

WILSON TUCKEY

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR O'CONNOR

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RUDD ABANDONS SOUTHERN OCEAN FISHERIES SURVIELLANCE - TUCKEY

"Why is the Oceanic Viking in Indonesia?" Wilson Tuckey said today.

"In answer to an Opposition Question, the Prime Minister has indicated that the vessel, Oceanic Viking, can remain in a state of virtual hijacking for as long as it requires to comply with the will of 78 persons seeking to gain illegal visa entry to Australia" Mr Tuckey said.

"When he said "Australian officials and Indonesian officials are processing this matter as a matter of course. As far as the presence of the vessel is concerned, I draw the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition's attention to one thing. It is as follows; the Foreign Affairs Minister of Indonesia said last night of Indonesia: 'Indonesia has great patience in handling this matter'—so does Australia. That is the basis upon which the vessel's presence in the port will be considered in the future."

"It is apparently of no interest to Mr Rudd that the Oceanic Viking is a vessel chartered by the Australian Government to conduct armed surveillance of the Australian Southern Ocean Territories, so as to prevent illegal and excessive fishing of those waters, with proven injury to Australia's fishing industry, and in particular the Port of Albany" Mr Tuckey said.

"By placing the Oceanic Viking within the path of the flood of boat people he has now issued an international invitation to Southern Ocean fishing pirates to enter and exploit Australia's Southern Ocean fishing areas, to the detriment of the Australian fishermen."

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