



UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

MEDIA RELEASE

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Low Owens to Lead Upper Spencer Gulf Group

The former head of ETSA Utilities, the Essential Services Commission of SA, Funds SA and WorkCover – Lew Owens – has been announced as the inaugural independent chair to the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group.

After an exhaustive four month search, Mr Owens was endorsed as the independent chair at the Group's recent annual general meeting.

Mr Owens is well known to South Australia and the Upper Spencer Gulf, having spent 20 years as Chief Executive Officer in a variety of public and private sector roles in economic development, mining and oil, the electricity and gas sectors, renewable energy, arts and heritage, Aboriginal employment and reconciliation, workers compensation, funds investment, and as regulator of the electricity, gas, water and rail industries.

Mr Owens is currently Chairman of SA Water Corporation and Country Arts SA, Director of Australian Gas Networks Ltd and an Ambassador for Reconciliation SA.

"We were overwhelmed with interest in the role and had an extremely high calibre of candidates to select from", says Whyalla Mayor Jim Pollock.

Appointment of independent chair was first considered by the Group following a 2012 review by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies.

"Following the loss of former Port Pirie Mayor Brenton Vanstone and Chair of the Upper Spencer Gulf Group at the November 2014 elections, we felt it was a good time to look at a new approach", explained Mr Pollock.

Deputy Chair of the Common Purpose Group, Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson says the appointment will complement the work of the three cities, noting the Upper Spencer Gulf is at a particularly vulnerable time, with widespread job losses across the traditional mining and energy sectors.

"But never has there been more opportunity for our region to reposition itself and capture the global trends and growth in renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and innovative agriculture", he says. "Having someone of Lew's capability and experience is very timely in helping us achieve our potential".

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