



Newsletter - September 2010

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Welcome

Dear Members,

Welcome to all our new members at this exciting stage for the project, as we prepare for construction of Australia's first community owned wind farm.

Since our May newsletter, 182 new members have joined Hepburn Wind bringing our total membership to over 1340 - further demonstrating that our model for community action on clean energy is gathering momentum.

The project received national attention recently on ABC's Inside Business (see details below) and we continue to receive hundreds of enquires from media, local groups and individuals.

Perhaps the greatest thrill is seeing the project foster a desire in other communities to consider similar projects. One of the strengths of the Hepburn Wind model is that it has created a network of nearly 7,000 supporters who together are promoting the idea that communities can take responsible action on climate change.

Simon Holmes à Court
Chairman, Hepburn Wind

Capital raising

Hepburn Wind has now raised over \$8.25 million from members and applicants. Having launched our capital raising campaign at the onset of the Global Financial Crisis, we are overwhelmed with the level of support shown by our members.

At the end of June, Regional Development Victoria announced a grant of \$750,000 to assist Hepburn Wind with the high costs of grid connection under their Regional Infrastructure Development Fund's (RIDF) - Regional Electrical Access Program (REAP).

With our member funds, state government grants, finance from the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank and the continuing strong flow of new investment, we are very close to

our fund raising target.

Recent publicity of the project coupled with greater investment certainty as we near the construction phase has resulting in a significant increase in enquiries relating to membership and share purchase. We are advising that we are still able to accept new members and investment from Victorians, and in certain limited circumstances we can accept some interstate investment (see our [FAQ](#)).

We will be revisiting this position when our targets are met.

If you or someone you know had been considering joining or increasing an existing investment, we encourage action soon. Please download our [Membership and Share Offer](#) for full details, including the application form.

Construction Update

We are rapidly moving towards construction. In July a series of pre-construction activities were undertaken, including surveys for soil resistivity, site layout and geotechnical conditions.

Our prime contractor [REpower](#) is now managing the final stages of the detailed civil engineering design (including foundations and site access roads).

In August we signed the formal agreements with Powercor that enable connection of the wind farm to the electricity grid and the detailed electrical design is now well advanced.

The construction programme is still developing, but we remain confident that civil engineering works will be underway in the coming months.

Critical pieces of the wind farm will soon enter production (blades, nacelle, tower and foundation components) and we plan to keep our supporters posted of these developments via our website and twitter.

Election day booth

Our local community is the cornerstone of our project and we place a strong emphasis on getting out on the street and meeting members of our local community and visiting as many community events as possible - since inception, we have run over 100 street stalls.

The recent federal election provided a wonderful opportunity to be out in the community with a special election day stall.



Strong interest in our stall at the Daylesford polling booth was shown by the local community and visitors alike.

In amongst voting, buying cakes and visiting the sausage sizzle from other community groups, well over one hundred people visited our stall, asked questions, took information, with some even joining up on the spot. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive and it was one of the most successful street stalls that we have ever conducted.

There seemed a keen desire to show our 'leaders' what leadership on climate action looks like.

Join up at the Daylesford Bendigo Bank agency

We have listened to feedback from our supporters that many more would join Hepburn Wind if the application process was easier. In April we simplified the application form and have recently made applying for membership and shares even easier.

Locals and visitors to the region can now apply to join at the Bendigo Bank agency at the back of Daylesford Newsagency in Vincent Street. The agency will have [Membership and Share Offer](#) documents and application forms on hand, and is set up to receive completed application forms and deposit payments on the spot.

Our thanks to the staff at Daylesford Newsagency for supporting us with this new service.

The value of our project to the community grows with every new local member, so we have recently begun a campaign to encourage existing members to sign up two new local members. As a special reward we have great prizes donated by local businesses, to be awarded to the member who sign up the most locals, as well as draws for all member recruiters and new local members.

If you recruit any new local members and would like to be eligible for our prize draw, then please ensure your name is placed on the top of the applicant's form or email us and the name/s of the new local member to janet.wheatley@hepburnwind.com.au. All new local members who have joined from 21 August will automatically go into the draw. Prizes will be drawn at the end of November.

Our [local offer](#) is still available at the special local minimum investment level of just \$100.

Local climate action groups support us, and vice-versa

We have continued to enjoy strong support from climate action groups across Central Victoria, and we welcome new members joining Hepburn Wind from these groups:

- Sustainable Hepburn Association Renewing the Earth ([SHARE](#))
- Hepburn Relocalisation Network ([HRN](#))
- Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions ([BREAZE](#))
- Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group ([MRSG](#))
- Woodend Integrated Sustainable Energy ([WISE](#))
- Bendigo Sustainability Group ([BSG](#))
- Trentham Sustainability Group
- [Riddells Creek Sustainability](#) and
- Mount Alexander Sustainability Group ([MASG](#)).

These groups do a fantastic job with very limited resources, and we thank them for their help in promoting our project in the region. As an acknowledgement for their support in our membership drives, Hepburn Wind has donated over \$3100 to support these groups in the last year.

