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REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENQUIRY

The optimum development of the Australian tourism, leisure and recreational sectors is hampered through the lack of reliable "mobile telephone services", at water level/pool level in the Murray Darling Basin System, particularly in the Murray Basin, along the River Murray west of Shepparton, to and including the Lakes Alexandrina and Albert and the Coorong.

The situation also hampers search and rescue arrangements for tourists and visitors and emergency management operations.

This submission is written by the Boating Industry Association (BIA) of South Australia, the peak industry body in South Australia representing the Recreational and Light Commercial Boating Industry.

The submission represents the views of sister organisations based in New South Wales and Victoria, the parent (national peak) body, the Australian Marine Industries Federation Ltd (AMIF) and the Marina Association of Australia Ltd, (MAA) the peak body representing the national interests of the marina industry.

The subject is **Telecommunications from/to craft operating on inland waters throughout the Murray Darling Basin System, including the Lower Lakes and Coorong.**

At the State Level:

The Boating Industry Associations exist in:

- Queensland,
- New South Wales,
- Victoria,
- South Australia,
- Western Australia and the
- Northern Territory.

I am the General Manager of the Boating Industry Association of SA, and represent the National Network of BIAs in areas of "telecommunications".

At the National Level:

Through the BIAs and the AMIF the national membership is approximately 2 000 companies based throughout Australia.

There are 600 000 recreational craft operating in Australian waters.

The Marina Association of Australia Ltd (MAA) comprises the interests of 400 Marinas across Australia.

The writer represents the General Managers/CEOs, on a National Basis for AMIF and is the General Manager of the MAA.

A "quick description" of a BIA,

... Lets use the BIA of South Australia (BIASA) as the example:

The Boating Industry Association of South Australia Inc. (BIASA) is one of six stakeholders of the national body, the Australian Marine Industries Federation Ltd, the peak industry body in Australia for Recreational and Light Commercial Boating.

All members are required to abide by a strict Code of Ethics.

The Code contains issues connected with commercial dealings and also in guaranteeing "best practice" in matters affecting safety and the natural environment.

Our members are diverse in their interests:

- Boat and Engine Retailers and Service Agencies
- Boat Builders
- Industry Development
- Industry Training
- Naval Architects,
- Industry Environment Group,
- Sports Group,
- Charter/Hire Operators,
- Chandlery Suppliers
- Heritage/Historic Wooden Boats,
- Houseboat Hire,
- Marina Operators,
- Sail Industry,
- Technical Equipment Development

The essential objective we have is to maintain/improve the sustainability of the Recreational and Light Commercial Boating Industry South Australia.

BIASA promotes holiday and recreational boating and related marine/riverine activities as safe, environmentally sound and responsible past-times for all members of the community.

In the conduct of our daily business, in SA, BIASA shares constructive relationships with organisations from all three levels of Government

BIASA has regular contact with organisations positioned within a wide range of portfolios:

- Aboriginal Affairs,
- Consumer Affairs,
- Environment and Heritage,
- Education,
- Emergency Services,
- Local Government,
- Police,
- Premier and Cabinet,
- Primary Industries,
- Recreation and Sport,
- Tourism,
- Treasury,
- Transport and
- Water Resources.

BIASA provides policy advice and consulting services to a number of these agencies.

Through the Adelaide support is provided to a number of public and private sector working parties and policy groups including several tourism bodies at Local, State and National levels and a range of other policy groups that enfold:

- Ramsar,
- Fishing Councils: recreational and professionals,
- Several Regional Consultative Committees,
- Bureau of Meteorology Working Parties,
- National Marine Safety Commission,
- PWC (Jet Ski) Consultative Committees,
- Port and Harbours Committees,
- One Marine Protected Area Pilot Group,
- This MDBC Community Reference Committee Panel, and the
- Boating Facility Advisory Committee whose role is in planning and development of capital facilities/projects in inland and coastal waters.

The Recreational Boating Industry is of considerable interest to the tourism, leisure and recreation sectors.

To illustrate the impact that our activities have on the economy (and particularly Regional SA), I have extracted some data from PIRSA.

Primary Industry, Resources South Australia, PIRSA: recently finalised a review of the impact of Recreational Fishing on South Australia: Paper No. 36 "South Australian Fisheries Management: Review of Recreational Fishing in South Australia: A Management Strategy For The Sustainable Development Of Recreational Fishing In South Australia".

Paper No. 36 provides an interesting set of statistics/ a profile of the recreational fishery in **South Australia**:

Number of Recreational Fishers over 5 years who fish at least once annually: 453 000

Number of fishers living in the metro area: 268 000

Extrapolation #1: 185 000 fishers reside in country/regional areas

Proportion of metro based fishers who fish mainly in country regions: 68%

Extrapolation #2: 182 200 metro based fishers fish in country regions

Proportion of country based fishers who fish mainly in the country: 93%

Extrapolation #3: 7% of country based fishers fish in metro areas: 12 950

This table suggests that in SA alone, over 180 000 metropolitan based fishers visit country venues and nearly 13 000 country based fishers visit metropolitan areas at least once each year in pursuit of their recreation.

That is; a total of nearly 200 000 recreational fishers "take a "short/s" holiday (to adopt SA Tourism Commission nomenclature) annually.

The largest proportion of these 180 000 (90%) are annual visitors to country localities in SA.

From our own research, we believe that the direct, positive economic impact delivered to country communities in South Australia exceeds \$100 Million annually.

A very significant figure.

The economic impact of these "holidays" in South Australia is enormous: probably the essential sustenance for many coastal/River/Lakes communities.

In the Murray Darling Basin, the value of agricultural production now exceeds \$10 billion, mining \$3 billion, tourism and leisure around \$6.5 billion, electricity \$0.3 billion and commercial fishing and other industries \$2.5 billion.

In SA, on the River and Lakes we see, from a boating and recreational perspective, 1Million holiday days taken annually.

In the Basin this could be as large as 3.5 to 4.0 Million holiday days taken annually.

Best estimates suggest that this all adds up to an economic bounty of \$6.5 Billion annually.

Along the Murray's 2500kms that is over \$7000/Km/day.

The industry requires sound telecommunication services to sustain every day purposes but such services are essential to tourists, leisure seekers and charter and hire operations.

The largest and most progressive element of my own organisation, BIASA, belongs to the "On Water Tourism Division".

The objectives and the work of this group closely mirrors those of a number of vital Ministries/Agencies:

1. Environment,

2. Tourism,
3. Recreation,
4. Economic Development,
5. Emergency Services,
6. Transport,
7. Regional Affairs,
8. Local Government and
9. Small Business.

The "economic dividends" or the "economic stimulus" delivered by the "Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Sectors" are substantial, particularly to rural and regional communities, and we pursue this in our endeavours.

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The situation also hampers search and rescue arrangements for tourists and visitors and emergency management operations.

Services are required to waterside shacks and holiday homes and to vessels plying the waters of this "inland highway".

We would be pleased to provide additional information as required.

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and
General Manager
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For the
Boating Industry Associations of Victoria and New South Wales
and
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