



## UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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### OPTIONS FOR IMPROVED PLANNING ACROSS UPPER SPENCER GULF CONSIDERED

Representatives from over 20 regional and state agencies attended a recent workshop in the Upper Spencer Gulf to consider future models and options for improving development planning and assessment for the region.

The forum was convened by the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group following recommendations from a number of recently commissioned reports that all pointed to potential for improving regional collaboration and planning practices across Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta.

“Currently the three Upper Spencer Gulf cities sit across three different volumes of the State Planning Strategy”, explained Common Purpose Group Executive Officer, Anita Crisp. “This does provide some challenges to taking a more strategic and streamlined approach to land use across the region”.

The report also found that whilst local development plan policy across the three Upper Spencer Gulf cities is reasonably consistent, there is some capacity for improvement, including potential for stronger resource-sharing and networking across the three Council planning units and greater engagement by State agency specialists.

A particular focus of the workshop was consideration of the State Government's proposal to create a network of regional planning boards across the state.

“Our report concluded that this integrated approach may not only help deliver better planning outcomes, but also improve better coordination and efficiencies in relation to environmental management, economic development and infrastructure provision in the long term”, said Anita.

Ms Crisp added that many in the region were hesitant to commit completely to such an approach at this stage, fearing it would take away local control and may add another level of bureaucracy.

The forum wrapped up an 18 month initiative funded by the Australian Government under the ‘Sustainable Regional Development Program’, which aimed to support streamlining of environmental and development planning, improve collaboration across the Upper Spencer Gulf and promote a more forward-thinking, sustainable and integrated approach to future growth.

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Photo (over page) - Attending the workshop were members of the Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta Councils, Regional Development Australia and the Regional Natural Resources Management boards, along with Adelaide representatives from Department of State Development including the Resources and Energy Infrastructure Council, Industry Development, Manufacturing and Innovation divisions, the Department of Environment's Science and Monitoring and Conservation and Land Management branches, the South Australian Research and Development Institute, Adelaide University, Regions SA, Office of State/Local Government Relations, Coast Protection Unit, Environment Protection Authority and planning consultants URPS.