If you are a member of any of these local climate action groups, please encourage your friends to join us at our special local climate action group offer (minimum \$100 investment).

Leonards Hill house visits

Approximately 40 households live within two kilometres of the future site of the wind

farm at Leonards Hill. Communication with those living in the immediate vicinity of the project is a key priority.

Sometimes residents around proposed wind farms receive a range of conflicting information, so it is very important that we make every effort to meet and speak to local residents about our project. Recently, directors of Hepburn Wind visited as many homes as possible near the site to discuss the project and to listen to and assist with any questions.

The visits proved very productive with mostly positive responses received about our project and ideas about how we can support sustainability initiatives within the immediate area.

In terms of direct contribution to the community, compared with other wind farm operators, Hepburn Wind will be 'punching well above our weight' by contributing more than \$1 million over the next 25 years through our Community Sustainability Fund. It is critical to us that the community living close to the wind farm is well supported by the Fund.

There are still a small number of residents around the site who do not support wind farms and so remain opposed to our project. We continue to offer to meet with these residents and discuss and hopefully address their concerns. That said, support for small scale community wind farms is very strong within our local area and it was terrific to hear how many of the local Leonards Hill residents are right behind the project.

Comings and goings

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of Phil Hanson due to health issues. Phil was a founding director and Treasurer of Hepburn Wind and a key member of the steering committee that brought the co-operative into existence. On behalf of the board and members, we wish Phil all the best and look forward to his continued involvement as a strong supporter.



We are pleased to advise that we have recently employed two new staff to assist our Executive Officer Jack Gilding with our work in constructing the wind farm and supporting our membership. We are delighted that Tracy Anthony has joined as a Project Officer and Janet Wheatley as our Membership Officer.

We are very proud to have added local 'green jobs' to the many local benefits of Hepburn Wind and we welcome both Tracy and Janet who bring great skills to our team.

Waubra wind farm tour

On Saturday 17 July, 25 local residents joined us on a tour of the nearby Waubra wind farm, currently the largest in the southern hemisphere. The tour was a great opportunity for many to experience wind turbines up close for the first time as well as hear first hand about the impact of the project on the local area directly from a landholder and a local Waubra resident.

Tour participants found it refreshing to hear that despite recent adverse media about the Waubra wind farm, many in the local community supported the wind farm, did not experience any adverse effects and enjoyed the benefits the farm has brought to the area.

As some of the local media have reported extensively on alleged health problems associated with wind farms (Waubra in particular), a [recent report](#) by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) countering the claims may be of interest. The report concludes that "there is currently no published scientific evidence to positively link wind turbines with adverse health effects." This is in line with reports from Worksafe, the Victorian Chief Health Officer and an [extensive study](#) for the American and Canadian Wind Energy Associations.



Hepburn Wind has taken over 200 locals on tours of wind farms with great success. We believe that it is critical that all stakeholders have an opportunity to get to see a wind farm up close. Members interested in future tours should contact info@hepburnwind.com.au and we will organise future tours if there is sufficient interest.

Spreading the word

While our main focus at the moment is on building the wind farm (one of only three under construction in Victoria), we are keen to share our experience with the many groups around Australia wanting to learn from our experience.

- On 4 August Director Scott Kinnear presented to Climate Action Newcastle's City Hall Meeting 'Newcastle and the Hunter Beyond Coal'. The assembled crowd of 200 gave an enthusiastic response to the Hepburn Wind story.
- On 5 August Chairman Simon Holmes à Court presented at the Wind Farm Development, Design & Construction 2010 Conference in Melbourne. While our project is very small by industry standards, the renewable energy sector has shown great interest in our project due to the overwhelming local support we enjoy and that fact that we've been able to proceed while so many other projects are currently stalled.
- On 22 August, Executive Officer Jack Gilding presented at the Natimuk Sustainability Forum. Natimuk is a small but highly innovative community near Horsham who are working with CSIRO and the Victorian government to develop sustainability strategies for their local community.

Stay tuned for the launch of Embark, the non-profit organisation that has grown out of the Hepburn experience that aims to establish a vibrant, sustainable community energy sector for Australia.

Recent media coverage

A highlight over the last few months has been working with the team from ABC TV's Inside Business program as they prepared a profile on Hepburn Wind. The segment was broadcast the morning after the federal election, one of their highest rating shows of the year, and can be viewed on the [Inside Business website](#).

We also received a positive mention by [The Economist](#) in an article on community reaction to wind farms and in an opinion piece in [The Mercury](#).



Your ideas and assistance

We know that our membership has a broad range of skills, connections, ideas and energy. Please email feedback@hepburnwind.com.au with your feedback about the project and any ideas or links you have to promote our project within the broader community.

We also know that many of our members are willing to help out as volunteers in a range of areas. If you are interested in helping us, please email volunteers@hepburnwind.com.au and we will contact you to discuss further.

We value the support of our members and their commitment to promoting Hepburn Wind. As we move into this next exciting phase of the project by working together we will create a model to inspire other communities around Australia.

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER



If you haven't already checked out our Twitter feed, you'll find Hepburn Wind and related news there first! See <http://twitter.com/hepburnwind> for more information.

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