

Mr Jeremy Conway
Chief Executive Officer
Infrastructure SA
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22 August 2019

RE: TRANSFORMING THE UPPER SPENCER GULF

Dear Mr Conway,

Thank you for meeting with me recently to discuss a range of strategic infrastructure needs for the Upper Spencer Gulf, as highlighted in our *Regional Transport Infrastructure Plan* and *Transforming the Upper Spencer Gulf* report. An electronic copy of both of these documents has been provided to your office.

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group (trading as 'Spencer Gulf Cities') is a long-standing alliance of the Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla Councils, with a focus on promoting the growth and sustainability of the Upper Spencer Gulf region.

Our region - and our communities of Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie - are facing a significant economic transformation. Substantial investment in renewable energy generation, mining and minerals processing, arid agriculture, Defence and tourism is providing our region with opportunities from which we hope to build on our competitive strengths and become cleaner, more innovative, liveable and economically diverse.

Optimising our strategic transport infrastructure across the road, rail, air and sea port network will be a critical part of ensuring the full benefits of this economic growth can be realised and sustained.

To secure the future of the Upper Spencer Gulf, we must also ensure we have the enabling services and to underpin our economic growth, including access to higher education, improving city liveability, protecting our natural assets and landscapes and strengthening regional decision making and governance.

A particular administrative barrier is the current splitting of the three Upper Spencer Gulf cities across three different State Government regions. This dilutes the significant economic, industrial and structural issues facing the Upper Spencer Gulf, increases duplication of resources and hampers the ability to take a more strategic view of development across the three cities, which have strong commonality in industry, growth, land-use and community. A summary highlighting some of these considerations is attached, for information, along with copies of relevant correspondence to various agencies and inquiries.

There is no doubt the Upper Spencer Gulf will play a significant role in supporting the South Australian Government's growth agenda. We seek a strong partnership that addresses the cross-region, cross-agency barriers that currently exists to ensure the most efficient and coordinated approach to help us realise this potential.

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

Yours sincerely



Anita Crisp
Executive Officer



Briefing for Premier, the Hon Steven Marshall MP 2nd July 2019, 12.00 noon, Parliament House

1. Background – Spencer Gulf Cities

- 20 year alliance between Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla – forum for collaboration and political advocacy on issues of strategic importance to the Upper Spencer Gulf.
- The three cities have strong industrial, cultural, environmental and economic connections and a dual role as a service centre for rural hinterlands.
- Key focus area is supporting the economic transition of the Upper Spencer Gulf - 'Transforming the Upper Spencer Gulf' our guiding document.

2. Regional Growth – Skills and Decentralisation

- USG will require skilled migration and active growth strategy tailored to meet and manage future workforce needs, particularly during construction phase.
- Need ongoing focus on diversifying economy to decrease vulnerability to single employer and manage beyond the construction boom – more public sector jobs in the region will be important.
- Local access to supported higher education also critical to future skilled workforce – only 8% USG population holds degree level, compared to 18% across SA.

3. Major Development and Workforce - Case Management

- Major economic investment in mining and energy the Upper Spencer Gulf will require significant workforce and development planning to ensure flow-on impacts and any unintended consequences are managed and positive benefits are maximised.
- Considerations include: accessing workforce, accommodation, development planning processes, rating of major development, behaviour management, recreation, community and health services, traffic management, impact on existing sectors (ie tourism, defence).
- Ministers Knoll and van Holst Pellekaan supporting Kangaroo Island Commissioner, Wendy Campana to work with Councils to provide cross-agency coordination – September dinner.

4. Strategic Transport Infrastructure

- National Highway access and under-utilised rail, air and sea port infrastructure across the USG.
- Strategic transport infrastructure required to unlock development opportunities and enhance intermodal efficiencies.

