



Spencer Gulf Cities Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025

Our purpose

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group Inc. (trading as Spencer Gulf Cities (SGC)) is a strategic partnership between the cities of Port Pirie, Port Augusta, and Whyalla. SGC works collaboratively across all levels of government, industry, and community to promote regional prosperity and growth.

SGC aims to capitalise on the opportunities and strengths of the region by:

- Strongly advocating
- Positively promoting
- Actively cooperating

Our vision

Spencer Gulf Cities is a region with

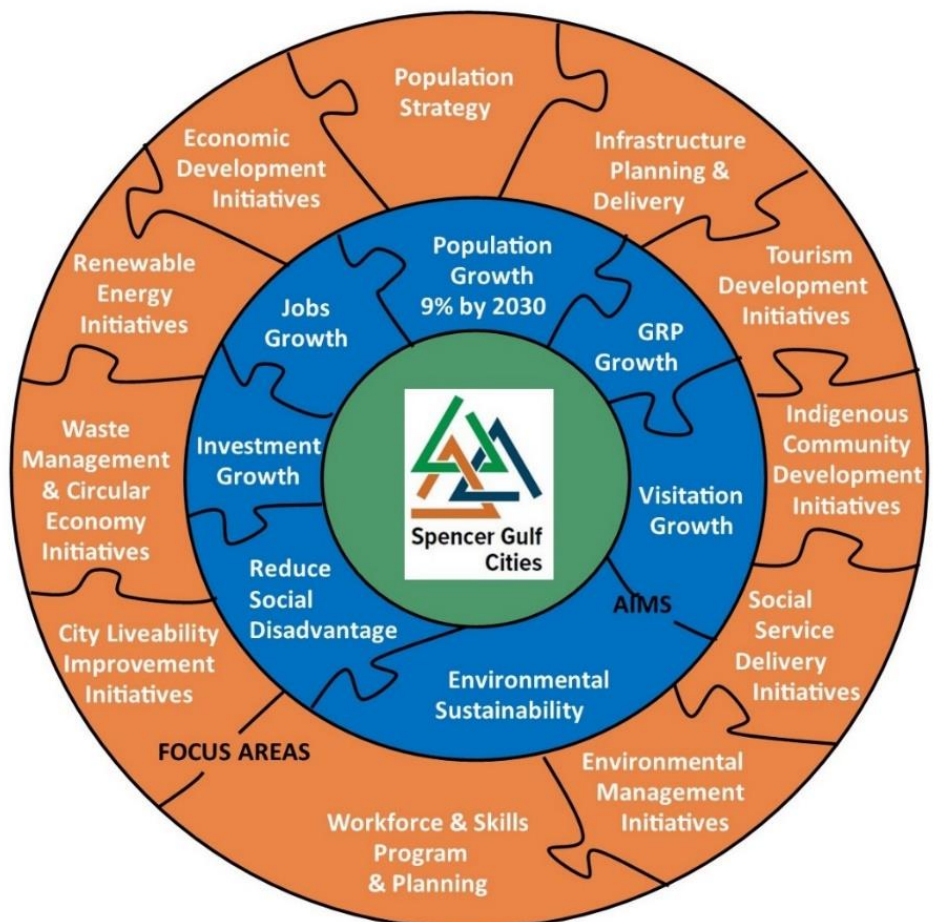
- ❖ Cohesive, vibrant and growing communities
- ❖ A prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy
- ❖ An attractive, quality lifestyle surrounded by stunning natural landscapes

Our aims and key focus areas

The core aim of this document is to:

- ❖ provide a framework for successful collaborative delivery of population, Gross Regional Product, investment, and visitation growth for the region
- ❖ promote environmental stability; and
- ❖ assist in reducing social disadvantage for the Upper Spencer Gulf region.

Key focus areas have been identified for action to deliver on each of these aims.



Foreword

The Upper Spencer Gulf (USG) region is home to over 53,000 people, representing 3.1% of the total South Australian state population (2018). The USG regional economy is steadily transforming with new employment and business investment in industries such as tourism, food and agribusiness, energy and mining, health and medical industries and defence.

The region is in the unique position of having a significant pipeline of both public and private sector planned economic investment across a range of sectors (estimated at \$15bn and 9000 jobs) that has the capacity to deliver significant population growth. Our vision is to unlock that growth, whilst also improving the liveability of our communities and the health and wellbeing of our people.

