

## Auf Wiedersehen Wolfgang

The curtain is about to come down on an exciting chapter in the career of OMV's Australian and New Zealand General Manager, Wolfgang Zimmer. Zimmer has been OMV's Managing Director for the region from day one when he arrived in Perth in December 1998 to embark on one of the greatest challenges of his career.

OMV had taken a long, hard look at Australia before deciding to set up an office in Perth. "I visited two or three times to sniff around and check it all out", he said. "I went to APPEA and other places and talked to companies. But you don't know how it is before you live here for longer than a few days or a week."

Zimmer has fallen in love with Australia, particularly its people, and that will be the hardest part of saying Auf Wiedersehen when he packs his bags and heads to London to take up the post of OMV's Managing Director for the UK and Ireland early in 2003.

Zimmer views being given the opportunity and the challenge to set up the Perth office as a highlight of his career. "I was given the task to start something and I was also given the trust and the confidence to be allowed to do it. So that was very exciting and it hasn't stopped being exciting ever since. Every day has been great! I mean look outside

[gesturing to the magnificent Swan River], it's beautiful, beautiful people, wonderful country, good red wine, and there is a very relaxed atmosphere here."

However, Zimmer says the true highlight of his Australian assignment hit home for him at OMV's staff Christmas party in early December. "That was a highlight because I realised this is a new company that has been built in just a few years. There were 60-80 people around with their partners and friends and all of them were working hard for OMV Australia's success", he said. "So this certainly was a highlight, to see what had been created and know that it wasn't just hopes and dreams in the end."

While he has been assured there is an adequate supply of West Australian red wine available in London, it is the people he has come to know in Australia that he will miss most. "I will miss all my friends, all the people I got to know, all the contacts I have", he said. "You have to be a social person. If you stay home all the time and don't go out you won't get anywhere. But you go out, you meet people, everybody is open and friendly and I'm sure that is something I will miss."

But moving from country to country is an occupational hazard in the oil patch and is a



*Zimmer bids farewell to Perth this year, after setting up the Australian office in 1998.*

vital part of improving corporate knowledge. Zimmer said rotating staff provides opportunities for people to experience different ways of doing business. "You bring expertise and fresh blood, and new thoughts and ideas into the office that you move to, and at the same time you get exposure to different ways of thinking and working", he said.

But Zimmer hasn't said Auf Wiedersehen forever, just a few years, as he told *PESA News* he aims to retire in Perth when his working days are done.