

### **SGC Mayors ask – what more can we do to support our children and young people?**

The Spencer Gulf Cities (SGC) Mayors joined with the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and invited Commissioner Helen Connolly, Commissioner for Children & Youth to a Forum held in Whyalla on 23 July to identify ways to support children and youth in their communities. The Forum resulted from initial conversations between Mayor Stephens (Port Pirie) and Mayor Shine (Port Augusta) and was supported by Mayor Stone (Whyalla).

Specifically, the question on their minds was “can we do more for our children and youth?”

Commissioner Connolly took participants through various findings of workshops and discussions held across the state with children and youth and revealed that our regional young people have unique issues in comparison to Adelaide based young people when it comes to:

- Concerns about climate change and cost of living
- Having things to do on the weekends to keep them engaged and entertained
- Accessing transport to events and activities
- Attaining the level of education they desire for careers locally without having to leave their towns to gain educational qualifications
- Feeling safe in their communities
- Contributing to their communities
- Being asked about how they feel and what they want in their lives to grow and prosper

She spoke of increasing pressure on schools to provide breakfast to students and the changing nature of the family home and broader parental arrangements.

A clear message from the Commissioner was know what you can do for kids in your communities and do that well and at the same time understand what needs to be done by other levels of government and hold them accountable to ensure regional kids are getting the support they need

Issues discussed by the Mayors and CEOs present centred around continuing to have and enhance:

- Community infrastructure and recreational facilities and making sure they are fit for purpose
- Engaging with young people about their ideas and aspirations for their local communities
- Learning from each other about projects and programs that can be put in place and where funding might support ongoing programs
- Better understanding the age groups of youth and children in the areas and projections for the future
- Advocating for programs and activities of the other levels of government to be better targeted to needs and be “place based”

On behalf of the 3 Mayors in the Spencer Gulf, Mayor Stephens, Chair of the SGC, said “the session was terrific. It gave us a chance as Mayors and CEOs to hear about issues being faced in various communities and strategies Councils are using to address them. There was tremendous alignment from among the Mayors about our need to support our children and youth and that a combined

effort and approach would serve to create a better future for our region's children and youth. These young people are our future and we need to continue to invest in them."

End

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