

“ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE”

FUTURE ASSURED FOR SA NORTHERN CITIES



12 August 2025

Spencer Gulf Cities of Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Whyalla are set for a resurgence of industrial development, new jobs and a fast-growing regional education precinct.

In a joint statement, the cities' three mayors – Linley Shine, Port Augusta; Leon Stephens, Port Pirie also Chair of SGC; and Phill Stone, Whyalla – said they believed that as one of SA's most vital regional economic generators, the signs were clear for a growing and prosperous future.

As chair of SGC, Mayor Stephens said that it had already been acknowledged much of SA's future prosperity would rely on the three cities and regional mining opportunities.

“We certainly see our region as an economic powerhouse for both SA and the nation,” Mayor Stephens said.

Government and private investment in northern areas mining developments, support for essential heavy industry in Whyalla and Port Pirie, and the opening of a new technical college at Port Augusta, all present great opportunities with more jobs on offer in both the short and long-term, according to the mayors.

These include:

- Formation of the Upper Spencer Gulf Intergovernmental Group which meets quarterly, is chaired by Minister Koutsantonis, with the mayors and CEOs of the three cities, and Chief Executive of the Department of Premier and Cabinet also members of the Group.
- Government restructuring and preparation of Whyalla One Steel for sale and further investment as a strategic national asset for Australian made steel.
- Government support to international metals producer Nyrstar, ensuring ongoing operations in Port Pirie are maintained while planning towards a significant re-build of the facility.
- Opportunities and planned development of copper mines in northern areas of SA – relying heavily on the SGC as service centres to their requirements.
- A resurgence of community and other private development – eg childcare centres in Whyalla, and retail development in Port Augusta.

- Recent and proposed wind and solar generating infrastructure.
- Expansion of education facilities – eg opening of the new Port Augusta Technical College, ongoing course inclusions at the UniSA Whyalla Campus, opening of the Spencer Gulf Jobs and Skills Hub, additional fee-free courses through TAFE SA, and continual growth opportunities through Uni Hub Spencer Gulf.
- Release by the Government of the Upper Spencer Gulf Workforce Strategy following consultation with local business, industry and the Workforce Advisory Group (formed through the Upper Spencer Gulf Intergovernmental Group) – playing a key role alongside other stakeholders in supporting the Strategy’s implementation.

The mayors said that while there were still challenging times ahead for all three cities, there was already a groundswell of optimism towards the future.

This was no more obvious than at the recent annual Tactic Conference and Trade Expo, hosted in Port Augusta, which attracted more than 700 delegates from throughout the region, SA and interstate.

An Upper Spencer Gulf Workforce Summit – held in conjunction with the conference – also brought together government, industry and regional stakeholders to discuss significant employment opportunities facing the region.

Mayor Stephens said the three cities had never worked closer with a unified and committed goal to improve and create benefits for the cities and their residents through a “very tight and cohesive” hard working regional body.

“We have a fantastic relationship as mayors which is reflected in our ability to passionately work together, while attracting the attention of State and Federal Governments to maximise our opportunities.

“Just ‘watch this space’ for the next instalment of regional development in the Spencer Gulf Cities,” Mayor Stephens said.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:

Port Augusta:

The new Port Augusta Technical College provides modern facilities for hundreds of school students each year, with on-site accommodation, to train with employers for careers in key regional industries.

Already full with more than 200 enrolled students from a wide regional cross section who will study for careers that match workforce demands in:

- Civil, resources and infrastructure
- Cookery and tourism
- Health and social support
- Multi trades

Open to students studying at local schools, along with those in the Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, Mid North, Far North and APY Lands.

Port Pirie:

The Nyrstar support package comes at a time of extremely challenging global market conditions and demonstrates the strategic importance of the Port Pirie operation.

The funds will also be used for feasibility studies into the production of critical metals to expand to antimony (used in electronics) and bismuth.

The SA and Federal Government support package sets Port Pirie up for a prosperous future.

Between the Port Pirie and Hobart smelters, Nyrstar employs 1,400 direct workers and supports 6,600 indirect jobs. There is still a journey ahead to tackle challenges – particularly coming out of China – but the future is now much more optimistic and reassured.

Whyalla:

More than 15 national and international parties have passed the final expression of interest phase for the Whyalla Steelworks as a positive sign for its transition to new ownership and the future of sovereign steelmaking. Indicative bids will now be solicited from shortlisted parties with the government objective being to transition ownership to a new credible owner who can invest in Whyalla's future.

Whyalla's regional airstrip has just been upgraded at a cost of \$30million to cater for larger passenger aircraft serving both Whyalla and the region, funded by the three levels of government – Federal, State and Whyalla Council, and project managed by Council.

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