



SA, NSW purchase renewables

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The City of Gold Coast unveiled a 300 kilowatt solar system for the Commonwealth Games Aquatic Centre as British billionaire Sanjeev Gupta said a SIMEC Zen Energy-South Australian government deal would “redefine” Australia’s energy market.

The 300 KW rooftop solar array on the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre will heat the pool and cool audiences at the Commonwealth Games in April. It cost \$654,000 and will save \$100,000 in annual costs, Mayor Tom Tate says.

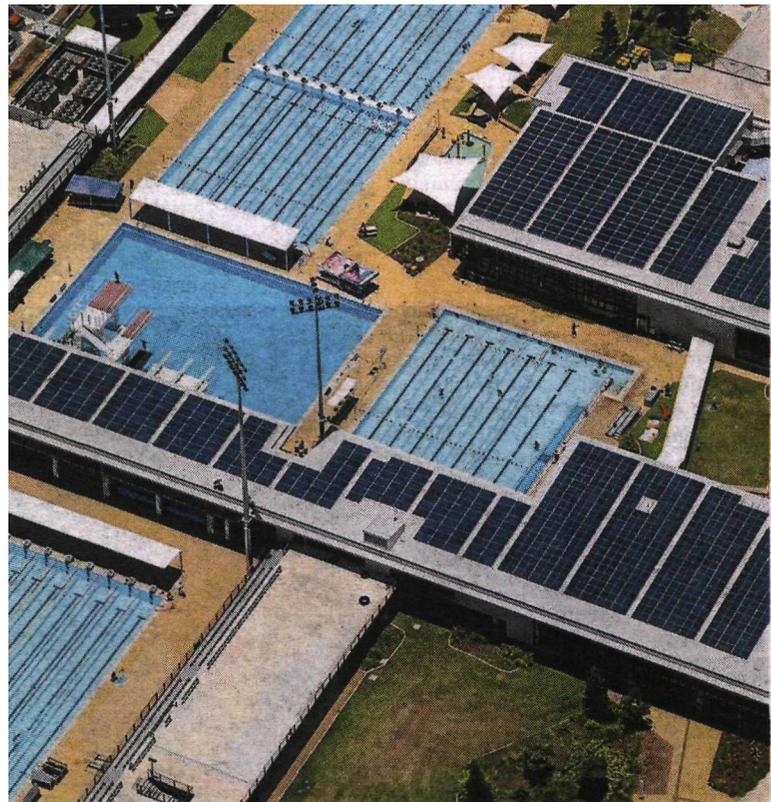
After the Games in 2018, the City will add a \$350,000, 300 kilowatt hour battery system, and maybe more solar panels, increasing savings and helping to stabilise the power grid by “shaving” demand spikes. The City has more than 1000 MW of other solar in the works.

The trend for governments and firms to buy wind and solar power – sometimes with gas peaking and battery and pumped hydro capacity – direct to ease soaring power costs is fuelling a 5000 megawatt boom in wind and solar energy capacity over the next three years as the Renewable Energy Target reaches its peak.

“We are putting serious amounts of clean energy on each site,” Richard Romanowski, director of system supplier Planet Ark Power, said.

“Every CFO [chief financial officer] has put solar on his house to save money and he is finally getting the fact that he can do the same thing for his business and save money as well.”

The South Australian government said on Sunday it had contracted SIMEC Zen Energy to supply at least 80 per cent of the government’s energy



Gold Coast Aquatic Centre boasts a new 300 KW solar system to heat its pools.

needs until 2020 from wind and solar power and storage.

From November 2020, SIMEC Zen – 51 per cent owned by Mr Gupta’s GFG Alliance, which bought the stricken Arrium steel-making business in August – will supply all of the SA government’s energy needs for five years from the proposed \$650 million, 150 megawatt Aurora solar thermal concentrating plant in Port Augusta.

It’s the first big deal for SIMEC Zen since it signed off on a \$700 million solar, battery and pumped hydro storage project to deliver power to Mr Gupta’s Liberty OneSteel works in Whyalla, SA, and other sites around the country in October.

“This is the beginning of a journey that will see SIMEC ZEN Energy redefine the energy landscape of Aus-

tralia, bringing down costs dramatically and making globally competitive energy a key advantage for Australian industry,” Mr Gupta said.

On December 8 the NSW government announced its first large-scale renewable energy deal – an 11-year contract with French renewables giant Neoen Australia to draw power from a new Dubbo Solar Hub in the state’s central west.

SIMEC Zen is talking to other large industrial energy users about similar clean energy systems to the one it has agreed to build for Liberty OneSteel.

Rival steelmaker BlueScope wants more “baseload” power built, but AGL Energy plans to replace the ageing Liddell coal power station with a similar mix of clean and firm energy to SIMEC Zen’s template.