

# SAVE CENTRAL



## **RELIANCE ON GIANT WIND “FOOLISHNESS”**

**Attention: News Editor**

**06 June 2008**

The failure of the 400 megawatt Otahuhu B gas-fired power station today has highlighted the foolishness of looking to industrial-scale wind farms for backstop solutions, says Save Central spokesperson Grahame Sydney.

A boiler tube fault means Otahuhu B will be out of action for at least four days, just as hydro storage levels reach lows not seen since 1992 and winter begins to bite.

The Government backs Meridian’s 176-turbine Project Hayes as a solution to such energy shortages, having made an All-Of-Government submission in support of the Central Otago wind farm proposal currently before the Environment Court.

“Yet we are being provided with a graphic illustration here and now that reliance on wind power doesn’t work,” said Sydney, speaking from a becalmed Central Otago.

“It has been a calm few months nationwide – especially so in Central – so the contribution of the country’s eight existing wind farms in averting an imminent energy crisis has been very poor. And with winter consistently calmer than other seasons, this is a scenario that is unlikely to change. The turbines simply don’t turn often enough.”

In the week ending 25 May, wind contributed just 30 megawatts, or 0.6% of the total energy consumed in New Zealand, from a potential 321.8 megawatts of installed capacity.

Sydney says the latest hydro and wind figures make a mockery of Energy Minister David Parker's insistence that we must rely more heavily on renewables as our energy consumption grows.

"The range of reliable base-load options available is considerable, yet Government still appears to prefer Think Big solutions which, dependent on fickle Mother Nature, can never provide security.

"But the bigger the scheme, the bigger the vacuum it leaves when nature refuses to comply with power company hopes."

Sydney added that he thought it "highly imprudent" of Parker to continue stalling on introducing energy-saving measures, not just in the face of looming shortages.

"Long-term, the sooner encouragement emphasises localised and smaller-scale solutions, and self-sufficiency, the better for all consumers – and the better we'll look to international eyes.

"We cannot afford to head down a bigger and bigger renewables trail at the expense of things which cannot be renewed – like our unspoiled and beautiful natural landscapes."

## **KEY FACTS**

- If it proceeds, Project Hayes will be one of the world's largest wind farms.
- It will physically occupy 92 square kilometres of the Central Otago landscape with 176 turbines and 150 kilometres of oversize roading.
- Each turbine will be as high as the observation deck of Auckland's Sky Tower.
- Construction alone will cost \$2 billion of taxpayers' money. This figure does not include transmission upgrades.

### **For more information:**

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