

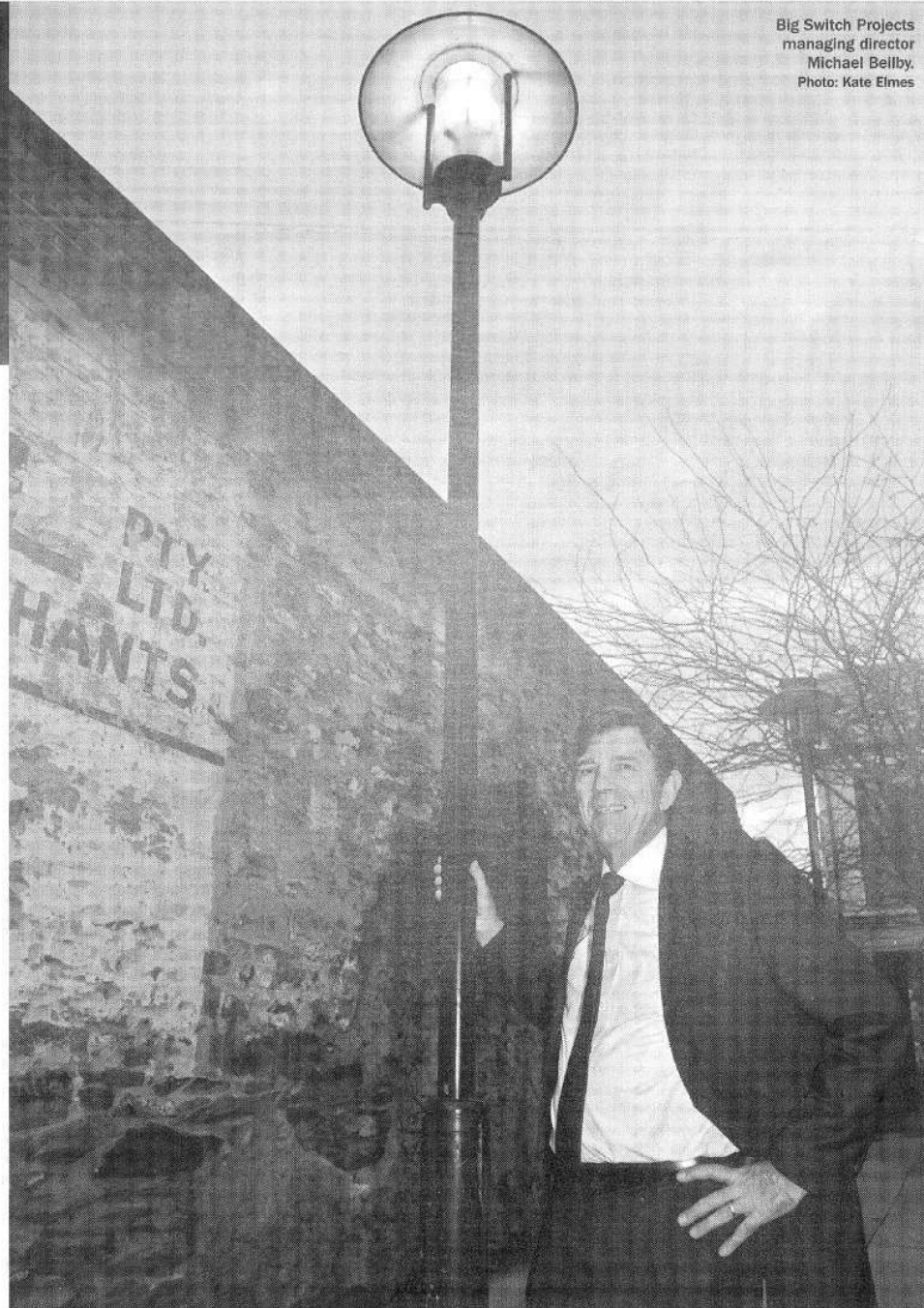
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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS

Big Switch Projects
managing director
Michael Beilby.
Photo: Kate Elmes

'Green' light for energy

Kate Nash



Adelaide is perfectly placed to lead the nation in sustainable development and environmental efficiency, says Michael Beilby, managing director of Big Switch Projects.

At the forefront of geothermal, solar and wind energy, and environmental legislation, the state has positioned itself well to show the nation the way when it comes to sustainable development and environmental efficiency, he said.

"Adelaide in many ways is a very forward-thinking state," he said, pointing to our drink container deposit legislation, introduced more than 30 years ago, which continues to be the envy of many other Australian states, and the state's recent ban on plastic shopping bags.

"Perhaps the Government has always thought that it must be a leader rather than a follower and always understood that SA needs to be ahead of the game," he said.

Big Switch, which has offices in Adelaide and Sydney, runs subsidised domestic and business energy audits around the country.

Mr Beilby, who previously headed a commercial law firm, first came across "green" initiatives when he made environmental decisions while running Sydney's Willoughby City Council.

He helped implement a number of "green" initiatives, such as the council's first kerbside green waste recycling service. He joined the green movement professionally when he became Big Switch Projects general manager last year.

Big Switch established an office in Adelaide two-and-a-half years ago because of the Federal Government-funded Adelaide Solar City project, which plans to install seven key solar installations in Adelaide, and is one of several sites chosen around Australia for the Solar Cities trial.

The first project in this state – a 50 kilowatt solar installation on top of the Adelaide Central Bus Station used to recharge the Adelaide City Council bus, Tindo – is among seven key solar installations in SA that will visually remind residents they live in a Solar City. Other installations include the Adelaide Central Market, the Rundle Lantern and the Playford Aquadome.

"There is a golden opportunity for South Australia to establish itself as leader in sustainable development and environmental efficiency – both on a national and global scale," Mr Beilby said.

"The world is looking for green

leadership and this is an area in which South Australia is well positioned to excel. This will require the corporate, not-for-profit and Government sectors to work together and maximise every opportunity to advance our technology, our legislation and our attitudes in order to set a benchmark for others to follow."

The Electricity Supply Industry Planning Council's June Annual Planning Report says SA has attracted 97 per cent of the available investment in

geothermal exploration and has nine windfarms generating 740 megawatts of power. Adelaide is also the home of the head office of Solar Shop Australia, which has offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, as well as a regional network of advisors across Australia and has been helping Australians "go solar" since 1999.

Mr Beilby said the "green revolution" will be one of the defining chapters in the world's history and there was a huge

opportunity for South Australia to play a key role in Australia's environmental legacy.

"It's happening already," he said.

"More businesses and organisations are changing their attitude towards energy efficiency measures. In the past people worked with our company primarily to reduce their power bills, and while that remains a key benefit of our service, we are seeing more organisations approach us for corporate social responsibility reasons."