5. Local Priorities

Augusta Highway Road Corridor

- 5.1 Support the duplication of National Highway One to Port Augusta, with the ultimate goal of achieving a full duplication from Port Wakefield to Whyalla.
- 5.2 Priority support for roadwork modification to provide access to the proposed Pirie Meats multi-species abattoir from Wilkins/A1 Highways, estimated at \$2.5 million.
- 5.3 Priority support for redesign and construction of turning lanes and lighting on the Augusta Highway at Warnertown, at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million to remove current restriction to industrial expansion and development.
- 5.4 Priority support for upgrade to Augusta Highway corridor through Port Augusta township (Victoria Pde, Railway bridge) to improve traffic flow and amenity of Port Augusta entrances.

Regional Airports

- 5.5 Support for consistency in security for regional airports based on safety, not seat counts or weight limits that differentiate against carriers.
- 5.6 Support of \$25 million to enable Whyalla to upgrade and strengthen its ageing runways to ensure future demand can be addressed.
- 5.7 Support to upgrade Port Augusta airport lighting to facilitate night landings required to underpin greater access to locally-based mining workforce.

Port Access

- 5.8 Continued support to ensure that third party access is granted and maintained at the Whyalla Port owned by GFG Alliance.

Tourism and Recreation

- 5.9 Support to refurbish Port Augusta jetties and wharf infrastructure to a standard that enables ongoing community and tourist use.
- 5.10 Support for a new \$45 million consolidated sport and recreation facility in Whyalla to service increasing community demand.
- 5.11 Support of \$12 million for the 'Gorges SA' initiative in the Southern Flinders Ranges to develop biking and walking trails on State Government land, linking Port Pirie and Melrose.
- 5.12 Support for Government partnership in Pt Augusta's Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens,

Civic and Community Development

- 5.13 Support for a remodelled, multi-agency funded "City Safe" type service within Port Augusta.
- 5.14 Support for funding towards a civic development program to assist the Port Augusta community through its economic and environmental challenges following the closure of the Northern Power Stations.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – UPPER SPENCER GULF

Summary

1. BACKGROUND

Over recent years, major investments in renewable energy, along with minerals processing, arid agriculture, defence and event tourism are providing Port Augusta and the Upper Spencer Gulf with a strong base from which to grow opportunities that help the region become cleaner, more innovative, liveable and economically diverse regional cities.

With well over \$5 billion in private investment in and around the Port Augusta district alone, development construction over the coming five year period is estimated to require a significant workforce – numbering in the thousands - ahead of gradual transition to ongoing operational resourcing levels.

2. DISCUSSION

Over coming months there needs to be a significant focus on strategies to meet the looming workforce needs in Port Augusta and the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Whilst key developers in the region have taken a pro-active lead in initiating these discussions, coordinating this incoming workforce will also need to be part of a much broader and more integrated approach to ensure flow-on impacts and any unintended consequences are managed ahead of time and the positive benefits of this significant economic growth can be maximised.

Considerations will need to include:

Workforce

Ensuring timely access to the right mix of skilled migration to meet immediate and specialised construction requirements that aren't available locally, recognising there may be a need for FIFO and international visa workers, but also considering the impact on existing employers in the region who are likely to lose skilled staff to new developments, along with both short and longer term opportunities for training and upskilling local workforce, targeting both school leaver and career-upgrade levels.

Accommodation

The social and economic impacts of various workforce accommodation options must be investigated, including construction of new residential dwellings vs temporary worker camps and whether these facilities should be located on site or integrated into the local community vs encouraging additional motels/cabin parks vs currently unoccupied private dwellings vs utilising capacity across neighbouring centres such as Port Pirie and Whyalla.

Recreation

Understanding the likely temporary and permanent workforce requirements and preferences will be critical in enabling local authorities to undertake informed forward planning to ensure adequate recreational opportunities are available for both workers and their families, including parks and open spaces, gymnasiums, sporting facilities, arts, libraries, walking/bike trails, public toilets etc. This is an important consideration to improving the aesthetics, functionality and liveability of Port Augusta and the Upper Spencer Gulf and attracting more permanent residents to the region.