This plan focuses on a suite of inextricably linked strategic priorities that will chart a course for Spencer Gulf Cities and guide our work over the next four years. The direction outlined will guide our activities and collaboration and is aimed at:

- Increasing population (9% growth over 10 years)
- Increasing Gross Regional Product, investment, and visitation
- Promoting environmental stability
- Assisting in reducing social disadvantage

Spencer Gulf Cities looks forward to working with regional stakeholders and government to deliver this plan.

Mayor Leon Stephens, Chair

Our Strategic Plan in context

This plan was developed by the SGC Board following consultation with its local government members, regional stakeholder partners and the South Australian Government. Importantly, it aligns with and continues to support the relevant objectives of local, regional and South Australian Government plans and targets.

Collaboration

The SGC member Councils have a key role to play in collaborating with the government, private, and community sectors, to deliver on identified priority growth issues, capitalising on core roles and responsibilities and spheres of influence. Outlined below are key focus areas to guide the activation of Spencer Gulf Cities Strategic Plan in collaboration with governments and industry sectors.

Strategic Priority 1: Population Growth

Strategic intent: SGC recognises the strong potential for population growth driven by economic development opportunities.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
9% population growth for the region (stretch target for achievement over 10 years)	In collaboration with Uni Hub Spencer Gulf and Regional Development Australia Yorke & Mid North, develop initiatives that capitalise on the Regional Australia Institute 'Regional Activators Alliance' national awareness campaign that is focused on driving regional population growth.
	Develop, in collaboration with the South Australian Government, a Population Growth Strategy for the USG region that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Establishes a 9% population growth stretch target for achievement over 10 years○ Focuses on the potential to attract workers and their families from interstate given the strong record of South Australia in managing COVID-19 and the decline of some industries interstate impacted by the virus○ Reflects the provision of services, housing and other support to new residents, workers, and businesses

Strategic Priority 2: Image and Liveability

Strategic intent: SGC faces at times a negative image of the region given the degree of heavy industry activity and is committed to reimagining the future of the region through capitalising on its:

- globally significant mineral and renewable energy sources,
- natural biodiversity
- landscapes; and
- honouring its industrial and cultural heritage.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Increase in population year-on-year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address the image and liveability challenges and opportunities for the USG region, including promotional campaigns linked to jobs and tourism in partnership with industry and other governments
Increase in GRP & jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capitalise on opportunities arising from the Regional Australia Institute <i>Regional Activators Alliance</i> ○ Promote and support access to education and arts and culture that underpins community wellbeing

Strategic Priority 3: Infrastructure

Strategic intent: The region has large transport hubs including road, rail, and airports along with a number of ports and jetties. The importance of ensuring that this infrastructure is working efficiently to support the export and import sectors and the movement of people and industry are critical to the growth of the region.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Delivery of identified priority infrastructure to support growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborate with government on infrastructure upgrades through alignment and adoption of long-term infrastructure plans, including engagement in decision making ○ Clarify the important role that SGC can play in supporting government and the private sector, especially regarding community engagement ○ Support funding for upgrades through private sector and government funding

Strategic Priority 4: USG Tourism Growth Plan

Strategic intent: The USG region has significant potential to grow tourism and the visitor economy, capitalising on its significant natural biodiversity and landscapes and honouring its diverse industrial and cultural heritage.

Significant tourism attractions such as the giant cuttlefish, new jetty at Whyalla, historical sites, Arid Lands Botanic Gardens, Remarkable Southern Flinders (Gorges SA), fishing, indigenous arts, culture, bush tucker experiences and capitalising on Port Augusta as the gateway to the Outback of South Australia are unique to the region.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Increased tourism visitation, length of stay and spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborate on the development of a USG Tourism Growth Plan with tourism operators, government agencies and surrounding councils ○ Promote tourism trails and experiences through council resources ○ Work with prospective developers to upgrade accommodation facilities and support private sector investment

Strategic Priority 5: Social Services

Strategic intent: Parts of the USG region experience significant social and labour market disadvantage that impacts on capacity and capability of the regional workforce and on community health and wellbeing. SGC aims to work collaboratively to reduce social and labour market disadvantage for the region.

