



Solar Thermal a 'Game Changer' for the USG

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The announcement this week that the South Australian Government will support a world-leading solar thermal power plant in Port Augusta is an absolute 'game changer' according to the Upper Spencer Gulf Mayors.

The \$650 million project, to be delivered by US based company SolarReserve, will see the construction of the 150MW 'Aurora' power plant commence next year.

Port Augusta Mayor and Chair of Spencer Gulf Cities, Sam Johnson said the announcement by the South Australian Government that SolarReserve had been awarded the contract to supply all of their electricity for 20 years, was a significant and defining moment for the city and the region.

"This project has been several years in the making and marks a new era for Port Augusta and the Upper Spencer Gulf. Much like the Whyalla and Port Pirie communities over the past few years, Port Augusta can now move forward with certainty and optimism."

"The South Australian Government power purchase contract was the final step needed to secure the project's go-ahead, and follows Commonwealth Government loan support of up to \$110 million announced earlier this year."

Whyalla Mayor Lyn Breuer and Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde are also pleased at the announcement, saying the project will play a substantial part in repositioning the whole region.

"The three cities have been working hard to promote the Upper Spencer Gulf as a region with a future based on advanced manufacturing and clean technology", said Mayor Breuer.

"We already have a number of solar photovoltaic, wind and pumped hydro projects either approved or proposed in the Upper Spencer Gulf, however to make a substantial difference to our energy security we really needed a large, storage-based electricity generator, like solar thermal", explains Mayor Breuer. "There is room for all of these projects and more – this project really helps secure the Upper Spencer Gulf as a hub for renewable energy."

Port Pirie Mayor John Rohde agrees, saying the solar thermal project in Port Augusta very much complements the transformation of Port Pirie's smelter to be able to process e-waste and the proposed upgrade of the Whyalla steelworks.

"These large projects are catalysts that will drive a whole lot of flow-on opportunities around manufacturing, technical services, research, education and training."

"It is a great time for the Upper Spencer Gulf and the marking of a new era. For the first time, in a long time our collective future is looking very, very positive."

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