



**IMPRESSIVE:** The Leonards Hill wind farm will prove turbines aren't intrusive on the environment, according to Hepburn Renewable Energy Association. Committee member Phil Hanson said: "I actually think people won't be able to hear the turbines over road noise." Left is an impression of what the turbines will look like from the road.

## Wind turbines are go

By Robert Somers

THE controversial Leonards Hill wind farm will go ahead after the Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal last week gave it the green light after a two-month hearing in Melbourne.

Hepburn Shire Council approved Australia's first community wind farm in February despite 18 objections. The objectors took the case to VCAT. The \$8 million project also received more than 300 positive submissions.

The VCAT report said there would be a significant impact on people involved no matter which outcome was reached

and found the proposal had caused community divisions.

Melbourne-based company Future Energy is developing the project in partnership with Hepburn Renewable Energy Association.

The project will consist of two two-megawatt 68-metre turbines built on a farm on the Ballan-Daylesford Rd that the company said would produce enough energy for more than 2000 homes.

Noise from the wind farm will comply with prescribed standards.

HREA committee president Per Bernard said: "It's clear from the VCAT decision that Future Energy prepared a very

comprehensive application covering all the environmental and amenity issues.

"It gives us a lot of confidence that we can continue working together to complete this great community project," he said.

Future Energy's managing director David Shapero was delighted with the decision.

"We'd like to thank everyone who supported the application.

"This project is already an inspiration to communities across Australia and we think it will prove to be the first of many community-owned renewable energy projects."

Mayor David Smith said,

while the council understood the objectors' views, under the planning and environment act planning applications had to be determined on their planning merits.

"VCAT has confirmed that council's decision to grant a permit was correct," he said.

Mr Shapero couldn't put a date on when construction would start. He said: "This is a magnificent milestone but there's a lot of work still to be done before we start the fund raising process."

Sustainability Victoria has allocated \$975,000 for the wind farm.

### HEPBURN RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE



**COMMITTED:** Hepburn Renewable Energy Association president Per Bernard said the recently elected committee would work towards attracting investors to support the project. The committee is, back, from left, Simon Holmes, Mim Dineen, Tracey O'Neill, David Wait, Phil Hanson and president Per Bernard. Seated, from left, David Shapero from Future Energy, Scott Kinnear and Koos Hulst. Iisia Carmichael is absent.

## Sad day for the landscape

THE Spa Country Landscape Guardians said the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's approval of the Leonards Hill wind farm is bad news for Spa Country.

Will Elsworth from Smeaton said VCAT's ruling would have little bearing on the Tuki proposal if it went to VCAT.

"The Leonards Hill project did not have significant landscape overlays like the area of the Tuki proposal does," Mr Elsworth said.

"They (VCAT) can't stop a proposal just because it's a financial lemon. They can only go by planning issues," he said.

Mr Elsworth also claimed the wind farm would only work at between three and four per cent of its capacity.

"VCAT found that Sustainability Victoria had no factual basis to

prove that wind farms work at a given 35 per cent capacity. Information put forward against the development proved that the Hepburn Community Wind Farm would only work at three to four per cent capacity.

"Sustainability Victoria was found to have no factual capacity outputs from any wind farms and that they only go on estimates.

"The problem now for this development is to have people put up around \$4 million to receive the government grant of around \$975,000 and then find a further \$4 million to have the project fully financed," he said.

"It highlights the fact the whole project is a fraud."

SCLG is a protest group that strongly opposes wind farms in Hepburn Shire.

### Demand to increase

THE Victorian Government's energy planning body VENCord predicts wind energy will provide 23 per cent of its installed generating capacity and that wind energy will provide 88 megawatts of power in summer periods of high electricity demand, with the figure increasing to 285 megawatts in 2009-2010.

The State Government wants renewable energy to meet 10 per cent of Victoria's annual electricity consumption by 2010, according to VENCord.

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