



Federal Budget Welcomed by Regional Mayors

17 May 2017

Upper Spencer Gulf Mayors have welcomed the strong focus on regions in last week's Federal Budget.

Chair of Spencer Gulf Cities Association, Mayor Sam Johnson said despite criticism by the South Australian Government over lack of project funding for metropolitan Adelaide, there were a number of significant initiatives for regional areas.

"We were very pleased to see a commitment of \$472 million for regional infrastructure projects in the budget", said Mayor Johnson, noting this is on top of \$20 million *Regional Jobs and Investment* funding specifically earmarked for the Upper Spencer Gulf and \$71 million currently being invested into expanding facilities and infrastructure for the Cultana Training Area between Whyalla and Port Augusta.

"From a local government perspective, we are also very pleased to have an additional \$20 million supplementary road funding on top of our existing \$170 million allocate for local Roads in SA."

Mayor Johnson said the budget allocation for a 'baseload' solar thermal power plant in Port Augusta was a particular highlight.

"This initiative has been talked up and promised by the Prime Minister, the Premier and both state and federal energy ministers over the past two years, but with no tangible commitment to funding", explained Mayor Johnson.

"We are extremely grateful to South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon for being the catalyst that has finally seen the \$110 million commitment from the Federal Government locked into the budget."

"It has given our community a tremendous boost. We have been planning and fighting for so long to transition from a coal based community to one at the cutting edge of solar-storage based renewable energy technology – we are now very close to seeing that reality.

"We now need the South Australian Government to play its part and commit to purchasing its electricity needs from this new facility."

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