

## MEDIA RELEASE ... MEDIA RELEASE ... MEDIA RELEASE

### Community takes the lead on climate change

Friday 8 October - Daylesford

*A small town in central Victoria is setting a powerful example by building the first community-owned renewable energy project in Australia and taking the future of its energy supply into its own hands.*

On **Friday 8 October 2010**, The Hon. Gavin Jennings, Minister for Environment & Climate Change, joined Chairman, Simon Holmes à Court at the official ground-breaking ceremony of **Hepburn Wind**.

**Hepburn Wind** started out as an idea, led by a group of passionate Daylesford pioneers who were keen to make a difference; to reduce pollution and inspire their community to be part of the solution to climate change. Their idea snowballed into the creation of the **Hepburn Wind co-operative**, that now has over 1350 members, ranging from local families to philanthropic organisations. These members have collectively invested more than \$8.3 million to make the first ever Australian community-owned wind farm a reality.

Hepburn Wind was conceived in 2005 and launched its membership and share offer in July 2008. Members will share in the proceeds of the sale of electricity and profits are returned via a community sustainability fund. Over the next 25 years, Hepburn Wind plans to contribute more than \$1 million to sustainability initiatives in the local community.

The ground-breaking marks the beginning of a construction process that will see two REpower 2.05 MW wind turbines built at Leonards Hill, 10 km south of Daylesford. Construction is expected to finish mid-2011 and expert analysis predicts that the wind farm will annually generate more power than is used by all the houses in Daylesford.

The ground-breaking event also heralds the first use of a progressive and unique community enterprise model for renewable energy development – designed, owned and operated by, and directly benefiting the local community.

The Hepburn Wind announcement coincides with the launch of [Embark](#), a new independent non-profit organisation, dedicated to accelerating the uptake of community renewable energy projects by providing capacity-building information, tools and funding support.

Hepburn Wind employs three locals and is managed by eight volunteer directors who each either live locally or have properties as regular weekenders.

## QUOTES:

*“Prior to Hepburn Wind I had never bought shares in anything. The shares give me a sense of enormous pride in my community and demonstrate the power of individuals and collective passion to achieve change. That, surely, is the best legacy to pass on to our children.”*

– Kirsten Wilken, Member, Hepburn Wind.

*“Our project is not just about building two wind turbines it is about empowering local people to become engaged and active participants in responding to the challenge of climate change.”*

*“Today’s ground-breaking represents years of hard work and commitment by our board, members and supporters who have never wavered in their desire to make this project a reality.”*

*“Our ground-breaking is a celebration of these achievements and of what we hope will become the first of many more for communities around Australia.”*

*“With the linked launch of Embark to support other communities in their renewable energy endeavours, we hope our achievement will be the first of many more in communities across Australia.”*

*“Communities are showing that they can take the lead – we don’t have to wait for government or big business to act on climate change.”*

– Simon Holmes à Court, Chairman, Hepburn Wind.

## Media Contacts

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