progress as the race gets underway on the 19th April 2009.

For further details on the race visit [www.crossingtheindian.com](http://www.crossingtheindian.com) or visit the official race website at [www.woodvale-challenge.com](http://www.woodvale-challenge.com)