

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mayors confident on return from Canberra

The Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie Mayors have returned from a visit to Canberra last week confident about the level of political support for the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Mayors Lyn Breuer, Sam Johnson and John Rohde met with several key Ministers and South Australian Senators during the visit, which focussed on issues such as the Whyalla steelworks, solar thermal power for Port Augusta, maximising local economic benefit from the Cultana defence expansion and opportunities to improve local higher education, skills and research capabilities in the region.

South Australian Senator and Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Anne Ruston hosted a morning tea for the Mayors, attended by Energy Minister Matthew Canavan, SA Senator Simon Birmingham, SA Senator David Fawcett and advisers from the Prime Minister's office and Deputy Prime Ministers Barnaby Joyce's office.

The trio also met during the day with Industry, Innovation and Science Minister Greg Hunt; Regional Development Minister Fiona Nash, Education and Training Minister Simon Birmingham; advisers from Energy and Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg's office, along with South Australian Senators Don Farrell and Alex Gallacher.

Whyalla Mayor Lyn Breuer said the trip was extremely worthwhile, with a strong level of engagement shown by all Ministers and Senators.

"There was genuine interest and goodwill by everyone we met with and a deep level of understanding of the issues and opportunities we were presenting to them", explained Whyalla Mayor Lyn Breuer.

Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde was also pleased with the outcome saying the trip emphasised just how important a united approach is for the three cities.

"Whilst Port Pirie's future is looking positive thanks to the smelter redevelopment, as a city and a community we need to use this as a trigger to further diversify our economy and to make sure we have the right support in place to provide the necessary skills and workforce into the future", he explained. "Without a critical mass it will be difficult to achieve this on our own, so we need to keep working with our neighbours to make these initiatives a reality."

This sentiment was echoed by Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson who is keen to see the three Upper Spencer Gulf cities take full advantage of emerging opportunities in storage-based renewable energy technology, arid innovation in agriculture, defence, mining services and tourism.

"The visit provided a substantial level of comfort to us that senior members of Government are committed to this region and are prepared to work with us to make sure our future is secure", said Mayor Johnson.

"It reinforced that we are on the right track, that we are being taken seriously as a region and that we can be confident about our future."

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Photo 1:

Port Augusta Mayor Sam Johnson, Federal Minister for Regional Development the Hon Fiona Nash, Whyalla Mayor Lyn Breuer, Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde



Photo 2:

Upper Spencer Gulf Mayors at Parliament House, Canberra

