

Moves to aid top boat-builder

CAPE TOWN mayor Helen Zille has made the awarding of a tender to the world's third largest builder of catamarans a priority after earlier promising to cut through bureaucratic red tape.

Zille said last month she would make it an "absolute commitment" to use her power as mayor to aid businesses experiencing "unreasonable" delays to achieve their goals.

Zille named Robertson & Caine (R&C), South Africa's premier boat-

builder and the third largest global layer in the domain of catamarans, as one of the companies she will assist first.

According to R&C director Ellian Perch they want to build a new shipyard in Atlantis. Their current shipyard in Woodstock is getting too small for the increasing demand for their award winning boats, which includes the well-known Leopard range of catamarans.

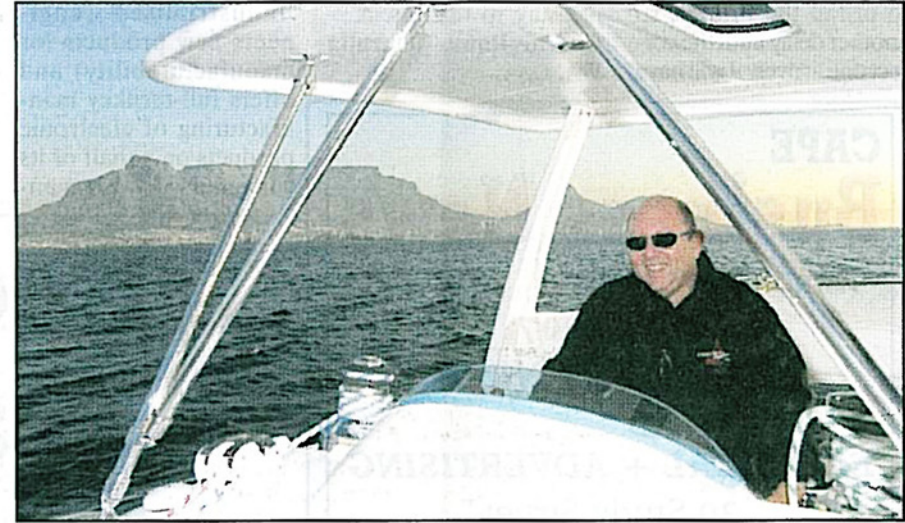
"The tender process with the provincial and city

authorities have been difficult and we welcome the mayor's decision to help R&C. Building our new shipyard in Atlantis will create more than 650 new jobs that will sustain the livelihoods of countless families in the area," according to Perch.

Says Zille's spokesperson, Robert McDonald: "Given the scarcity of jobs in Atlantis and given the opportunity for job creation and the potential for R&C to create jobs, the mayor is very disappoint-

ed at the delays that have been created. She is putting pressure on officials to try and find a rapid resolution to the red tape."

R&C considered for a while the option of relocating their building operation to Ireland, but their commitment to supporting the local industry made the final decision easy. Perch says he has no doubt that the skills exist among the people of Atlantis to be able to work in the boat-building industry.



Ellian Perch of Robertson & Caine may get his wish fulfilled soon.

In the boat-building industry, which already employs 3 200 people, skills development and new investments are seen as the biggest obstacles to the industry.

Perch says the cutting of

red tape could convince major foreign operations to relocate some of their activities to South Africa. One example is EdgeWater Power Boats, which are looking to streamline operations and

possibly move from their base in Florida.

"The Western Cape has the potential to become a major international hub for boat-builders, but then the authorities must come to the party," Perch says.