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NATIONAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS SCORES A GOAL FOR THE RIVERLAND

The Riverland has seen an influx of champion hockey players and enthusiasts this week, held at Glassey Park in Berri. The national event has attracted over 1000 visitors to the region, giving local businesses a boost over the typically quieter winter months. All three Riverland councils partnered to fund the Championships event.

Berri has seen the biggest economic impact from the event, with most players and teams staying the duration of the eight-day championship in nearby accommodation. Local retailers noticed an influx of foot traffic over the first weekend of play, with Riverland Farmers Market manager Patria Kohler saying “the market was buzzing at about 10am when some of the teams dropped in – they said they’d tell everyone to come back to the market next week, it’s great for the town”. Teams and spectators are also staying in nearby towns, spreading the economic impact across the district.

Economic impact analysis, conducted through the RDA Murraylands & Riverland event impact calculator, estimates the National Hockey Championships will contribute more than \$425,000 to the region. Event organisers expect over 1000 people to use the recently upgraded Glassey park facility on this coming Saturday to either participate or watch the finals.

Commenting on the recent grants secured to upgrade the facility, Mayor Peter Hunt said Council is excited to see that improvements to the Glassey Park facilities have resulted in attracting such a high quality sporting event to the region. “Council congratulates the Riverland Hockey organising group for staging this unique event and I look forward to joining the community and watching some high quality hockey over the weekend” he said.

While in the region, several teams have visited local schools, demonstrating the added benefit of sports tourism to the local community. Berri Barmera Council Tourism & Economic Development Advisor Ella Winnall said “With sport being such an integral part of the fabric of Riverland life, the community should feel proud to be able to host sporting events which bring benefits to tourism and locals. The district has some of the best community sporting facilities in the regional South Australia, and when these are combined with the capacity and calibre of the tourism offering we have – we are well placed to continue to attract these types of events.”

For Further information contact:

Mayor Peter Hunt
Berri Barmera Council
mayorhunt@bbc.sa.gov.au
0408 821 922