

Farming turned into game

By NICK TROMPF

BULBOURNE University has devised a computer game which, it claims, will soon help wheat farmers grow better crops. Agricultural scientists and engineers have developed *The Wheat Game* as part of a project funded by the Wheat Industry Research Council.

The game uses computer graphics to display crop growth, rainfall, sunshine and soil conditions. It takes into account the type of wheat and when it was sown. Decisions the farmer makes affect the computer as they would a real

farmers say farmers "plant" a crop on the computer and see whether it thrives or fails within minutes, learning what is right or wrong.

The game accommodates variables including weather, crop history, paddocks used, cultivars sown, date of sowing, management of the crop, water-holding properties and other characteristics of the soil.

One of the developers, Glyn Rimmington, said: "The *Wheat Game's* ability to generate its own weather is notable in that it can mimic the variability of the weather at a specific site.

Its value is that it exercises the player to a wide range of conditions, offering an opportunity to try



Bewitching sight for air modellers

THE crowd gasped as a black witch zoomed out from behind trees — on a powered broomstick.

The witch model was performing in the novelty aircraft event at the Doncaster Aero-modellers' Club 12th annual display at Bulleen yesterday.

It was designed for a novelty event about eight years ago by Lilydale club member Max Chadwick.

He retired his witch a few years ago, but Steve Green and Cliff Melver of the Doncaster club brought it back to life at the display last year.

At the controls this

By CHRISTINE MCTIGHE

year was Steve Green, 29, of Doncaster, the Australian Aerobatics champion at the age of 16, and now an aerial photographer and trainer of hopeful aero-modellers.

He has been building model aircraft for 15 years.

"I don't have any ambition to fly the big ones," he said, when asked if he'd like to become a "real" pilot.

"This is just a hobby, but for me it's also a business.

"I'll be flying models for life."



• This witch (top) ruled the skies at Bulleen, and Steve Green (above) shows it off.

Pay row may hit schools

By SUE HEWITT

VICTORIA'S government schools are threatened with industrial trouble as teachers step up their fight for a 4 per cent second-tier pay rise.

The government and teacher unions are deadlocked over the rise, which would cost \$52 million for 45,000 teachers.

The Teachers' Federation of Victoria will decide on an industrial and political campaign on Friday.

The federation president, Ms Jan Dillow, said yesterday industrial action was "on the cards".

She said teachers had waited a year for the rise and the government was demanding unreasonable compromises in return.

The government failed to respond to a March 3 deadline on proposals from the federation, an umbrella group for three teaching unions covering primary, secondary and technical teachers.

Ms Dillow said the government was demanding the \$52 million pay rise be cost-neutral and wanted union trade-offs on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

It would not recognise substantial savings made in the major reorganisa-

tion of schools which increased teachers' involvement in extra-curricular activities and school committees, she said.

"Industrial action is on the cards," Ms Dillow said.

"It's not that we want, but in the circumstances teachers are entitled to the 4 per cent rise and have been waiting for a long time to get it.

"We think the (union) proposals are perfectly adequate — similar ones have been accepted in the public sector, but the government demands cost neutrality.

"We and the government are a long way apart in agreement."

Ms Dillow said the government wanted teachers to take more classes, but this would create an unacceptable workload.

Teachers were already working extra hours on school committees for proposed amalgamations, curriculum and individual school budgeting programs.

Ms Dillow said teachers also rejected the government's proposal to reduce the number of emergency and relieving teachers.

New Person to Person