

Media Briefing

14 November 2009 - Daylesford

Hepburn Welcomes Run for a Safe Climate - 28 November 2009

Firefighters, police and ambulance officers are making a strong statement about taking action to combat climate change by running a 6000 km relay to link many of Australia's world-renowned natural icons. The run aims to highlight our need to bring greenhouse gas levels back to safe levels. The event will also pass through some of the great climate solutions that already exist – solar thermal and wind energy plants, ocean hydro systems and research facilities.

One such solution is community-scale renewable power generation, such as the two turbine wind farm project being undertaken by the residents of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs. Communities around Australia are keeping a keen eye on what will be Australia's first community owned wind farm.

On Saturday 28 November 2009, Hepburn Wind and the Leonards Hill CFA will host a reception for the emergency services running team from Run for a Safe Climate. The reception will be held at 10:30am at the Leonards Hill CFA fire shed, which is at the base of Leonards Hill, the site for the Hepburn Wind project.

The event occurs on the second last day of the run, as part of the Ballarat to Kilmore leg.

Sue Waters, captain of the Leonards Hill CFA said *"The Victorian fires earlier this year provide a warning of how catastrophic even modest climate changes could be. We need to do more than just try to deal with the impacts of fires, so we are pleased to be supporting the Run for a Safe Climate."*

"Hepburn Wind is showing that communities can play a leading role in moving to a sustainable future based on renewable energy. We applaud the emergency services personnel taking part in the relay for their commitment and determination in raising the issue of climate change on a national scale. Hepburn Wind encourages all residents in the Daylesford area to support the runners as they pass and take the opportunity to attend the reception and demonstrate that our community will also be part of a climate change solution." said Simon Holmes à Court, chairman of Hepburn Wind.

Morning tea will be served.

Media contacts

Hepburn Wind	Jack Gilding, Executive Officer jack.gilding@hepburnwind.com.au (03) 5348 6760, 0407 486 651
	Simon Holmes à Court, Chairman simon.holmesacourt@hepburnwind.com.au
Leonards Hill CFA	Marc Dankers, Secretary marcus.dankers@members.cfa.vic.gov.au 0418 560 477
	Sue Waters, Captain 0428 486 747
Run for a Safe Climate	Brendan Condon 0412 198 974

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Background information

Run for a Safe Climate

Website: <http://runforasafeclimate.org/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/Run4SafeClimate>

Melissa Fyfe Blog: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/blog/climate-run>

Hepburn Wind

Hepburn Wind is a community based co operative with over a thousand members that is building Australia's first community owned wind farm. Around 90% of the required funding has been raised and construction is anticipated to start early in 2010.

When completed, the two 2MW turbines on Leonards Hill, just south of Daylesford, will generate renewable energy equivalent to most of the domestic electricity consumption of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs.

The development of Hepburn Wind is being closely followed by community groups around Australia who are interested in developing their own renewably energy projects. Hepburn Wind is assisting with the establishment of a new organisation that will provide advice, support and assistance with fund-raising to groups seeking to establish community scale renewable energy projects. Financial modelling has been carried out demonstrating that it is feasibly to facilitate 100 such projects around Australia in the next ten year across a range of technologies such as wind, solar and biomass.

<http://www.hepburnwind.com.au/>

Leonards Hill CFA

Several members of the Leonards Hill brigade were part of the strike team deployments to the Black Saturday fires at Kinglake.

Since the 7 February 2009 fires, the brigade has signed up and trained 5 new members in preparation for the coming fire season.

Leonards Hill CFA Captain Sue Waters was first on the scene of the Daylesford / Musk Vale Fire on 23 February 2009 and coordinated the initial response.

The Brigade is currently working on extension to the fire shed and expecting a new four wheel drive ultra-light tanker.

Background – Daylesford / Musk Vale Fire

The Daylesford / Musk Vale fire started at approximately 3pm on Monday, 23 February on the edge of the Ballan-Daylesford Rd, Sailors Falls, and became known as the Musk Vale - Hogans Road fire. The fire travelled south easterly threatening Leonards Hill and Korweinguboora. The fire threatened Daylesford at various times during the evening. By 10pm that night, the fire had grown and with a wind change, headed north east and threatened properties along the Daylesford-Trentham Rd and smaller villages of Musk and Bullarto. Spotfires ahead of the main fires threatened properties in Musk, Wheatsheaf and Bullarto. A relief centre was opened at the Daylesford Town Hall at 5pm on 23 February. Approximately 20 people and their pets stayed at the centre that night. Over 500 people

were registered by the Red Cross during the emergency. Many residents left Daylesford on the evening of 23 February, while others from Glenlyon, Coomoora and Wheatsheaf went to the relief centre in Kyneton. Some residents went as far as Bendigo.

The fire was brought under control on Wednesday 25 February, but continued to burn within containment lines for several days afterwards. Windy conditions on two total fire ban days kept authorities and residents on high alert. Firefighters from the ACT were brought in to give local firefighters assistance with the campaign.

About 2,600 hectares were burnt - approximately 650ha of private land, including 450 ha of grazing/pasture land, and 1,650 ha of Crown Land. Around 140kms of fencing, 1 dwelling and 25 other structures, including hay sheds and other sheds were destroyed or damaged. Approximately 100 head of stock including alpacas, sheep, cattle and poultry died or were destroyed after the fire and 1,500 tonnes of hay or silage were destroyed. Some 20ha of hardwood plantations, 8ha of softwood plantations and 4ha of olive trees were destroyed. The fire affected over 70 individual properties in some way.

Adapted from Hepburn Shire Council Annual Report 2008-09