



COGNITION: Hepburn Wind members Kate Redwood, Tracy Anthony, Taryn Lane and Per Bernard proudly display their Premiers Sustainability Award.

Wind farm to begin feeding electricity into grid

Community award

EVAN SCHURMAN

COMMUNITY co-operative on the verge of producing electricity for the first time, has been recognised by the Victorian Premier.

Hepburn Wind, Australia's first community owned wind farm, took out the community award at the Premier's Sustainability Awards on Tuesday night.

The co-operative is expected to begin feeding electricity into the

grid from this week, and chairman Simon Holmes à Court said it would generate more power each year from its two turbines than all the houses in Daylesford consume.

"It's the very first time a community in Australia has initiated and then built a renewable energy project at a community scale," he said.

"While everyone's been sitting around for the past five years or so and saying that the government should do more about renewable energy, a

small group of locals, and then more and more people have gotten excited about this idea and just got on with it."

Mr Holmes à Court said the award would help put the project on the map, and cause more regions to embark on similar projects.

"Woodend and Castlemaine are keen to follow the lead and this will make it easier for them by opening doors to government and opening minds in their communities for the model," he said.

The Hepburn Wind team was presented with a trophy made from a recycled W-class tram, but Mr Holmes à Court said the award was simply a step in the right direction.

"The prize we've always kept our eye on is the original goal, generating electricity," he said.

The co-operative gathered \$9 million for the project by launching a share offer, which was taken up by 1650 people. The share price will go up from from \$1.00 to \$1.10 on July 1.