



UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Upper Spencer Gulf was well represented at a national economic development conference, held in Alice Springs recently.

The '*Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia*' conference is an annual event that attracts participants from across Australia and internationally - this year including a delegation from Korea.

Sponsored through the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group, local delegates included Port Pirie Mayor and Chair of the Common Purpose Group, Brenton Vanstone, Executive Officer Anita Crisp, Regional Development Australia Yorke/Mid North CEO Kelly-Anne Saffin and board member Jodie Gregg-Smith, RDA Far North Chair Dr Jen Cleary and CEO Claire Wiseman.

The conference provided academic, policy and practitioner insight into the approaches of diversification or specialisation of rural economies, alternative options for regional governance, investment and funding, indicators of community adaptability and wellbeing, the importance of local innovation and collaborative leadership and the increasing need to decentralise policy and decision making.

The conference also highlighted emerging global 'megatrends' including agribusiness, the gas sector, tourism, education and wealth management, with Australia's regions well placed to capitalise on these future opportunities.

Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Warren Truss addressed the conference, announcing the retention of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) network and praising the South Australian model, which is unique in the nation, being jointly funded by Local, State and Commonwealth Governments.

Mayor Vanstone was nominated to lead conference discussion on options for supporting single industry towns, including the power of Government underwriting, whilst Dr Cleary, also part of the national conference organising committee, presented on indicators of social capacity and the impact of a 'grant economy' on regional communities.

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Photo:

Upper Spencer Gulf delegates at the national economic development conference in Alice Springs – Jodie Gregg-Smith, Kelly-Anne Saffin, Jen Cleary, Anita Crisp and Mayor Brenton Vanstone with Dr Kim Houghton. Dr Houghton presented his academic work modelling immediate and longer term local consequences of specific economic shocks on a community and is currently working with the Upper Spencer Gulf Group analysing and quantifying the economic interdependence of the three cities.

