

Parliamentary Officer
Environment, Resources and Development Committee
Parliament House
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

28 June 2019

RE: INQUIRY INTO RECYCLING

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group (trading as 'Spencer Gulf Cities') is a long-standing alliance of the Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla Councils, with a focus on promoting the growth and sustainability of the Upper Spencer Gulf region.

Our region, and our communities of Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie are facing a significant economic transformation.

Substantial investment in renewable energy generation, mining and minerals processing, arid agriculture, Defence and tourism is providing our region with opportunities from which we hope to build on our competitive strengths and become cleaner, more innovative, liveable and economically diverse.

The high percentage of energy intensive enterprises in the Upper Spencer Gulf is fast becoming a competitive advantage for the region in attracting significant investment in renewable energy and low emissions technologies.

The transformation of the Port Pirie smelter with potential to process e-waste and Whyalla steelworks with a focus on increasing production, sustainability and 'green steel', and remediation of the Port Augusta powerstation, significant investment in new renewable energy technologies, Australia's first arid horticulture operation, ongoing interest in algae-based technologies, development of a green organics composting and processing facility and a focus on more sustainable processes by nearby mining operations all offer the potential for the Upper Spencer Gulf to play a substantial role in developing a circular economy for South Australia.

This potential has been more sharply brought into focus following restrictions by China and now other countries on export markets for recyclables and the growing economic and ethical momentum for processing our own waste and recycling streams locally.

The Upper Spencer Gulf's current industrial transformation provides a sound base from which to attract service providers and new entrants to the region to leverage this existing critical mass and investment. The existing transport infrastructure across the region, including road, rail, sea and airport facilities to cater for the industrial operations in the region, also reinforces the Upper Spencer Gulf as an ideal location for additional manufacturing and re-processing operations.

Furthermore, with the Upper Spencer Gulf, like Northern Adelaide, being a State Government designated 'Economic Participation Region' under the State's Industry Participation Policy, there is potentially further incentive and opportunity to promote new and enhanced economic activity in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

With this context in mind, we are currently preparing a Regional Waste and Circular Economy Strategy that will identify:

- The potential waste and recycling market infrastructure and market development opportunities in the Upper Spencer Gulf.
- Specialisation opportunities across each of the three cities
- Potential for integration of circular economy research or modules within degrees offered through Uni Hub Spencer Gulf
- Considerations for each of the councils for managing the waste and recycling volumes for the projected increase in workers and residents from the planned industry growth (e.g. steel works, mining operations, renewable energy, E-waste processing) in the region.
- How the existing focus on local employment and economic benefit can be further leveraged to encourage additional recycling markets and local reprocessing and also capture increased use of local recyclable materials or recycled-content products through procurement.
- The role of Council waste contracts and services in facilitating future circular economy enterprise within the USG

Whilst clearly there are many opportunities for our region to engage more strongly in a circular economy, it relies heavily on support – and investment – by Government.

Whilst we are extremely disappointed at the latest increase in the solid waste levy and the inimical, disingenuous manner in which this was announced, we are even more frustrated that – given the precarious situation around waste and recycling globally and locally - there is not a stronger reinvestment of this funding to support purposes for which it is intended.

We are seeking that a significant portion of the Waste to Resources fund be reinvested into initiatives in the Upper Spencer Gulf that actually facilitate and support recycling, reprocessing and the development of a circular economy that will assist in the long term diversification and sustainability of our region and maintain South Australia's prominence as a leader in waste management and resource recovery.

For further information, please contact our Executive Officer, Anita Crisp on 0427609404 or email: ceo@upperspencergulf.com.au.

Yours sincerely



Mayor Leon Stephens
Chair