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# Wind power hit by restrictions

## Wind power hit by curbs

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The 44c is guaranteed by the distributor ETSA and electricity retailers may choose to add to this amount. For instance, TRUenergy offers an additional 20c to the feed-in tariff.

Consumers generally pay 17c-20c per unit of electricity consumed.

The scheme, along with the solar rebate scheme, has encouraged suburban and regional customers to go greener and is due for a review next year.

The Office of Sustainability and Climate Change expects to present recommendations to the State Government by the end of this year, a spokesman said.

"At the moment, wind systems are not eligible for the feed-in scheme. There are issues to be resolved for their roll-out into the residential area - for example noise and aesthetics. This will be considered in the review," he said.

Wind turbine engineer Mike Davidson has spent significant "time and effort" in creating a grid connect turbine for domestic use.

"People are hesitant to buy the systems because there are no incentives," Mr Davidson said.

While he did not have a figure for the total number of redundancies over the past six to nine months, he said Hills numbers were about per cent off their peak.

Hills had 3140 employees at the end of the 2007-08 financial year.

"Some of our businesses started to shut down early in the year, our water tank business for example," he said.

"There's been a steady series of adjusting the manning levels for various reasons."

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VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

DEVELOPMENT of a viable small-scale renewable energy industry is being held back because a State Government incentive scheme applies only to solar systems, equipment suppliers say.

Micro wind turbines and hybrid systems should also qualify for the feed-in electrical tariff system which rewards households and businesses that feed power into the grid from photo voltaic solar panels.

Wind power is the cheapest form of renewable energy but is excluded from the scheme, says ZEN Technologies' chief executive Richard Turner.

"The uptake is being stalled by the Government's current feed-in tariff legislation being limited to just solar PV," he said.

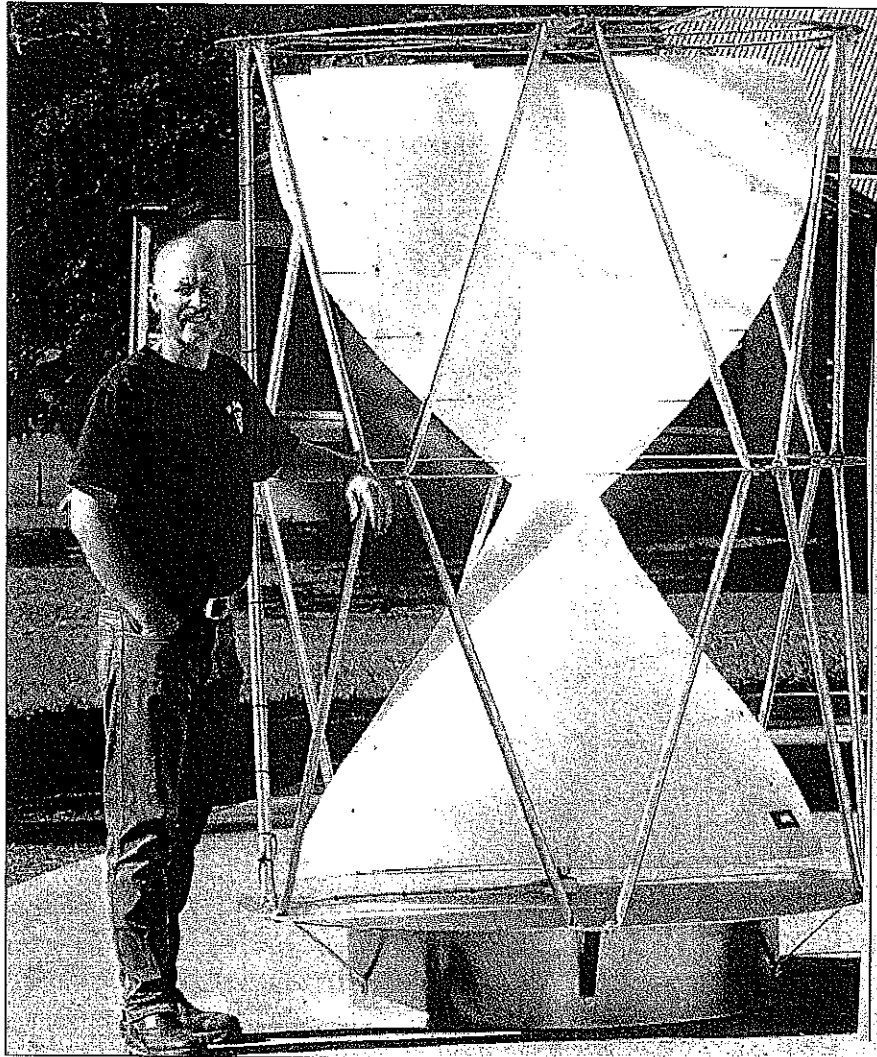
"Ideally, a hybrid system combining both solar and wind producing power both day and night is the optimum solution for people in semi-rural areas with some extra land."

