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Lindon Thompson
Merimbula Big Game & Lakes Angling Club Inc.
Merimbula Artificial Reef Letter of Support

Dear Lindon,

Sapphire Coast Tourism (SCT), the peak tourism body for the Bega Valley Shire in NSW, would like to support your application to locate an artificial reef in Merimbula Bay.

Overall domestic Tourism is more critical to our economy than our South Coast neighbors. Our location eliminates large day trip and short stay volumes like those visiting destinations closer to Sydney. Hence we rely significantly on domestic visitors from Melbourne, Regional VIC, and Regional NSW & ACT. Alternate outbound and QLD markets are continually challenging our domestic return.

‘Experience and product development’ is the key to maintaining the domestic market and competing with outbound and QLD markets. Experiences are also the main motivator for existing visitors to stay longer. And the artificial reef will be a key motivator to increase length of stay.

Importantly, research tells us fishing is a key experience for domestic visitors to the whole of Sapphire Coast with data showing fishing likely being 5 times more the motivator to visit here than other destinations; Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay, Coffs and Gippsland.

If I could share some statistics...

The economic benefit from tourism to Sapphire Coast is estimated at \$600,000,000, twice that of any other individual industry in our region.

Merimbula visitation itself represents around 40% of the overall economic contribution

There were 890,000 visitors to Sapphire Coast in 2015. Of which 500,000 were domestic overnight visitors.



Around 42% visitors are motivated by Fishing as an activity compared to an 8% benchmark of comparable regions (Coffs, Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay, Gippsland).

Half of all domestic visitors were from Victoria, and 59% of Victorian visitors were from Melbourne.

Merimbula was the most popular stop for all visitors from all states with the majority of visitors from Victoria.

We look forward to a successful claim on the artificial reef for Merimbula and working with you on a sustainable and prosperous outcome.

Please feel free to pass on my details to anyone wishing to discuss this further.

Kind Regards,

General Manager - Sapphire Coast Tourism LTD

References. Destination Visitor Survey Program (DVS) - Tourism Research Australia (part of the Department of Resources Energy and Tourism).

Available her http://www.sapphirecoast.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/FINAL-Sapphire-Coast-full-VPS-Report_FINAL.pdf