Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0313-5926(16)30130-8
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2016.10.001
Reference: EAP 133

To appear in: *Economic Analysis and Policy*

Received date: 18 August 2016
Revised date: 10 October 2016
Accepted date: 11 October 2016

Please cite this article as: Prayaga, P., Estimating the value of beach recreation for locals in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Australia. *Economic Analysis and Policy* (2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2016.10.001

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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Estimating the value of beach recreation for locals in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Australia

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Abstract

Although more that 86% of Australia's population live less than 100kms from the coast and spend or invest a lot of money to gain access to the beaches, little is known about the intensity of their use and the economic value of beach recreation. Very few studies estimate recreational use value of beaches particularly for those living close (less than 5km) to the beach (locals) because they typically have dissimilar visit patterns and low or sometimes zero travel costs because their proximity to the recreation site. This study uses finite mixture models to estimates the economic value of beaches for locals in the Capricorn Coast region of the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland. Results indicate that there are differences in values for beach use among the locals depending on their visit patterns. This information is essential when evaluating policy options associated with beach protection and management.

Key words: recreational beach use; count data; travel cost model; latent class models; Great Barrier Reef

Acknowledgements

The research reported in this paper was carried out as part of the author's doctoral study. Special thanks to John Rolfe and Natalie Stoeckl for their support and advice during the course of this research as well as Bill Greene. Funding provided by the 2006 Queensland Smart State PhD funding Program. The author would also like to thank an anonymous referee for constructive feedback.

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