

### **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.
- Focus areas: (1) Advocacy and promotion of the Upper Spencer Gulf; (2) Support economic transition of the Upper Spencer Gulf; (3) Foster Local Government collaboration.
- The three cities have strong industrial, cultural, environmental and economic connections and a dual role as service centres for rural hinterlands.
- Significant economic transition of the Upper Spencer Gulf underway – loss of Port Augusta coal-fired power station and new investment in renewables; sale of Whyalla steelworks; upgrade of Port Pirie smelter; expansion of Cultana Defence training area; expansion of Port Augusta prison; commercialisation of Sundrop Farms arid-land horticulture operation; resurgence in mining and processing operations; growth in event and marine tourism.
- These investments provide the region with a strong base to build on competitive strengths and become cleaner, more liveable and economically diverse regional cities.
- Must also have the enabling services to underpin economic growth - including access to higher education, improving city liveability, protecting our natural assets and landscapes and strengthening regional governance.
- Key focus area is supporting the economic transition of the Upper Spencer Gulf - 'Transforming the Upper Spencer Gulf' our guiding document - 30 strategic initiatives identified.

### **2. Regional Growth – Skills and Decentralisation**

- Strong support for decentralising population, public service and funding.
- USG will require skilled migration and active growth strategy tailored to meet and manage future workforce needs, particularly during construction phase in coming years.
- 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.
- Access to locally supported, affordable and industry-relevant vocational and higher education also critical to future skilled workforce.

### **3. “Uni Hub” Spencer Gulf**

- Lack of local, skilled workforce a substantial barrier to future regional sustainability – improving local access to higher education a key issue.
- Only 8% USG residents holds degree level, compared to 19% of SA. Only 4% undertaking university study, compared to 16% of SA.
- Traditional Adelaide based and online study failing our region - low level of internet access at home, low level of motor vehicle access, high level of socio-economic disadvantage.

- 'Uni Hub' initiative key to growing a local skilled workforce and leveraging business incubation, innovation and research within the Upper Spencer Gulf.
- Uni Hub is a 'Community Owned Tertiary Education Centre (COTEC)' – brokers university course delivery based on local industry need and face to face student and tutorial support.
- Port Pirie campus opened February 2019 with 50 students across bachelor and masters degrees, foundation and school-scholarship programs.
- Port Augusta campus to open in 2020 – over 500 student EOIs received so far, many for career-upgrade qualifications in nursing, teaching, social work, business, engineering.
- Flinders University, Adelaide University, CQ University are delivery partners. Uni SA declined to be involved.
- \$3 million Commonwealth funding has leveraged a further \$1.1 million regional, university and industry support.
- \$0 support from the SA Government compared to significant invested by NSW and WA state governments into similar initiatives.

#### **4. USG Case Management – Major Development and Workforce**

- Major investment in the Upper Spencer Gulf will require significant workforce over coming years ahead of gradual transition to ongoing operational resourcing levels.
- Understanding and coordinating incoming workforce is required to ensure flow-on impacts and any unintended consequences are managed and positive benefits are maximised.
- Considerations include: workforce recruitment and retention, accommodation, development planning and compliance, recreation, policing and behaviour management, community/health services, communications, traffic management, impact on existing sectors (ie tourism, defence).
- Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla are split across different state government regions – resulting in fragmented government decision-making and resourcing, a dilution of the significant economic, industrial and structural issues facing the region, increased duplication of resources and a restricted ability to take a more strategic view of development across the three cities.
- Working with Kangaroo Island Commissioner, Wendy Campana to provide cross-agency coordination to ensure government have a full understanding of the likely impact and needs of the USG.

#### **5. Strategic Transport Infrastructure**

- Royalties for Regions program very welcome – USG seeking focus on strategic, catalytic infrastructure, not just the backlog of road maintenance.
- Under-utilised rail, air and sea port infrastructure across the USG.
- Opportunity for expansion into significant intermodal hub for the state.
- Upper Spencer Gulf Transport Strategy identifies strategic opportunities.