



Loss of flagship solar thermal project leaves region reeling

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Upper Spencer Gulf leaders are reeling from the news that the flagship 'Aurora' concentrated solar thermal project will not proceed.

Reports broke on Friday that the \$650 million project planned for Port Augusta has been unable to secure commercial finance.

The news follows the release of the Upper Spencer Gulf Federal Election priorities in late March, including the call for all political parties and candidates to back a strong, credible and evidence-based national energy policy to provide stability and certainty for investment in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Chair of Spencer Gulf Cities, Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens said the announcement by Solar Reserve was a huge blow.

"It is just heartbreaking for our region. This particular technology has captured the hearts and minds of the nation and given the Upper Spencer Gulf real hope for its future beyond coal-fired power generation and traditional heavy industry."

"The community of Port Augusta were a driving force behind the project, and worked so hard for so many years to advocate for its success."

"The irony is that only the day before the news broke we were in Canberra meeting with a number of South Australian Senators and Ministers to highlight the importance of getting the energy policy settings right in order to provide certainty for investors into our region."

Port Augusta Mayor Brett Benbow said the failure of the solar thermal project will reverberate widely.

"Not only will this impact on the Upper Spencer Gulf, but there will also be flow on impacts for Adelaide based businesses who were engaged to manufacture the heliostat mirrors and other componentry for this project".

"We are one of the first regions in Australia to transition from coal to renewables. It has been an incredibly difficult journey and as we are finding out the hard way - we are not over the line yet".

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