Policing and Behaviour Management

The substantial influx of both temporary and permanent workers to Port Augusta and the Upper Spencer Gulf will invariably bring potential for anti-social behaviour, with additional local resourcing required to encourage positive civic behaviour and maintain law and order as the changes in community dynamic and population growth occur in the region.

Community Services

Forward planning for appropriate levels of health/medical, childcare, family support, schooling and tertiary education services will be required to allow both public and private providers to respond in enough time to ensure availability for workers and their families and encourage more permanent relocation to the region.

Communications

Potential congestion, service coverage, cost and quality for both mobile and internet services will require analysis to ensure both continuity for existing businesses and residents, along with affordable and reliable service for new developments, workers and families.

Traffic

Transport authorities will need to understand the likely impact of workforce movements in order to plan for increases and directional flows of commuter and development construction and maintenance traffic, develop new funding models to adequately upgrade and maintain local and arterial roads and airport facilities, provide adequate local carparking and facilitate options for both intra-city public transport and USG inter-city shuttles between Port Augusta – Port Pirie – Whyalla.

Impact on Existing Industry Sectors

Compounding the issues expected during the forthcoming extended construction phase, the workforce, services and infrastructure impact of existing sectors must also be thoroughly analysed and managed. Port Augusta and the Upper Spencer Gulf relies heavily on periodic peaks of inflows associated with Defence training exercises at Cultana, nature-based tourism/travel season and major events/conferences. Careful attention must be given to minimise any economic or workforce displacement of these important sectors.

Whilst individual developments will clearly need to undertake their own strategies to fulfil their workforce needs and maintain an advantage over their competitors, the sheer scale of development activity in and around Port Augusta and the high risk of adverse impacts to the local community and existing economic sectors will necessitate a strong level of collaboration both by industry and with all levels of Government.

3. NEXT STEPS

Government Coordination

Ongoing discussions have been held with the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group and South Australian Government with regards to appointment of the 'Commissioner for Kangaroo Island' as a single point of contact to provide coordination of input by agencies. Working under the Minister for Planning and Local Government, the Commissioner has approval to work with Spencer Gulf Cities to progress this government engagement and coordination in the short term.

Whilst often a case manager is appointed from one agency to undertake this coordination work, the advantage of the Commission model is that it has statutory authority underpinned by legislation to specifically:

- improve the management, co-ordination and delivery of infrastructure and services provided by government agencies
- ensuring co-ordinated delivery of infrastructure and services to businesses and residents

Joint Planning Board

Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla Councils are currently considering whether to progress establishment of a Spencer Gulf Cities Joint Planning Board under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

At present, the three cities are split across three different State Government planning regions - Port Augusta within the Far North, Port Pirie in the Mid North and Whyalla in the Eyre Peninsula planning region. This dilutes the significant economic, industrial and structural issues facing the region, increases duplication of resources and hampers the ability to take a more strategic view of development across the three cities, which have strong commonality in industry, land-use and community.

A Joint Planning Board will enable the three cities to be formally recognised as a single group for the purpose of land-use and development planning and consolidate focus and effort by agencies on the specific future needs of the three cities taking into account their commonality of land-use, economy and social structure and their strong reliance on the marine environment of the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Hon. Stephan Knoll
Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government
Minister for Planning
Parliament House
GPO Box 572
ADELAIDE SA 5001



Post: PO Box 677, PORT PIRIE SA 5540
Email: ceo@upperspencergulf.com.au

20 April 2018

RE: RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANNING REVIEW

Dear Minister,

The Upper Spencer Gulf is a region in the midst of significant economic transition. Our communities of Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Whyalla lie in close proximity to some of the best and most diverse renewable and low carbon energy resources in the world.

We are very proud to be home to a number of new and innovative large-scale renewable energy initiatives that will help to secure the economic future of our region and energy security for the state.

Our Councils and communities have a strong track record of encouraging and supporting renewable energy developments, however in recent times this has, unfortunately, been tarnished by a lack of appropriate safeguards for neighbouring residents and limited Council engagement and jurisdiction.

