



## **UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP**

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### **Support for Upper Spencer Gulf Future Industries**

24 March 2016

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A package of recommendations to help transition the economy of the Upper Spencer Gulf is being prepared, following meetings between Upper Spencer Gulf leaders and South Australian Government Ministers at the recent 'Country Cabinet' visit to Port Augusta.

The good news followed an afternoon of meetings between Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group representatives and Treasurer and Energy Minister Tom Koutsantonis; Tourism, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell; Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation Kyam Maher; Transport and Infrastructure Minister Stephen Mullighan and Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ian Hunter. Minister for Regional Development and Member for Frome Geoff Brock also attended a number of the briefings.

The meetings focussed on future growth opportunity in renewable energy, defence, arid innovation and research, agriculture and minerals value-adding, national transport and logistics hub, conferences and events and public service administration, along with a new model higher education and research delivery.

Outcomes sought from the Ministers included:

- Stronger support to implement new renewable energy projects in the region, with a focus on solar thermal and solar photovoltaic generation, with a push to also investigate opportunities for solar cell component manufacturing in the region.
- Establishing the Upper Spencer Gulf as a hub to trial and test renewable new energy technology and support research, development and commercialisation.
- Opportunities to position Upper Spencer Gulf as a centre for 'Arid Innovation', leveraging the existing presence of Sundrop Farms Pt Augusta and Betatene Whyalla, the new Sterile Fruit Fly facility and several university research initiatives proposed or underway in the region.
- Support and sponsorship to grow event based tourism in Upper Spencer Gulf, including attracting more conferences, cultural and sporting events that build on the region's previous successes such as hosting the International Rural Research conference, annual Global Maintenance Industry Cluster conference, the Desert Fringe Festival and a number of high profile sporting and cultural events.
- Greater access and use of existing Port Pirie and Whyalla ports and opportunities to attract air, road and rail freight to Upper Spencer Gulf, capitalising on the prime location of the region at the 'Crossroads of Australia'.

"We received a very positive hearing from the Ministers and are now working with Government to develop a single package of initiatives that will help economic transition of the region", said Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson. "We have also had good engagement with the Commonwealth, including a meeting with the Prime Minister during his recent visit to the region."

The sentiment was echoed by Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde, who was also part of the delegation.

"The whole region has a great opportunity to build on initiatives such as the Nyrstar transformation project and Sundrop", he explained.

"For this to be realised we now need a strong level of cooperation and coordination across Government agencies and with our three cities".

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Photo: Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde and Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson represented the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group at a series of meetings with State Ministers including Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Kyam Maher, Minister for Transport Stephen Mullighan, Minister for Regional Development Geoff Brock.

