



# Policy an ill wind that blows nobody any good

The state government's stance on wind farms is short-sighted in the extreme, writes **Paddy Manning**.

**T**ODAY more than 500 people are expected in Daylesford to celebrate the launch of Hepburn Wind, a community-owned wind farm generating more than enough power for the 2000 local homes.

The twin turbines were commissioned a few months ago and the launch is the culmination of six years' effort and a \$13.5 million investment.

No matter how sunny the weather, a cloud will hang over the launch: Premier Ted Baillieu's draconian anti-wind laws have hit the wind industry for six and, if in place at the time, would have made Hepburn

Wind impossible.

Chairman Simon Holmes a Court says Hepburn Wind was "never meant to be the first of many. It was a local project conceived by local people."

But a non-profit consulting arm, Embark, was conceived as other communities nationwide sought to follow Daylesford's example. At least four more community-owned projects are dead in the water. What's killed them is amendment VC82 to the Victoria Planning Provisions, gazetted in August, which sets out extensive "no go" zones and introduced a requirement that any new wind farm obtain the written consent of any landowner within

two kilometres. Effectively, each neighbour has a veto.

It's unbelievable. The planning system exists to resolve conflicts over land use and these happen all the time. Whatever gets proposed, someone is going to oppose.

In no category of development in any jurisdiction I can think of, has a right of veto been given to potential objectors. Nor can the Victorian division of the Planning Institute, whose vice-president, Brett Davis, says the current planning system of notifications and appeals is "essentially sound".