



Mr Peter Tegart
General Manager
Bega Valley Shire Council

email: petertegart@begavalley.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Tegart

At its meeting of 21 November 2011 the Sapphire Coast Tourism Board requested I write to Council regarding the development application for the establishment of a wind farm in the southern precincts of Twofold Bay at Eden.

I am sure Council's planning advice will accommodate the objective in the Lower South Coast Regional Environmental Plan (No. 2) to maintain the visual quality of the coastal environment. Other representations may address issues associated with wildlife impact, town viewscape amenity and noise. The Board however wishes to comment on the issue of the economic value to tourism of coastal environment visual quality.

The region is increasingly presented in the international and national tourism marketplace as part of Australia's Coastal Wilderness. The brand backing this placement relates to the increasingly very rare commodity of undeveloped forested coast line as an attraction to a national and world market whose own coast lines have been heavily impacted by developments.

Whilst the mainstay of our local tourism industry has been beach recreation associated with the domestic market our distinctive coastal landscape selling proposition will become increasingly important. In NSW the projected inbound tourism visitor nights will exceed domestic tourism nights in 2016 (Tourism Forecasting Committee) and we will increasingly rely on our distinctive market position. There are encouraging signs in our tourism statistics that we are strengthening in this area ahead of our competitors.

Eden is the centre point of Australia's Coastal Wilderness which extends from Montague Island to Lakes Entrance. The town's economic life has faced its challenges in recent years but the tourism potential associated with the Brand is significant. With tourism the mainstay of the Shire's economic activity there is a strongly compelling economic argument to very carefully avoid actions that will damage or degrade the Brand.

The wind farms have the potential to be a significant industrial intrusion in an otherwise minimally disturbed landscape, particularly as viewed from the adjacent national parks and from offshore.



The Ben Boyd National Park is state priority area for nature tourism product development by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It makes little economic sense to compromise the natural landscape values associated with that priority. The value to the local economy, including employment, surely places a high priority on the protection of these values.

Any short term economic gain associated with the construction of the wind farm may be strongly eclipsed by the economic gain in preserving the tourism brand.

The same economic argument regarding protection of coastal landscape values could be applied to other shire coastal areas. The precedent set by the wind farm development could have quite serious implications.

The Board trusts that Council will weigh up these critically important economic issues in its assessment of the development application.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Leaver". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a circular scribble.

Bruce Leaver
Chair
Sapphire Coast Tourism Ltd

22 November 2011