



## UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

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# MEDIA RELEASE

16<sup>th</sup> January 2015

The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group has appointed a new chair, following the loss of former Port Pirie Mayor, Brenton Vanstone at the recent local government election.

In their first meeting since the election, the group appointed Whyalla Mayor Jim Pollock to fulfil the important leadership role through until their next AGM in mid 2015. Mayor Pollock will be supported by Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson, appointed as Deputy Chair and Dr Jen Cleary who continues as Chair of the Group's Education Committee.

"These roles are so much more than just chairing the meetings", explains former Chair, Brenton Vanstone. "The whole point of the Group is to provide a united voice on issues that are important to the whole of the Upper Spencer Gulf, not just small, localised matters".

"The positions require a considerable time commitment, promoting our region and opportunities to State and Commonwealth Government, Members of Parliament, influential academics and industry. This is work that is often not seen or recognised at a local level, but leaves a big gap when it doesn't happen."

"We are so reliant on each other that for our three cities to all grow and prosper, we need to maintain a strong alliance."

"I think locally we often don't realise how powerful we can be", reflects Brenton. "However, it is certainly recognised within Government. A few years ago Tony Abbott, then in opposition, commented on just how much of a strong, economic force we could be, if we focus our collective effort and vision".

In taking over the top job from Brenton, new chair Mayor Pollock fully understands the significance of the task ahead.

"This is important work", says Jim. "The Upper Spencer Gulf has so much potential to help transform this state economically and to become strong, thriving regional cities where people want to work and live."

"If we don't stand up for our region, and keep advocating to shape our future our way, no-one else will."

"With previous champions of the Upper Spencer Gulf including Brenton and the late Mayor Joy Baluch we have generated significant momentum and presence in the corridors of power". We can't afford to go backwards now.

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Photo from left: Attending the recent farewell for former Chair of the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group – Group Executive Officer Anita Crisp, Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson, Brenton Vanstone, Whyalla Mayor Jim Pollock and Federal Member for Grey, Rowan Ramsey. Brenton was presented with a canvas print by local artist Georgie Sharp.

