



## **UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP**

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### **“Arid Innovation” Pitch for Upper Spencer Gulf**

18 March 2016

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Upper Spencer Gulf leaders have pitched for the region to become a hub for 'Arid Innovation', building on the Sundrop farm expansion, growing interest in new renewable energy technology in the region and the Nyrstar transformation project.

The call came as Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson, Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde and Upper Spencer Gulf Executive Officer Anita Crisp met with Treasurer and Energy Minister Tom Koutsantonis, Tourism, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell, Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation Kyam Maher, Transport and Infrastructure Minister Stephen Mullighan and Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ian Hunter at the recent 'Country Cabinet' visit to Port Augusta.

The delegation received a positive hearing from Agriculture Minister Leon Bignell in seeking State Government support to rebrand the Upper Spencer Gulf as the home of 'Arid Innovation'.

The Group was particularly keen to promote to the Minister the potential of the Upper Spencer Gulf to support more value-added agriculture and intensive horticulture, and develop a strong local research presence to develop local skills and research into new, sustainable methods and technologies

“Our region is going through some hard economic times at the moment, but we have some great opportunities for growth into the future”, said Port Augusta Mayor, Sam Johnson.

“We already have some fantastic, innovative business and research operations in the Upper Spencer Gulf, for example Sundrop Farms and the new Sterile Insect Technology Research facility in Pt Augusta, Wilson Pastoral's saltbush pellet plant near Port Pirie, Muradel's biofuel research and one of the world's largest producers of pharmaceutical grade beta-carotene being produced by Betatene near Whyalla”.

Following the meeting with Minister Bignell, the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group will now work with the South Australian Government through their Upper Spencer Gulf Taskforce, Councils and Regional Development Australia to develop the concept further.

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Photo: Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde and Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson represented the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group at a meeting with Minister Leon Bignell recently.

