



## Stellar Year for Spencer Gulf Cities

30 December 2019

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As 2019 draws to a close, the Spencer Gulf Cities Association has reflected on its achievements as it prepares for the year ahead.

Chair, Mayor Leon Stephens said the Upper Spencer Gulf region has taken a huge step forward in recent times and the tri-city alliance between Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie remains a crucial part of strong coordination across the three cities and across the three levels of government.

"The alliance between Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla has been going for over 20 years and remains as relevant today as it ever has", stated Mayor Stephens. "As three industrial cities we share many common issues and an understanding of how these can impact on our communities, through the good times and the bad."

"We were really active in the lead up to the Federal election in May, pushing hard for a much stronger focus on growing our population through skilled migration and decentralisation initiatives, investment into strategic transport infrastructure, improving access to higher education in the region, a strong national energy policy and enhancing the liveability of the three cities."

"We are pleased to see some progress, but of course these issues are still important and discussions are ongoing", said Mayor Stephens.

The group have also made significant inroads at the state level, showcasing the economic growth opportunities at a dinner event in Parliament House in September.

Hosted by Minister for Mining and Energy and local Member, Hon Dan van Holst Pellekaan, and attended by the Premier, Hon Steven Marshall and the Ministers for Planning, Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government; Tourism, Trade and Investment; Regional Development and Primary Industries; and Innovation and Skills, Port Augusta Mayor Brett Benbow said the event provided a rare occasion to highlight the full potential of the region to state leaders.

"There's over \$15 billion investment proposed, underway or recently completed across the Upper Spencer Gulf in a range of renewable energy, mining and processing, Defence, value-added agriculture, event and nature-based tourism initiatives. At the upper end we are talking about several thousand jobs", explained Mayor Benbow.

Whyalla Mayor Clare McLaughlin said perhaps the highlight of the year has been gaining a commitment by the South Australian Premier, Steven Marshall to meet regularly with the Group.

"The Premier's commitment to give up his time to meet with us on a regular basis highlights the importance of the region to the state's growth target", said Mayor McLaughlin.

The first of the meetings was held in November and emphasised the need for strong collaboration around workforce development, a range of transport and civic infrastructure projects and improving liveability of the three cities.

“We are really keen to leverage the current wave of investment into the region and generate as much positive and lasting benefit for the Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla communities as we can.”

In addition to their strong state and federal advocacy, 2019 also saw Spencer Gulf Cities launching a comprehensive plan to help reduce waste to landfill and investigate opportunities to attract new recycling and re-manufacturing enterprises to the region, submissions to several parliamentary and government inquiries and progress towards a more streamlined and coordinated approach to landuse and development planning. The Group also led delivery of the statewide Coastal Councils initiative and supported a joint regional report into rating inequity for renewable energy generators and major development.

The Upper Spencer Gulf was also well represented by the Mayors at a range of local, state and national events over the past year, including at the Regional Australia National Summit in Canberra, attendance at SA Mining and Energy Awards and the Global Maintenance Upper Spencer Gulf (GMUSG) conference and as guest speakers at the SA Renewable Energy conference in Adelaide.

The Upper Spencer Gulf Mayors & MPs Forum, with the Mayors of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla Councils, State Member for Giles, Stuart, Frome and Federal Member for Grey, also remains a valuable forum to reinforce a strong and united approach by all elected representatives across all levels of government.

“It is such an exciting time for the Upper Spencer Gulf”, concluded Mayor Stephens. “We have an amazing future ahead of us and we’re really looking forward to continuing to promote our great region into 2020”.

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Photos: Spencer Gulf Cities 2019 Year in Review

With the Premier (July, Sept, Nov 2019) - Mayor Leon Stephens, Premier Steven Marshall, Mayor Clare McLaughlin, Mayor Brett Benbow

USG Parliament House Dinner (Sept 2019) - Member for Giles Eddie Hughes, Member for Stuart and Minister for Energy and Mining Dan van Holst Pellekaan, Port Augusta Council CEO John Banks, Minister for Planning, Transport, Infrastructure, Local Government Stephan Knoll, Whyalla Mayor Clare Mc Laughlin, Minister for Training and Skills David Pisoni, Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens, the Premier Steven Marshall, Port Augusta Mayor Brett Benbow, Regional Development Minister Tim Whetstone, Port Pirie Council CEO Peter Ackland, Minister for Tourism and Trade David Ridgway, Whyalla Council CEO Chris Cowley, USG Case Manager Commissioner Wendy Campana

Opening of Uni Hub Spencer Gulf (Feb 2019) – Uni Hub Chair Brenton Vanstone, Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens, Federal Member for Grey Rowan Ramsey, Port Augusta Mayor Brett Benbow

Regions Rising National Summit in Canberra (April 2019) – Mayor Clare Mc Laughlin, Mayor Leon Stephens, Mayor Brett Benbow, Regional Australia Institute Co-CEO Dr Kim Houghton





At Parliament House Canberra (April 2019) – Port Pirie Deputy Mayor Alan Zubrinich, Whyalla CEO Chris Cowley, Mayor Leon Stephens, Mayor Brett Benbow, Mayor Clare McLaughlin

SA Senator Hon Penny Wong (April 2019) - John Banks, Senator Penny Wong, Mayor Clare McLaughlin, Mayor Leon Stephens

USG Mayors and MPs Forum (May 2019) – Port Augusta Deputy Mayor Phil Brown, Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens, Member for Stuart Dan van Holst Pellekaan, Member for Giles Eddie Hughes, Whyalla Mayor Clare McLaughlin, Member for Frome Geoff Brock, Federal Member for Grey Rowan Ramsey

SA Senator Hon Anne Ruston (April 2019) – Mayor Clare McLaughlin, Port Pirie Deputy Mayor Alan Zubrinich, Port Augusta Mayor Brett Benbow, Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens, Senator Ruston, Whyalla CEO Chris Cowley

GMUSG Conference (August 2019) – Port Pirie Mayor Leon Stephens, Port Augusta Mayor Brett Benbow, Whyalla Mayor Clare McLaughlin

