

## University Study Centre Plans Progress

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The Spencer Gulf Cities Association is wasting no time progressing plans to establish a University Study Centre in the region.

The initiative recently received \$1.1 million funding from the Federal Government's *Upper Spencer Gulf Regional Jobs and Investment Package*, with Chair of Spencer Gulf Cities, Mayor Sam Johnson, saying there is a lot of work to do in a short amount of time.

"Our university partners are keen to move forward with the project – we are aiming to take students at the Port Pirie campus from 2019", said Mr Johnson.

"We will be working closely with secondary schools and local businesses over the coming weeks to identify potential students and potential employers and to then make sure our university partners offer the courses that best meet these local needs."

Mr Johnson explained the Upper Spencer Gulf, particularly the catchment around Port Pirie and Port Augusta, has limited face-to-face support options for higher education, noting this will be critical to developing a strong, locally skilled workforce to underpin our future growth.

"We have been working with a range of local industry, education and government partners for several years now to develop a new model to deliver higher education in our region and to meet the needs of our region."

Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde is also looking forward to having local options for university study, noting this was one of the key features identified by demographer Bernard Salt during his address to regional leaders in Port Pirie last month.

"Establishing a university study centre in the Upper Spencer Gulf will open opportunities for those potential students - both at school leaver and career-upgrade levels - who don't have the time or resources to move or commute to Adelaide, or who don't have a family or cultural history or affiliation with university engagement."

"One of our partners, Central Queensland University, has about thirty study centres around Australia. They understand regional communities and have a model that works. In addition, the University of Adelaide and Flinders University have a long history in our region and are already doing some great work with schools and employers."

"We are also looking at some exciting new opportunities for students to more easily move between TAFE and university study. We are really pleased this initiative has such a strong level of engagement from the higher education sector."

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