

Pirie Voices Next Phase Begins

After reaching its target of hearing from 1,000 locals, Pirie Voices is now moving to its next stage, with Anita Kuss appointed to lead the initiative.

Ms Kuss, who stepped down as CEO of Uni Hub Spencer Gulf at the end of June, said she is excited to take on the role. “It’s an initiative close to my heart. Pirie Voices is a community led movement that puts local people at the centre of shaping their own future.”

“Over many years my career has focussed on advocating for a different way of developing policy and delivering services in our region that actually meets the needs of the community. I’m delighted to continue that work with Pirie Voices.”

Launched in September last year, Pirie Voices set an ambitious target to hear from one thousand residents about what matters most to them—their hopes, challenges and ideas for the future.

Chair of the Pirie Voices Leadership Group, Lisa Brock, said the target was “absolutely smashed”, with nearly 1,200 Port Pirie locals participating. “It’s a phenomenal response, with some very clear themes, hopes and aspirations emerging from the community.”

Lisa explained the next phase builds on the work of the Pirie Voices Coordinator Paula Backstrom, who led the community engagement over the past year. “Paula did an amazing job supported by a number of ‘community conversation leaders’ who attended local events, markets, schools, businesses and pop-ups around town.”

“Our next step is to analyse the feedback and prepare a report that accurately reflects what the community has told us. We then want to go back to the people who participated, show them what we’ve heard, and invite them to continue the conversation about practical next steps in areas that matter to them.”

Ms Kuss said having input from more than one thousand locals provides a strong evidence base and a clear starting point for how future services and infrastructure should be designed and delivered.

“People often feel their voices aren’t listened to, and that consultation by government or other institutions is tokenistic, with outcomes already predetermined.”

“Pirie Voices is an opportunity to help change that. We can now confidently express what we’ve heard and encourage agencies and government representatives to use Pirie Voices as a starting point for understanding community priorities—and to come back to us when they’re ready to build on that information, not ignore it or repeat the process.”

Over the next six months, Ms Kuss will work with the Pirie Voices steering committee to transition the current structure into a community led governance model and secure the funding and resources needed to embed Pirie Voices in the community for the long term.

“Pirie Voices doesn’t belong to any one group – it belongs to the community”, Lisa explains. “The initiative has been supported by a number of partner organisations who have been very generous with their time, knowledge and resources to help get things started, but have all recognised the need to set it up so the community are in the driver’s seat going forward.”

Media Enquiries

Anita Kuss
Pirie Voices Strategic Lead
M: 0427 609 404
E: anitakuss@outlook.com

Lisa Brock
Chair, Pirie Voices Leadership Group
M: 0449 671 183
E: lisa@usgemployment.com.au