

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: FRIDAY 1 JUNE 2012

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Community-owned renewable energy lecture

How feasible is it for communities to own and run wind farms in Tasmania?

A free public lecture at UTAS' Cradle Coast campus will explore the topic on **Tuesday 6 June 2012**.

North West farmer Robert Nichols will speak at the event.

He believes that community ownership could provide enormous social, environmental and economic benefits to regional areas.

Mr Nichols operates a 250ha farm at Sassafras growing and processing 750,000 chickens and 30,000 turkeys per year. Half of the farm's electricity requirements are supplied by 225KW wind turbine located close to the processing plant.

Last year Mr Nichols won a Nuffield Scholarship to travel to Denmark, where 20 percent of the country's electrical energy is generated from renewable resources, and community ownership of wind turbines is becoming more common.

"In Denmark the size and cost of turbines has increased to the point where developers have been forced to offer local communities the chance to invest in these projects," Mr Nichols said.

He said currently new developments are required to offer 20 per cent of the development to local investors.

"Investors must live within 4.5kms of the turbine and are rewarded with a dividend for the resource that is being harvested," Mr Nichols explained.

"There has been widespread interest and support for wind generation from Danish communities who recognise the benefits of keeping profits in the local area, providing employment opportunities through the new skills and service industries needed to maintain the turbines."

Mr Nichols will be discussing community ownership of wind turbines with renewable energy expert Jack Gilding at two free public events next week.

Mr Gilding was a key player in Australia's first community owned wind farm, Hepburn Wind, and assists with the development of renewable energy community projects.

Who: Jack Gilding and Rob Nichols

What: Free public lecture, *Community owned renewable energy*

When: 5.30-7pm

Where: UTAS Cradle Coast Campus, Tuesday 5 June, Devonport
Entertainment and Convention Centre, Wednesday 6 June,

Email: CCC.Events@utas.edu.au

RSVP/ contact: Nicki Fletcher, (03) 6430 4949

Information Released by:

The Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: (03) 6226 2691 Mob. 0447 537 375

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au