



Collaboration Continues on the Multi-Billion Dollar Growth Opportunities in Upper Spencer Gulf

20 June 2023

Intergovernmental collaboration continues between State and Local Government in an effort to progress commitments made for the growth of the Upper Spencer Gulf region through infrastructure, business, health and social support.

The most recent meeting took place on 9 June, and was attended by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Geoff Brock, Damien Walker (Chief Executive of the Department of Premier & Cabinet), Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens (Chair of the Spencer Gulf Cities), Whyalla Mayor Phil Stone and Port Augusta Mayor Linley Shine, CEOs Peter Ackland (Port Pirie), Justin Commons (Whyalla) and John Banks (Port Augusta), as well as the Minister's Chief of Staff and the Executive Officer of the Spencer Gulf Cities.

This was the second State/Local Government meeting held as part of the commitment by the State Government to support the Spencer Gulf Cities tackle the implications of the multi-billion-dollar growth opportunities in the region. Quarterly meetings are being held with invites extended to relevant Ministers, key State Government Chief Executives, and local regional representatives. The first meeting was held in March.

Issues canvassed at the meeting were:

- Recent State Government trade missions to Japan, South Korea and Germany where hydrogen and decarbonisation industry development and challenges and opportunities in the Upper Spencer Gulf
- Workforce and skills development to meet current and future job opportunities in the region for those at the coal face of supporting workers, businesses and the community
- Regional and land use planning activities underway to support identification of land for green and other industry developments, housing, and the delivery of social infrastructure and services to support a growing region
- Preparation of information documents to attract and support investment to meet future growth challenges

The meeting heard presentations from Anita Kuss (CEO, Uni Hub Spencer Gulf) and Lisa Brock (Federal Government Employment Facilitator for the Mid North) and Sally Smith (Director, Planning and Land Use Services from the Department of Trade and Investment).

One of the key outcomes from the meeting was to finalise joint State/Spencer Gulf Cities documents - co-ordinated through the Chief Executive of the Department of Premier & Cabinet and other key Chief Executives and Council CEOs - to promote and encourage continued investment in the region through industry and businesses, including housing developers.

Other outcomes were:

- Finalising an Upper Spencer Gulf planning issues document drawing on the 3 separate Regional Plans that the Cities are in, to present the picture for the Upper Spencer Gulf (Port Pirie, Whyalla, Port Augusta) and guide future development decisions regarding housing

diversity, industrial and employment land availability, social support infrastructure and services along with other related matters;

- Preparation of a Federal Advocacy Briefing document to enable a 'joined up' discussion between the Federal, State and Local Governments regarding future development and growth of the Spencer Gulf region
- Addressing skills development issues such as:
 - an enhanced presence by TAFE as a training provider;
 - accessing skilled trainers;
 - targeted programs to reverse long term unemployment trends in the region which are higher than average SA unemployment rate;
 - co-designing of programs in the region;
 - addressing costs of delivery of training in the region.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for 7 September where update reports will be presented on the above issues that will continue to be addressed in the interim.

QUOTES:

Minister Brock

"It is imperative that this collaborative approach is undertaken to bring State and Local Government cohesion for the growth of our Upper Spencer Gulf region.

Working as a team to understand and drive the appropriate priorities for our regional communities ensures we are listening to the community, working with stakeholders and influencing the prosperity of the Upper Spencer Gulf which is a key economic contributor to the state."

Mayor Stephens

"These intergovernmental meetings are important to the region. Our second meeting built on our first meeting in March. I look forward to seeing the progress on outcomes and commitments made. Our Councils stand ready to support the growth in the region, through collaboration which is commensurate with the influence and resources that our councils can bring to the table"

Mayor Shine

"There is much to be achieved and a key focus is making sure that the social infrastructure and services are front of mind as the growth in the region occurs. These quarterly meetings are a key vehicle to making sure this happens. Industry growth only thrives and works if the community is brought along on the journey and sees the direct and indirect benefits from it"

Mayor Stone

"As well as the growth expected across the region, Whyalla is on the cusp of generational change and growth, courtesy of the State Government's Hydrogen Jobs Plan and GFG Alliance's green-steel projects. These opportunities don't come along often so it's critical that our communities and businesses prosper through short, medium and long-term planning, that places this growth front of mind in our intergovernmental discussions. This will also be pivotal to the projects succeeding, by ensuring adequate social planning and infrastructure is in place as growth occurs. Whyalla City Council is ready to play its part alongside Port Pirie and Port Augusta Councils to assist government and private enterprise in their ventures"

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