



## Spencer Gulf Cities Host Planning Commission

12 July 2018

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Spencer Gulf Cities are this week hosting members of the State Planning Commission to highlight a number of inadequacies in current development planning for renewable energy facilities.

Chair of Spencer Gulf Cities, Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson says the Upper Spencer Gulf is shaping up to be the renewable energy capital of Australia, but the current planning and development system has simply not kept up with the scale of development.

"We fully support renewable energy, but we need to be sensible about where it happens and we need to make sure that our development approval, monitoring and compliance regimes are kept up to date so nearby residents and communities and environments aren't adversely impacted."

Mr Johnson highlights the recent opposition by the Port Pirie Regional Council to a proposed windfarm in the Southern Flinders as a case in point.

"There is no doubt windfarms have a substantial visual impact on the landscape, generate noise and divide rural communities, but current windfarm planning and compliance is not keeping pace with the size and output of new turbines."

We have to make sure that our key iconic landscapes, such as the Flinders Ranges and the Clare Valley are explicitly protected from future windfarm development.

Mr Johnson said there also needs to be much stronger local input and control over energy developments.

"My town of Port Augusta is proud to be home to a number of very significant solar renewable energy projects. Our community has a very strong track record of encouraging and supporting these developments."

"Unfortunately this has been tarnished by the planning and development approvals undertaken by the city based Development Assessment Commission, which failed to give adequate consideration to issues such as dust suppression and damage to our local roads."

"Because the approval was made by the State Government, Council is powerless to do anything other than join the queue of angry residents trying to get a resolution."

"Unfortunately, our planning system is letting our communities down. The current assessment guidelines for renewable energy doesn't even mention solar, let alone newer forms of technology like pumped hydro, batteries or hydrogen."

The Spencer Gulf Councils are also supporting an initiative led by the nearby Central Local Government Region to review options that would allow Councils to rate major developments such as wind and solar farms.

"At the moment, these large renewable energy developments are exempt from valuation for rating purposes, despite there being an impact on ratepayers and Council infrastructure".

"We are really looking forward to discussing all of these issues with the State Planning Commission and showing them around our region."

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