

## Suburban wind power

# Push to close turbine loophole

HOUSEHOLDERS can cash in on wind power by erecting turbines up to 10m high in their backyard that could transform suburban skylines.

But the window of opportunity could be slammed shut by Family First, which wants to change development regulations and allow neighbours to have a say in the erection of any wind turbines in their street.

Under present regulations wind turbines are treated the same as windmills and do not require any council approval if they are under 10m high or up to 4m high if on top of a building.

Wattle Park resident Don Evangelista was surprised when he found out that his application to Burnside Council to erect a 6m turbine in his back yard was not required. After taking legal advice Burnside Council re-funded Mr Evangelista's \$900 application fees earlier this month.

"As a licensed builder I was surprised I didn't need council approval for a turbine," Mr Evangelista, of Redouneau Cres, said yesterday.

"I've got solar panels already and combined with the turbine I should be self-sufficient."

The 77-year-old is negotiating with overseas suppliers for a 2kW turbine valued at about \$20,000, which he hopes to install within the next couple of



**EMMA  
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months. Mr Evangelista said his turbine would not bother his neighbours because he lives at the end of the street and next to bush in the foothills.

But Family First MP Dennis Hood wants to close the regulation loophole because he fears suburban wind turbines could generate anger among residents.

"These things can be noisy, unattractive and there are even suggestions they can impact on people's health, so neighbours should be consulted before they are allowed," Mr Hood said. "We will be looking at legislative changes and will be writing to the Minister for Planning, John Rau, seeking his input to any changes."

Mike Davidson, who owns Wind Machines, said he has sold three wind turbines to householders in the past 18 months.

"At present solar panels are a better deal because they are cheaper and have a feed-in tariff," he said.

"But if the State Government offered feed-in tariffs for wind it would spark interest," he said.

- with David Nankervis

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Should this loophole be closed?

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