With this rapid emergence of new renewable energy technologies, we consider it timely to seek an urgent and thorough review of planning assessment, approval and compliance processes so our communities have confidence in well-planned, orderly development that is underpinned by appropriate protections for nearby residents and landuses.

Key issues include:

- Development of comprehensive, world-leading assessment guidelines and safeguards for new large-scale renewable energy technologies including solar PV farms, solar thermal, pumped hydro, batteries and hydrogen.
- A review of windfarm assessment, including explicit protection of key iconic landscapes such as the Flinders Ranges from future windfarm development.
- Stronger local input and control over renewable energy development assessment conditions of approval, monitoring and compliance, including traffic, dust and noise management.
- Support for local Councils to rate major developments such as wind and solar farms on their capital value.

The multi-billion dollar investment in renewable energy provide our region with a strong base from which we can continue to build on our comparative strengths, as we pursue opportunities that help us become cleaner, more innovative, liveable and economically diverse regional cities.

We are very keen to work with the new Liberal Government to make sure that our development approval, monitoring and compliance regimes are comprehensive and up to date so nearby residents, communities and environments aren't adversely impacted and our transition to a renewable energy hub for South Australia is a world-leading, positive and fruitful experience.

Spencer Gulf Cities representatives would be very pleased to provide further information and discuss this matter with you further. Meeting arrangements can be made by contacting me directly by email: sam.johnson@portaugusta.sa.gov.au, or Melanie Jenkins on: 86419144 or email: ceo@portaugusta.sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Mayor Sam Johnson
Chair



NORTHERN AREAS
COUNCIL



Mr Michael Lennon
Chair
State Planning Commission
C/- Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure
GPO Box 1815
ADELAIDE SA 5001

1st July 2019

RE: FLINDERS RANGES LANDSCAPE PROTECTION ZONE

Dear Mr Lennon,

The Port Augusta, Flinders Ranges, Mount Remarkable, Northern Areas and Port Pirie Councils all share the Flinders Landscape Protection Zone – which explicitly aims to preserve the natural and rural character and scenic features of the iconic Flinders Ranges landscape.

It is with considerable alarm that we note that, as part of the State Planning Reform, the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure are proposing to remove the landscape protection zone and revert it to a general rural zone.

This is particularly disappointing given that, whilst the Government is clearly seeking to dilute the significance of the Flinders Ranges landscape, the protections for the Adelaide Hills Face Zone, Barossa and McLaren Vale Character Preservation Zones, are proposed to remain in place.

The Flinders Ranges is an important natural landscape that must continue to be protected from inappropriate development into the future, but also allow consideration to expand compatible, low impact landuses.

For example, the Mid North and Upper Spencer Gulf is experiencing significant growth in renewable energy generation. To date this has focussed on windfarms, which have a high visual and community impact, however there is increasing interest in other technologies including solar PV, solar thermal, pumped hydro and utility-scale batteries.

There are also a range of other potential industrial developments including mineral and agricultural processing facilities, transition of the northern forests, expansion of the Mount Remarkable National Park, additional nature-based tourism ventures and inclusion of the Flinders Ranges on the world heritage list.

Ahead of implementation of the statewide planning and design code for regional Councils at the end of 2019, we seek support from the Planning Commission to urgently convene a local Working Group comprising staff and elected members from each of the five Councils and DPTI representatives, to review the Flinders Landscape Protection Zone.

The purpose of this Working Group will be to identify the current and future development pressures on the Landscape Protection Zone, determine appropriate and acceptable forms of future development, assessment criteria and character protection.

The region has some exciting economic growth opportunities before it however we must not undermine the significance of the Flinders Ranges landscape to the cultural, social, natural and economic values of the region.

We seek your support for this request and would be happy to meet with you to discuss how this can best be progressed as a matter of urgency.

