



## UPPER SPENCER GULF COMMON PURPOSE GROUP

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### Economic Transition Planning Continues

4 July 2016

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The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group is continuing to work with the South Australian Government to develop a package of initiatives to help transition the economy of the three regional cities.

Chairman of the Group, Mr Lew Owens says that despite the current economic situation facing the region, the Upper Spencer Gulf has been identified by experts as having some of the most significant mineral and renewable energy resources, natural biodiversity and landscapes in the world.

"The Common Purpose Group has identified and now, through involvement with the Government's Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Taskforce, is able to strongly promote these competitive advantages to help diversify and grow the local economy in areas including: renewable energy generation and research; agricultural value-adding and innovation; intermodal transport and logistics hub; event, cultural and marine tourism; defence; mining services and processing; delivery of public and regional services", explained Mr Owens.

"To maximise success in these future growth industries, we have also identified the need for a new model to deliver higher education and research in the Upper Spencer Gulf; effort to preserve our stunning natural landscapes, coast and marine environment; and improvement to the aesthetics and public perceptions of our three cities", he adds.

The initial impetus for the transition plan came from a meeting in Port Augusta in February this year, between the local Mayors, State Minister for Manufacturing, Industry and Innovation, Kyam Maher and Minister for Regional Development, Geoff Brock.

"Given the Upper Spencer Gulf has already lost well over 2,000 direct jobs over the past 12-18 months, amounting to around 4% of the region's population, there is some urgency to this work", says Mr Owens. "We need to make sure we can diversify and grow the economic opportunities in the region, so we don't find ourselves back in a crisis situation."

"Unfortunately progress has been slower than we would have liked, however we are now assisting the Department of State Development to establish a number of expert working groups to help progress each of these opportunities."

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Photo: The Upper Spencer Gulf's Sam Johnson (Mayor of Port Augusta) and John Rohde (Mayor of Port Pirie) met with State Minister for Manufacturing, Industry and Innovation, Kyam Maher and Minister for Regional Development, Geoff Brock in February this year to propose development of an economic transition plan for the region. Also pictured is Minister for Transport, Planning and Infrastructure, Stephen Mullighan.

