

Expressions of Interest

Project Team - Upper Spencer Gulf University Study Centre

Student and Industry Engagement; Media and Marketing Support; Campus Development

Closing Date Monday 4th June 2018

For further information, please contact Anita Crisp: 0427609404 or email: ceo@upperspencergulf.com.au

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Upper Spencer Gulf is in the midst of transitioning from a traditional heavy industry and manufacturing base to a cleaner, more diverse and sustainable future that takes advantage of its proximity to some of the most significant mineral and renewable energy resources, natural biodiversity and landscapes in the world.

The region is seeing rapid growth in areas such as renewable energy, arid agriculture and innovation, mining services and processing, Defence, intermodal transport and logistics and event, cultural and marine-based tourism. This economic transformation is underpinned by recent major initiatives such as:

- construction of Australia's first concentrated solar thermal power plant near Port Augusta, along with a number of other renewable energy initiatives
- expansion and modernisation of the Whyalla steelworks
- transformation of the Port Pirie smelter into an advanced multi-metals and e-waste recovery facility
- expansion of the Cultana Defence Training Area
- commercialisation of Sundrop Farms' arid-land horticulture operation
- resurgence in mining, including expansion of Olympic Dam and construction of Oz Minerals' new copper and gold mine and proposed processing facility
- completion of the national "Sterile Insect Technology" Facility

The region, particularly the catchment around Port Pirie and Port Augusta, has limited face-to-face support options for higher education, which will be critical to developing a strong, locally skilled workforce to underpin our future growth.

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group Inc. (trading as 'Spencer Gulf Cities') is a long-standing alliance of the regional cities of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla. For several years, the Group has been working with a range of local industry, education and government partners to develop a new model to deliver higher education and research opportunities, pathways and partnerships, tailored to the specific needs and situation of the region.

The Community Owned Tertiary Education Centre (COTEC) model is a university study centre concept that is rapidly gaining momentum across regional Australia.

The COTEC, or Study Centre provides a higher education demand aggregation, brokering and coordinating service across multiple institutions. Facilities are owned and operated within the community, rather than by any single educational institution. Local Centre staff work directly with students, University academics and administration to provide operational support such as student enrolment, logistics, pastoral care, tutorials and administration, along with partnership development.

The Upper Spencer Gulf University Study Centre will be established with a campus in Port Pirie and Port Augusta in the first instance, to meet the growing education needs of the population and the increasing need for skilled workers as the economy transforms from traditional manufacturing into emerging industries. The objectives of this initiative will be to:

- remove a key limiting step to economic growth in the region by linking prospective students with the needs of local industry and access to educational courses delivered by the partner educational institutions in the region;
- stimulate demand for higher education by the local population to meet the need for skilled workers in the region;
- provide better options for people living in the region to enrol in tertiary education without having to leave the region to build our own skilled and flexible local workforce that stay in the region, making it more resilient to changes in local economic conditions;

- provide industry with a skilled local workforce who stay in the region because of their social links to the local community;
- grow a pool of professionals from within the region to ensure a competitive, vibrant and self-reliant economy and community.

The USG COTEC/University Study Centre is a partnership of the three city councils of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla, education providers University of Central Queensland, University of Adelaide, Flinders University, Academy Curio and TAFE SA as well as industry, education and government organisations.

Existing, underutilised facilities will be leased and refurbished for the purpose of the Study Centre, consistent with the requirements of a higher education facility. A student support model will be adopted based on the approach that has worked well in other regions, with a strong emphasis on up-front marketing to rapidly stimulate demand for student services and achieve financial sustainability within three years. The model has the following features:

- *Distance with assistance:* Students studying remotely get support and tutoring face to face and through state of the art video-conferencing.
- *Campus life:* Creation of a welcoming meeting place for a community of learners to meet, share experiences and information and motivate each other to remain committed to and excel at their studies.
- *Industry connection:* Connecting student to local businesses and government agencies to build the workforce required for a changing regional economy and provide pathways from education to employment.
- *Try before you buy:* An innovative approach to giving students in the region a chance to sample higher education while still at school to overcome their fear of the unknown and encourage more 'first in family' students to enrol.
- *Career upgrade:* Courses will be offered at a sub-degree, degree and post-graduate degree level, linked to pathways from VET and Foundation courses.
- *Demand stimulation:* The key challenge to achieving a successful outcome from this COTEC is to change the culture and expectations of the population in the region to have a greater aspiration for tertiary education and the resulting career options.

Spencer Gulf Cities has recently secured Australian Government funding through the Upper Spencer Gulf Regional Jobs and Investment Package to implement this initiative and is now seeking expressions of interest from enthusiastic individuals across a variety of skill sets to be part of the project team and help lead the successful establishment of the Upper Spencer Gulf University Study Centre.

ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM

To help successfully establish the Upper Spencer Gulf University Study Centre, a range of resources will be required for the project team over the next two years, including student and industry engagement; media and marketing support and; campus development.

A highly flexible approach to the engagement of these skills is offered, with options for full or part time, independent contractor, employee or consultancy basis, depending on the preference and best fit for successful candidates.

The project team will work with the Spencer Gulf Cities Executive Officer and Project Steering Committee to deliver the following project milestones and activities:

1. Student and Industry Engagement

To achieve success, the University Study Centre must quickly build the demand for higher education in the region from both potential students and potential employers across the catchment area, including Port Pirie, Port Augusta and surrounding districts including the Southern Flinders, Mid North and Yorke Peninsula and Far North.

There will be an immediate need to work directly and closely with secondary schools, businesses, regional agencies and industry groups from the region to quantify the level of interest and barriers to tertiary entry for prospective students, and the skills/courses required by employers.

The focus will include both school leavers as well as career-upgrade aspirants who wish to undertake post-graduate qualifications.

Support will be required to directly engage secondary schools, determine employer qualification gaps, work with higher education partners to confirm courses for delivery and support development and implementation of course marketing.

Specifically, there will be a need for direct liaison with key leaders in public and private secondary schools to promote the Study Centre and secure students for the first intake in February 2019 and subsequent intakes. Securing a strong pipeline of students for the Study Centre will be fundamental to its long-term success.

Engaging businesses and industry groups from the region to quantify the undergraduate and post-graduate skills/courses required by employers will also be critical. This will ensure the Study Centre delivers higher education courses that directly reflect the needs of local employers. This can be supplemented by research already undertaken by the University of Canberra, regional agencies and industry groups to quantify the level of interest and barriers to tertiary entry for prospective students.

Once the higher education gaps are identified, support will be needed to work with Education partner institutions to finalise the package of associate degree, bachelor degree, post graduate courses to be delivered through the USG University Study Centre from 2019. The focus will be on marketing particular courses that are in demand by employing organisations in the region, however the final list of course offerings will be demand driven, based on industry feedback and actual expressions of interest and enrolments by students in the region. The COTEC will not duplicate existing courses being delivered (to industry satisfaction) in the region but will address existing gaps and lack of flexibility in pathways into Higher Education.

Support will be required to work with University partners to finalise arrangements for delivery of student scholarships. There will also be a need to work directly with businesses and employers in the region to secure sponsorship and scholarships to the Study Centre to assist in meeting their skilled workforce needs. Confirming and maximising industry scholarship support will be crucial in underpinning the long-term local employment pipeline for local University Centre graduates.

In addition to offering undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses, the COTEC will also foster networks and partnerships between universities, researchers and industry, including supporting local access to postdoctoral research, intern placements, researcher exchanges, visiting specialist academic experts and facilitating access to demonstration and research pilot sites.

2. Media and Marketing Support

Media and marketing support will be critical to helping coordinate and oversee implementation of engagement and marketing packages for courses to be delivered through the initial year at Port Pirie and the second year at Port Augusta.

Support will be required to manage key media contracts for television, radio and newspaper advertising, the construction, content and management of a website, social media, search engine optimisation and monitoring of performance across all media. Working in partnership with the higher education partners, there will also be a need for development of promotional banners and brochures, supporting career and campus open days, coordinating inspirational stories of success from study to careers published in school newsletters and local papers.

3. Campus Development

A number of suitable University Study Centre sites have been identified for both Port Pirie and Port Augusta, with preliminary discussions with owners undertaken.

A key project milestone will be to finalise design, upgrade and fit-out of sites to offer fit-for-purpose facilities and equipment that can support mixed delivery platforms for tertiary education, including student study areas, tutorial room, high speed internet and wi-fi access, kitchenette, administration and student support officer offices.

LODGING YOUR SUBMISSION AND FURTHER INFORMATION

To register your interest in being part of the project team for this exciting initiative, a current CV and written submission that clearly demonstrates ability and experience should be submitted, along with salary or fee structure, preferred method and timing of engagement, current referees and any other assumptions or requirements considered relevant.

Expressions of interest should be provided in a single electronic file (in .doc, .txt or .pdf format) to ceo@upperspencergulf.com.au. Files must not exceed 2 mB in size.

For further information, please contact Ms Anita Crisp, Executive Officer of Spencer Gulf Cities on: 0427609404 or email: ceo@upperspencergulf.com.au

Expressions of Interest close 5.00pm, Monday 4th June 2018.