



Albany and Great Southern Weekender

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Silent life saver is in demand

By **Peter Morris**
Albany Weekender

LIFE-saving technology pioneered in Albany could soon be used in other parts of Australia.

The Silent Sentry life saving system created by the Nathan Drew Trust was a hot topic of conversation when trust founder Graeme Drew visited Adelaide recently.

An Australian Local Hero Award winner, Mr Drew said the Water Safety Council of South Australia had shown keen interest in the Silent Sentries which have already saved two lives on the south coast.

"Once we finalise the sentries, the Water Council are very interested in installing them on their wharves and other dangerous water-related areas," Mr Drew said.

"The Nathan Drew Trust has begun to liaise with them to see if we can get our technology fitted over there.

"This was another positive outcome from a very enjoyable trip."

The Silent Sentry consists of a canister bolted to the rocks with three 300mm diameter ball floats inside.

The floats have ropes attached to hold onto and are accessed by pushing a retaining lever to one side.

Once this lever is pushed to access the floats, a UHF radio signal is sent from the cage transmitter to a translator.

On receiving the UHF signal, a translator sends a CDMA text mes-

sage to a local security agency with 24/7 monitoring.

In June 2007 a Silent Sentry located at the north end of the Salmon Holes near Albany helped save the life of a 16-year-old fisherman who slipped off the rocks into the ocean.

He was rescued with the use of the Silent Sentry floats.

During his trip to South Australia, Mr Drew was reunited with fellow 2008 Australian of the Year (AOTY) award winners.

He joined Australian of the Year Professor Mick Dodson, Young Australian of the Year Jonty Bush and Senior Australian of the Year Pat La Manna on a visit to schools and community organisations around Adelaide.

The visit was part of the AOTY program's Tour of Honour, which enables recipients of the nation's most respected honour to share their inspiring stories with school students and community members.

During the tour, Mr Drew was special guest at a Premier of South Australia's reception and spoke to more than 4,000 students at seven different schools about the dangers of rock sea fishing.

On his return from Adelaide, Mr Drew and Nathan Drew Trust chairman Theo Newhouse presented some suggestions to the Injury Control

Council of WA at its conference in Geraldton.

"We presented a paper of all the near misses, accidents and their ramifications to the ICCWA," Mr Drew said.

"After the event I was asked to be patron of the ICCWA for October, which is safety month."

Mr Drew said the Trust had submitted a funding application to the City of Albany for the Silent Sentries, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBS).

"We plan to fix four Silent Sentries at The Gap, the Blowholes, Cape Point and Cable Beach, but they won't be installed until they are complete units with EPIRBS fitted," Mr Drew said.

"Once the EPIRBS has been activated you've got three minutes before the police arrive.

"If somebody has fiddled with it, there's a good chance police will be coming over the hill before the culprit has left the car park.

"I just hope people in the community won't abuse what we are putting out there on the rocks.

"It will be a shame if I have to organise for their picture to go on the front page of the paper to shame them."

To prevent them from being stolen, the EPIRBS will be coded and registered with the sites where they have been installed.



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Pioneer: Australian Local Hero Award winner Graeme Drew, pictured with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, is hoping technology pioneered in Albany will be used in other parts of Australia.