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Hepburn Wind - a model for Australia

1 August 2009 - Daylesford

Hepburn Wind has created a model for community scale renewable energy projects throughout Australia. This is the message Chairman of Hepburn Wind, Simon Holmes à Court will be delivering at a Climate Action Forum in Daylesford on Sunday 9 August.

Hepburn Wind has raised more than 90% of the funds needed to build a community-owned wind park at Leonards Hill, just south of Daylesford. The wind park is on target to start generating clean energy in the first half of 2010.

The success of Hepburn Wind in the current economic conditions demonstrates there are untapped sources of money and human effort when it comes to climate change issues.

Communities are concerned about climate change and want to take action. The Hepburn Model provides a constructive and efficient path for entire communities to reduce their carbon footprint.

“Community scale projects have many advantages”, said Mr Holmes à Court.

“They are flexible and can draw on local expertise and knowledge to work out the best solutions for each community. Depending on the community’s location, the Hepburn model can be made to work for technologies such as bio-waste to energy, small scale hydro, solar or wind.”

Community scale projects can be implemented using existing technologies and have short development times, he said.

“Community projects can tap new sources of funds. Hepburn Wind's experience has shown that in the current economic climate, community investors are more responsive to innovative projects, than either large corporations or institutional super funds.”

Despite these advantages there are impediments to these community initiatives. Promising ideas need expert assistance. Many projects are re-inventing the wheel in terms of planning, assessment and financial modelling.

Hepburn Wind has provided the Australian Government with a detailed proposal with modelling which shows that a government investment of \$100m over 10 years could create 100 community scale renewable energy projects worth over \$769m. These projects could be generating over 760GWh annually by 2020 and could create over 850 jobs, including 117 direct permanent jobs in regional Australia.

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"We need urgent action on climate change now at the individual, local and national level," said Mr Holmes à Court. "Community scale renewable energy projects are the most effective community response. Enabling these projects should be a vital component of both State and Federal government policy on climate change."

ENDS.

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Editor's Note: The Climate Action Forum (and associated book launch) is being held from 1.30pm to 5pm on Sunday 9 August at Daylesford Inn, Ballan Road, Daylesford.

Leading environmentalists, Dr Mark Diesendorf and David Holmgren, will provide their insights on how people can grasp the opportunities for change in the climate /energy /economic crisis and will launch their respective new books.

Local representatives will showcase practical initiatives that are already happening in Hepburn Shire:

- Simon Holmes à Court, Chairman of Hepburn Wind, will speak about community-scale renewable energy projects.
- The enthusiastic take up of grid-connected solar power in our shire will be discussed by David Grigg and Anneke Deutsch.
- Su Dennett and Maureen Corbett will speak about Hepburn Relocalisation Network's Food Survey.

An organic afternoon tea will be available. Entry is by donation and proceeds from the event will be used to buy relevant books for Central Highlands Regional Library.

This event is part of the Words in Winter Festival and is hosted by Sustainable Hepburn Association (SHARE), Hepburn Wind and Hepburn Relocalisation Network (HRN). For more information, email info@hrea.org.au or call David Grigg on 0401 763 553.