Context: SGC recognises the myriad of service providers from government and the community sectors offering support in the delivery of social services and acknowledges the duplication of effort and resources occurring at times and the confusion this causes for clients.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Reduction in social and labour market disadvantage for the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore the formation of partnerships in key areas where providers identify duplicated effort, opportunities for better resource use and/or inefficiencies in meeting client needs ○ Support workforce planning and development projects to meet skills needs and to create job opportunities ○ Support specific programs for Indigenous Australians living in and visiting the region

Strategic Priority 6: Economic Development Projects

Strategic intent: There are a range of projects in the USG region that require further work to facilitate and secure the opportunities for growth. Examples of these are: renewable energy projects, indigenous tourism development, defence plans for growth, mining and manufacturing and hydro projects. Opportunities exist for local contractors to expand to support government and other projects. Securing work for local contractors and attracting new businesses will be important activities along with the provision of housing and social services for workers and their families.

Context: There are nearly 22,000 workers in the region and over 2,000 small businesses, contributing over \$2.3 billion in Gross Regional Product and equating to just over 3% of South Australia's gross state product (2016). Industries contributing to GRP in the region are mining, manufacturing, utilities (electricity generation), agricultural production, education, and health with a significant reliance on single industries dependent on global influences.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Increased GRP & jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with government and the private sector to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ prove up the potential for these projects, and others, to provide jobs in the region ▪ establish strategies to support local contractors to be ready to undertake additional work and ensure new business attraction occurs in targeted areas ▪ ensure social and other service needs are in place to support the consequential population growth

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recognise the unique developments in the region by collaborating with industry and government to reduce the cost and environmental impacts and find innovative solutions such as in the area of lead abatement in Port Pirie and creating circular economy opportunities in waste management for industries in the region
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Strategic Priority 7: Government Land

Strategic intent: The use of government land should be better aligned with growth opportunities in the SGC region such as:

- co-location of local and state government agencies, including those delivering community services
- where appropriate, preserving heritage significance and combining this with tourism and history promotion
- the provision of affordable housing for current and new workers

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Maximise economic and community outcomes from government owned land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Engage with the relevant agencies in the USG region to identify their needs and opportunities for co-location, for example in Whyalla where redundant school sites will result from the new school development o Initiate proposals for consideration by government which provide community benefits, tourism potential and the provision of affordable housing

Strategic Priority 8: Education and Workforce

Strategic intent: Provide advocacy and support that facilitates the filling of current and future regional jobs and supports local people into learning and education pathways aligned with regional industry skills needs and with reducing current labour market disadvantage.

Context: The region has a strong presence and is well placed to support student populations at primary, secondary, TAFE and University levels. This is further enhanced through the Uni Hub Spencer Gulf (initiated by SGC with significant Australian Government funding) which engages with a range of universities across Australia in providing a platform for the support of local and international students.

What success will look like	Key Initiatives
Workforce capacity and capability is able to deliver economic growth Improvement in key labour market performance measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Advocate for delivery of regional workforce and skills projects and resources to facilitate traineeship, apprenticeship and academic opportunities aligned with skills needs now and into the future o Continue to collaborate with government in funding to support workforce development, service delivery and assisting local businesses to access skilled workers aligned with changing economic opportunities o Better connect young people in schools with future opportunities through school-based traineeships / apprenticeships in collaboration with industry, providing enhanced career guidance aligned with future job opportunities o Better utilise current government service providers and enhance their offerings to align with current and future needs in training and education in the region

Resourcing of initiatives

Successful collaboration between the USG with governments, industries and the community sector to deliver the initiatives outlined, will require efficient and effective communication, commitment and resourcing by recognising individual and complementary roles of the various stakeholders.

How we will work:

- ❖ Collaborate on projects where the value of the role councils play in community engagement, economic and community development, and local regulation will deliver efficiencies
- ❖ Identify the range of partners that should be engaged that already receive government funding to support the region and clarify appropriate future roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Explore areas where revenue raising opportunities of councils can be enhanced through targeted reviews of key opportunities

Review and evaluation

Spencer Gulf Cities will review progress towards the strategic priorities at each Board meeting. The plan will be formally reviewed at least annually outlining progress towards the nominated targets.