



## UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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A delegation of local government, regional development and education sector leaders from the Upper Spencer Gulf recently undertook a fact-finding mission into the transformation of the regional, industrial centres of Wollongong and Newcastle.

Chair of the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group, Brenton Vanstone, said the visit, made possible with funding from the Commonwealth 'Regional Sustainability Program', provided considerable inspiration and a renewed enthusiasm for the future of the three Spencer Gulf cities.

"Given our shared history in heavy industry, we were particularly interested in learning about the approaches to economic diversification and educational innovation taken by Wollongong and Newcastle over the past 15 years", said Mayor Vanstone.

"It was particularly inspirational to see firsthand Newcastle's approach to changing their reputation from 'steel city' to one of Lonely Planet's top 10 cities in the world", he said. "Wollongong similarly, has worked very hard to maintain its industrial base, expand its port capabilities and combine this with a culture and a whole industry around innovation".

"Both centres have very strong education and research sectors linked heavily to industry – so they are always pushing forward in terms of new approaches to sustainability and efficiency", he said.

The delegation found an integral part of the transformational success was the strong collaboration between local universities, TAFE and industry that underpinned the economic diversification and now supports both cities reputation as leaders in higher education and research.

Mayor Vanstone considers there are similar opportunities for innovation in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

"At the moment Alinta is considering the feasibility of converting its coal fired power station to solar thermal and we also have projects like the Muradel algae biofuel project in Whyalla and Sundrop farms in Port Augusta, along with the Nyrstar upgrade in Port Pirie", he said.

"These initiatives have potential to also generate considerable technical and research capacity in our region and are very consistent with our Group's vision for the whole Upper Spencer Gulf in terms of transforming to a cleaner, more innovative, liveable and economically secure region".

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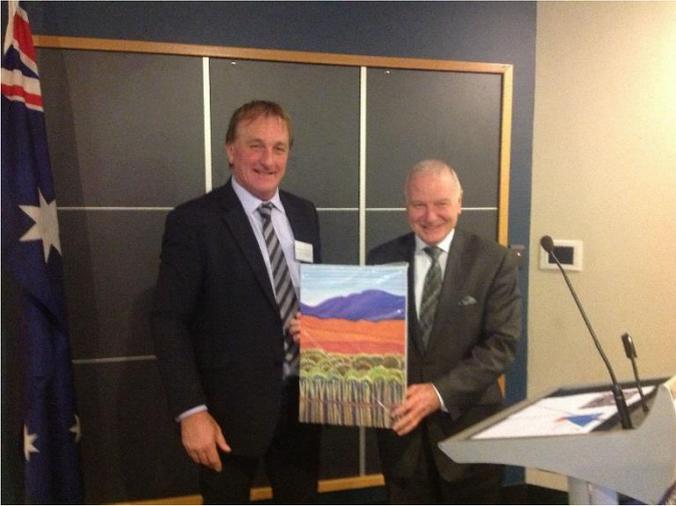


Photo 1: Chair of Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group, Brenton Vanstone presents Wollongong Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery with a gift from the region, a painting by local artist Georgie Sharp.



Photo 2: Delegates from the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group during their recent visit to Wollongong and Newcastle. From left: Ms Deanne Heidrich (Wollongong City Council), John Banks (City Manager) and Lee Heron (Director City and Cultural Services) Port Augusta Council, Professor Anthony Hogan (Canberra University), Peter Peppin (CEO, Whyalla Council), Claire Wiseman (CEO, RDA Far North), Kelly-Anne Saffin (CEO, RDA Yorke & Mid North), Brenton Vanstone (Chair, USGCPG), Wollongong Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery, Michael Reay (Bluescope Steel).



Photo 3: TAFE SA Regional Manager for Port Pirie and Port Augusta, Robin O'Dea with David Leask, Head Teacher of Electronic Trades with Hunter TAFE in Newcastle.