To make arrangements for the Working Group, or to discuss this matter further, please contact Rosalie Jones on: 8633 9777 or email: rjones@pirie.sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Mayor Peter Slattery
Flinders Ranges
Council



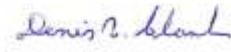
Mayor Brett Benbow
Port Augusta City
Council



Mayor Phil Heasilip
District Council of
Mount Remarkable



Mayor Leon Stephens
Port Pirie Regional
Council



Mayor Denis Clark
Northern Areas
Council

cc: Hon Stephan Knoll, Minister for Planning
Hon Dan van Hatt Pellekaan, Member for Stuart
Hon Geoff Brock, Member for Frome

Parliamentary Officer
Environment, Resources and Development Committee
Parliament House
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

28 June 2019

RE: INQUIRY INTO RECYCLING

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group (trading as 'Spencer Gulf Cities') is a long-standing alliance of the Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla Councils, with a focus on promoting the growth and sustainability of the Upper Spencer Gulf region.

Our region, and our communities of Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie are facing a significant economic transformation.

Substantial investment in renewable energy generation, mining and minerals processing, arid agriculture, Defence and tourism is providing our region with opportunities from which we hope to build on our competitive strengths and become cleaner, more innovative, liveable and economically diverse.

The high percentage of energy intensive enterprises in the Upper Spencer Gulf is fast becoming a competitive advantage for the region in attracting significant investment in renewable energy and low emissions technologies.

The transformation of the Port Pirie smelter with potential to process e-waste and Whyalla steelworks with a focus on increasing production, sustainability and 'green steel', and remediation of the Port Augusta powerstation, significant investment in new renewable energy technologies, Australia's first arid horticulture operation, ongoing interest in algae-based technologies, development of a green organics composting and processing facility and a focus on more sustainable processes by nearby mining operations all offer the potential for the Upper Spencer Gulf to play a substantial role in developing a circular economy for South Australia.

This potential has been more sharply brought into focus following restrictions by China and now other countries on export markets for recyclables and the growing economic and ethical momentum for processing our own waste and recycling streams locally.

The Upper Spencer Gulf's current industrial transformation provides a sound base from which to attract service providers and new entrants to the region to leverage this existing critical mass and investment. The existing transport infrastructure across the region, including road, rail, sea and airport facilities to cater for the industrial operations in the region, also reinforces the Upper Spencer Gulf as an ideal location for additional manufacturing and re-processing operations.

Furthermore, with the Upper Spencer Gulf, like Northern Adelaide, being a State Government designated 'Economic Participation Region' under the State's Industry Participation Policy, there is potentially further incentive and opportunity to promote new and enhanced economic activity in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

With this context in mind, we are currently preparing a Regional Waste and Circular Economy Strategy that will identify:

- The potential waste and recycling market infrastructure and market development opportunities in the Upper Spencer Gulf.
- Specialisation opportunities across each of the three cities
- Potential for integration of circular economy research or modules within degrees offered through Uni Hub Spencer Gulf
- Considerations for each of the councils for managing the waste and recycling volumes for the projected increase in workers and residents from the planned industry growth (e.g. steel works, mining operations, renewable energy, E-waste processing) in the region.
- How the existing focus on local employment and economic benefit can be further leveraged to encourage additional recycling markets and local reprocessing and also capture increased use of local recyclable materials or recycled-content products through procurement.
- The role of Council waste contracts and services in facilitating future circular economy enterprise within the USG

Whilst clearly there are many opportunities for our region to engage more strongly in a circular economy, it relies heavily on support – and investment – by Government.

Whilst we are extremely disappointed at the latest increase in the solid waste levy and the inimical, disingenuous manner in which this was announced, we are even more frustrated that – given the precarious situation around waste and recycling globally and locally - there is not a stronger reinvestment of this funding to support purposes for which it is intended.

We are seeking that a significant portion of the Waste to Resources fund be reinvested into initiatives in the Upper Spencer Gulf that actually facilitate and support recycling, reprocessing and the development of a circular economy that will assist in the long term diversification and sustainability of our region and maintain South Australia's prominence as a leader in waste management and resource recovery.

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

Yours sincerely



Mayor Leon Stephens
Chair

ATTACHMENT 1 – UPPER SPENCER GULF AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY POTENTIAL

****CONFIDENTIAL****