If a qualifying household adds a wind energy system to its solar PV system, it is disqualified for the feed-in tariff because the system then becomes a "hybrid" one, ZEN Technologies said.

Despite the chance to get a viable local renewable energy industry going in the region, the loophole in the legislation is holding the sector back.

Currently, small customers - consuming less than 160 MWh per year - who own a small-scale solar photo voltaic system, receive a guaranteed net feed-in tariff of 44c for every unit of electricity supplied to the grid from the solar system.

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STAR TURN: Mark Davidson with the prototype vertical axis wind turbine yesterday. Picture: MATT CARTY

## Home turbine set to spin

SOUTH Australia's first domestic wind turbine manufacturer Wind Machine has teamed with local renewable energy systems supplier ZEN Home Energy Systems to bring its product to market.

Wind Machine founder Mike Davidson's 1.5m wide and 4m tall vertical axis turbine is designed to sit

on top of an 8m tower and will produce 1.5-2KW/hour for residential households in regional areas.

However, he is concerned about the uptake of his turbines and business prospects until the state's feed-in power tariff legislation is changed.

"I feel I am fairly committed and I am working

very hard," Mr Davidson said. "All the time and effort is being wasted while they (the State) sit on their hands."

"They have to just change the legislation".

Other wind turbine manufacturers in Australia are Soma in NSW (horizontal axis) and Hush Power in Queensland (horizontal axis).

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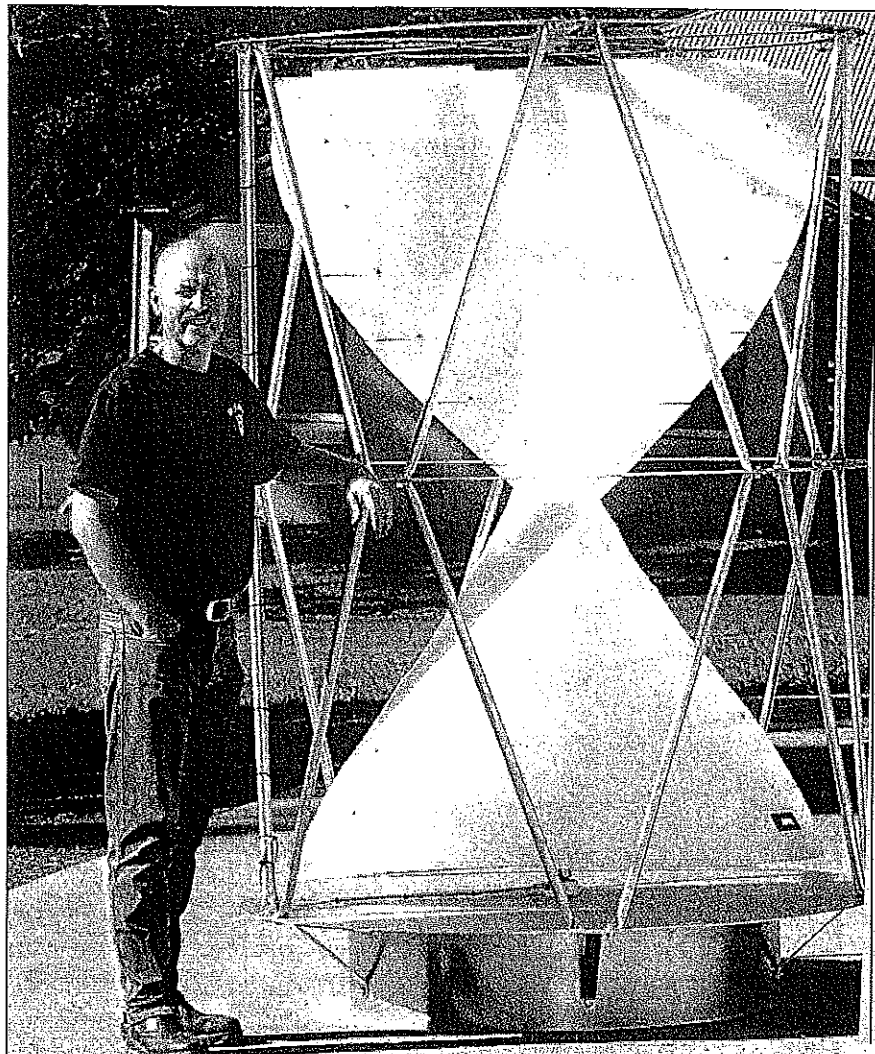
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