



UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

MEDIA RELEASE

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The three Upper Spencer Gulf cities of Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie have strong economic flows between them as labourers, contractors and other trade services work across the region to support the resources and manufacturing sector, but are more independent in providing retail, arts and social services.

The findings were revealed in a report commissioned by the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group to analyse the economic and social flows between the three cities.

The report's author, Dr Kim Houghton found that whilst there is a strong economic and historical connection, each city also has different and complementary economic specialisations.

"Whyalla, for example, is strong in mining and has close to average shares of jobs in most other industries, Port Augusta is strong in utilities (electricity generation) and the public sector, with close to an average share of jobs in most other industries, while Port Pirie is strong in utilities, manufacturing, health and retail, with above average share of jobs in each of these three industries", explained Dr Houghton.

"While many health services are provided in all three cities, there are also some specialisations. A similar pattern is seen in education services – with some specialisations in each of the three cities seeking to complement a core offering available from each", he said.

"What was also interesting was that retail, cultural, tourism and social services are replicated in each of the three cities, rather than shared", said Dr Houghton. "We can assume this reflects the strong role each city has as a service centre for their own geographic hinterland".

Of some concern was the finding that the three cities have only average capacity in several fast growing industries and are all below average in the share of professional services.

"Over 100 Adelaide-based residents work in the three cities in medium to high-income professional services such as public administration, education, health and technical services", explained Dr Houghton. "Whilst this is common in non-capital city regions, catch up is vital if the Upper Spencer Gulf is to see more growth in a more diversified economy", he warned. "It is important the region builds its own capacity in these fields".

The report also found that between the 2006 and 2011 census period:

- Less than 100 people moved residences between the three cities.
- Over 3000 moved out of the region to Adelaide.
- Around 2000 people moved from Adelaide to the Upper Spencer Gulf.

In 2011:

- Less than 60 people lived in one of the three cities and worked in another.
- Each city had well over 100 residents working in mining or other sectors in the northern regions.

Currently:

- Collectively, the three cities contribute a total of over \$2.3 billion in gross regional product.
- There are nearly 22,000 workers in the Upper Spencer Gulf and over 2,000 small businesses.

The analysis was based on the 2011 Census, the Australian Business Register, and interviews conducted with businesses and service providers in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

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Photo from left: Dr Andrew Johnson (Port Pirie Council CEO); Peter Peppin (Whyalla Council CEO); Claire Wiseman (CEO, Regional Development Australia Far North based in Port Augusta); Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde; Lucy Kennewell (Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group Project Officer); Dr Kim Houghton (report author); Dr Jen Cleary (University of SA and RDA Far North); Anita Crisp (Executive Officer Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group); Kelly-Anne Saffin (Regional Development Australia Yorke/Mid North)

