



Facing up to new horizons

LUKE GRIFFITHS

PROVIDING opportunities for around 100 relatively small-scale South Australian suppliers and service providers to pitch to mining and resource industry heavyweights underpins everything Mark Malcolm does.

"We generally add value by getting, wherever possible, face-to-face engagement between buyers, asset owners, tier one contractors, explorers, project developers, and local contractors and suppliers," he explains.

"We try to make sure the big players understand the capability of local industry."

Mr Malcolm is manager of the member-based Global Maintenance Upper Spencer Gulf (GMUSG) group, which he describes as a "small, but effective cluster".

Comprising businesses that are predominantly located in Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta, Mr Malcolm cites examples of where two or three member organisations have joined forces to capture work they wouldn't be able to alone.

"We're an organisation that ties local businesses together and is able to, in a sense, save

them money by getting them interacting with buyers that would be difficult on their own to do," he says.

"It can be pretty simple stuff. Last year we had 10 of the majors, BHP, Santos, OZ Minerals and others, visit the three (USG) cities and conduct site visits.

"The comments that came back were of surprise that the

region had such capability.

"From that, BHP brought a bigger team to the area so that its engineers and procurement people were aware of what was on offer."

Following a number of high profile issues in the region of late, notably Alinta's exit and Arrium's administration, a recent member survey showed growing confidence levels for 2017 and beyond. Mr Malcolm singled out OZ Minerals' Carapateena project as having huge potential for GMUSG members.

"Our members have certainly come off a couple of years that have been very difficult and where jobs have been shed," Mr Malcolm said.

"There are some parts of our membership doing very well at the moment, but some are still facing difficulties.

"But the general sentiment

is that we're past the bottom of the cycle."

Mr Malcolm will this morning chair a panel discussion on the benefits of industry collaboration at the SA Minerals and Energy Services Future Forum.

Hosted by the SA Chamber of Mines and Energy and held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, he will be joined by WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff's Nick Flanagan, UniSA's Future Industries Institute director Professor Emily Hilder, and cluster expert Steven Travers.

Other speakers at the all-day event include Business SA's Nicola Kelly and Sue Johnson from Fyfe. Registrations open at 8.30am.

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MARK MALCOLM