

Plans 'premature'

By **MADLINE HEALEY**

THE Alpine School has "jumped the gun" with plans to build a rural learning centre in Glenormiston, according to South West Institute of TAFE chief executive officer Joe Piper.

The TAFE uses the former college for agriculture and horse management courses.

Mr Piper said the management of the land hadn't been decided beyond the end of this year.

"At this stage the property is still in the ownership of the University of Melbourne," he said.

"South West TAFE has a two-year lease and until such time as the ... ownership is finalised we find it premature for the rural learning centre to claim a parcel of land within the college."

Mr Piper also thought the college should use Glenormiston's existing buildings rather than build a new \$3 million facility.

"I believe the current Glenormiston facilities could be adapted to meet the needs of the rural learning centre and do not support the duplication of educational facilities unnecessarily."

Mr Piper said he did support a rural learning centre being established in the south-west.

Member for South West Coast Denis Naphine agreed it was a waste of taxpayers' money to build new facilities in Glenormiston when the existing facilities could be used.

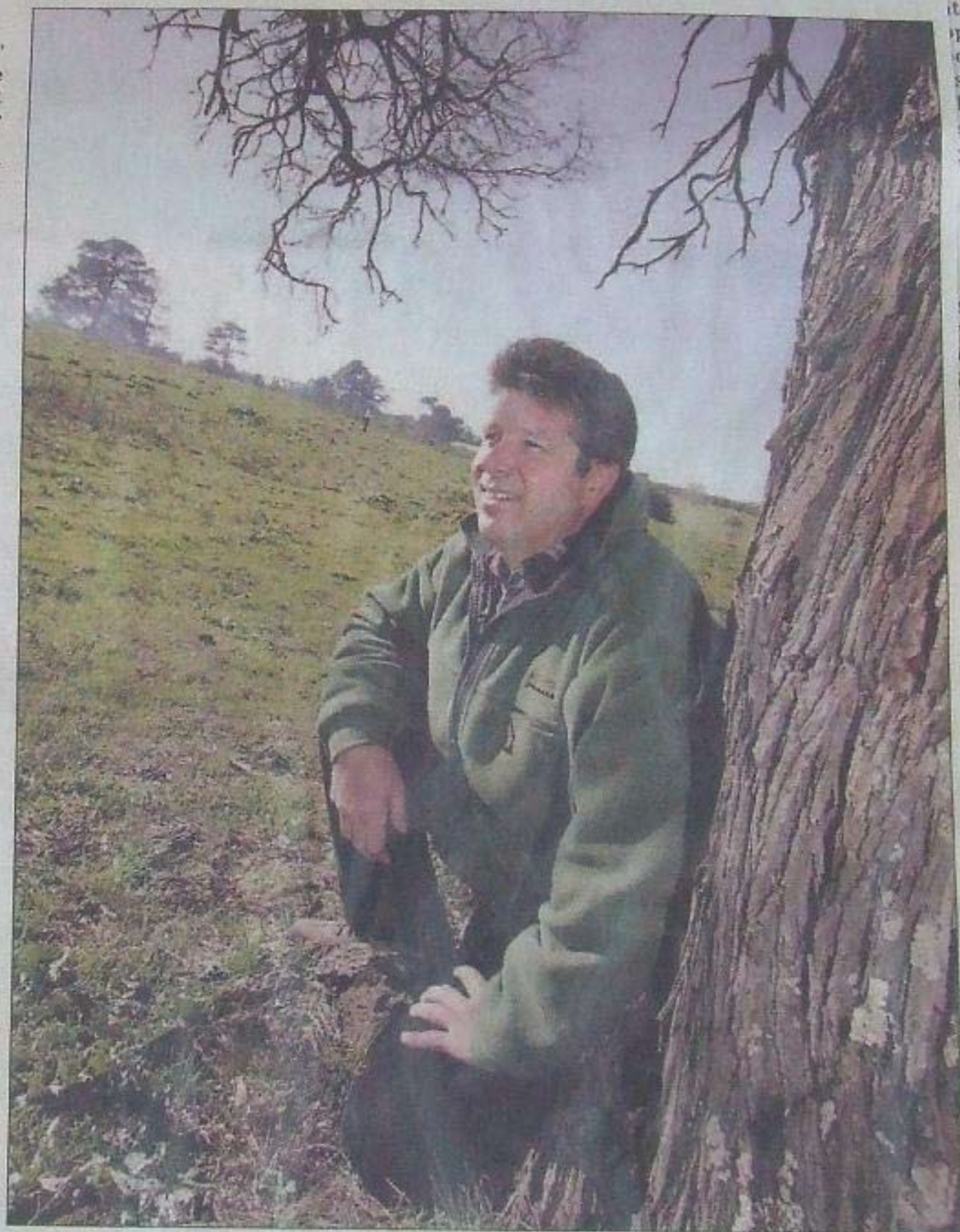
"There's bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen facilities, classroom. It's all there and it's grossly underutilised and yet the Government is now prepared to ... duplicate these underutilised facilities a kilometre away," he said.

"This project will be great for young people, great for the region and it should be good for Glenormiston but it won't work if they build a separate facility."

The Alpine School's principal, Mark Reeves, said the approval for the school had come from the Minister for Education Lynne Kosky who had visited the site last year.

He said the new building was necessary because the existing buildings wouldn't suit the rural learning centre.

"The buildings are 30 years old. They were built for tertiary or post-compulsory education.



Alpine School principal Mark Reeves.

070525DW05. Picture: DAMIAN WHITE.

"We're building a residential year nine program. They don't suit the needs of a contemporary year nine education program," he said.

A Department of Education spokeswoman said the University of Melbourne had leased the land to the South West In-

stitute of TAFE until the end of 2007. At the end of 2007 Melbourne University will return the land to the state.

Future use of the site would be determined following a public expression of interest process, which will be released shortly.