



## University Study Hub Progressing

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Plans for a university study hub in the Upper Spencer Gulf are continuing, with the Spencer Gulf Cities preparing for another funding opportunity.

Local Councils and businesses are concerned that the increasing centralisation of courses to Adelaide and the trend to online university is failing regional communities.

Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde explained the Upper Spencer Gulf has enormous economic potential but needs to grow its own local, skilled workforce to support these opportunities.

"We have had report after report warn us that the lack of technical capacity in the region is a key barrier to future growth and economic diversification", explained Mayor Rohde.

"In the Upper Spencer Gulf only 11% of adults hold an above certificate level qualification, compared to the South Australian average of 23%."

"For our region, higher education, skills and workforce development policy is letting us down."

The Councils have been working with Regional Development boards and industry leaders groups along with Adelaide and Flinders University, Central Queensland University and TAFE to develop a new model of tertiary education in the region.

"Essentially, we are looking at establishing a university study hub that provides face to face support for local students studying at various universities. Facilities are owned and operated within the community, rather than by any single educational institution".

The Councils, through the Spencer Gulf Cities Association, are currently preparing for an application to the Federal Government's \$15 million 'Study Hubs' program, designed to assist the establishment and maintenance of up to eight community-owned, regional study hubs.

"We recognise that a number of country students prefer and will continue to move to the city for their tertiary studies", said Mr Rohde.

"We also recognise that establishing a study hub in the Upper Spencer Gulf will open opportunities for the vast majority of potential students - both at school leaver and career-upgrade levels - who cannot afford to move or commute to Adelaide, or who don't have a family or cultural history or affiliation with university engagement."

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Photo: Central Queensland University Vice Chancellor, Professor Scott Bowman and Professor Drew Dawson, with Port Pirie Mayor John Rodhe and Dr Peter Munn from Whyalla inspecting potential sites for a University Study Hub in the city.

