

MEDIA RELEASE

Fukushima student Ambassadors tour Hepburn Wind

27 March 2013

Twelve students from Fukushima visited Hepburn Wind today for a glimpse of the clean energy future they want to build in their disaster stricken province in Japan.

It has been nearly 2 years since the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Incident. The disaster and its aftermath continues to burden Fukushima residents, especially the children. Radioactivity from the Nuclear plant meltdown is one of the ongoing issues for the student delegation.

People in areas affected by radiation have to limit their exposure. They are restricted to two hours outside per day and most of the students still live in temporary accommodation. The delegation's schedule in Daylesford also included lunch with Hepburn Shire Councillors and an afternoon at renowned permaculture farm Meliodora. This gave the students two days in the clean air and environment of Daylesford.

Noritsane (14 years old) said, "I have never had an experience like this, being inside a turbine - I will tell this story to my school back in Fukushima, we should do this."

Miyuki (13 years old) said, "One turbine generates a lot more energy than I thought possible and are far quieter than I thought - wind farms provide many good things, not bad things like nuclear."

Naomi (14 years old) stated, "I really hope Fukushima will change and do this."

Taryn Lane, Hepburn Wind's Community Officer said, "It was an honour to host the students at our wind farm and show how a community can take charge and create a clean energy future. We hope the students can return home with a new story of possibility and hope."

"Fukushima and other nuclear disasters are a global threat and a global responsibility, which Australia should give more enough attention to. Very few Australians realise that our uranium was the source of the radioactive pollution that is harming our young visitors from Fukushima." [ref 1]

From 23 March - 1 April, the 12 junior high students from Minamisoma [School?] are visiting Victoria for 8 days with sponsorship from international NGO 'Peace Boat' in co-operation with Melbourne-based organisation 'Japan for Peace' (JfP) and various NGOs.

The 'Fukushima Youth Ambassadors' project was initiated by Peace Boat after the earthquake disaster in 2011. They trip aims to show them how Australians tackle environmental issues and includes visits to local secondary schools for a cultural exchange.

Victims of other nuclear disasters, such as the 1986 Chernobyl meltdown, have also visited Australia on similar visits.

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(1) <http://www.thepunch.com.au/articles/australian-uranium-fuelled-the-fukushima-disaster/> Accessed 27 March 2013.