



UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stronger Support for Upper Spencer Gulf Economy Urged

The chair of a leadership alliance from Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie's local government, regional development and education sectors has expressed disappointment at the lack of funding for new renewable energy projects in the region.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) recently announced its short-list of projects invited to progress to the next stage of its \$100 million large-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) competitive round, with only one of the final 22 from South Australia.

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group's independent chair, and former head of ETSA Utilities and the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, Mr Lew Owens, said this was despite a number of projects being submitted from the Port Augusta and Whyalla area.

"Given the superior solar and other renewable energy resources in the region, and the precarious economic situation in the Upper Spencer Gulf cities, we are looking for much stronger consideration and support from both Federal and State Governments to help the region's transition to a sustainable future", said Mr Owens.

The Group is working towards economic transformation of the Upper Spencer Gulf into a major economic growth and research hub for renewable energy, low carbon and clean technologies as a means to help diversify the local economy, create jobs and increase prosperity and long term sustainability of the region.

A recent report identifies the Upper Spencer Gulf as ideally located in close proximity to some of the best and most diverse renewable and low carbon energy resources in the world, supported by a strong electricity transmission network, and these provide an ideal location to construct, trial and test renewable energy technology. However, this has not been reflected by the ARENA funding allocation to projects from the region.

The Group has also provided state Energy Minister, Tom Koutsantonis with a list of renewable energy initiatives from private investors keen to establish in the region, urging their strong consideration as part of the Minister's current call for ideas to supply low carbon electricity and efficiency measures for State sites.

"We are encouraging both Governments to give special weighting to proposals that will provide economic growth and employment in the Upper Spencer Gulf, given the natural advantage that the region has in terms of solar and renewable resources".

This request comes on top of the Group's earlier call for a more pro-active, coordinated and forward thinking approach to the future of the three cities by the State Government's Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Taskforce, established by Manufacturing and Innovation Minister, Kyam Maher. Mr.Owens said he was encouraged by recent discussions with government officials on progressing this proposal.

"When you consider that the initial \$160 million committed by Federal and State Governments to help the economic transition of Northern Adelaide has just been boosted by a further \$24 million, it is surely not too much to ask for extra consideration by Government for enterprises which are looking to establish or expand their operations in the Upper Spencer Gulf."

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