

Alt-tv

not since the dreaded large screen in the city square has melbourne seen another large public viewing monitor in our streets...a tiny fraction of the time's square ambience touched down in melbourne in 1998. the screen having been installed at the intersection of bourke and swanston streets this time hoping to sustain itself by coming closer to the pedestrian. the pedestrian is the target audience and this location is certainly at one of melbourne's busiest pedestrian intersections. here, at the eastern end of the bourke street mall two main tram thoroughfares make their way to all four corners of melbourne's inner/outer suburbs. the tram stops around this intersection are practically full of people all daylight hours. alt-tv is visible from the bustling bourke street mall too. the only disadvantage of this location is the fact there are tall buildings directly across the road from alt-tv therefore restricting an even bigger audience. but, i must admit, standing nearer the screen is better as you can clearly hear the accompanying sound (when no trams are rattling by) so, in hindsight, it doesnt matter that there are tall buildings hiding the screen to an audience further away. it was just that i was nostalgically thinking of a melbourne tuned into a hitech infotech led society with large viewing screens dispersed all over the city like in new york or osaka, having the ability to tap into the system for any enquiries regarding the amenities available in the city...oh well, maybe in another 50 years? i'm still unsure of the site. i have images of such screens performing their public service (and private enterprise) on the victoria square intersection or perched somewhere near the intersection of flinders and swanston streets fitting in with the yet to be completed federation square project or high above the young and jackson's hotel diagonally opposite - which has become a sort of piccadilly circus with all the advertising marking the entrance to the central business district.



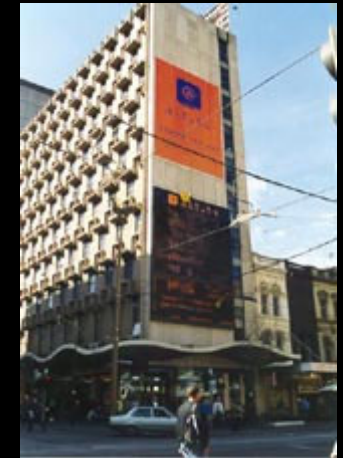
some of the pedestrians watching alt-tv



view of the bourke and swanston street intersection



the programs showing on alt-tv are contemporary 'foxtel info type' programs with provisions for around a 37% advertising content. these programs are maintained in the airconditioned comfort of the alt-tv office. it is this nature of content that has determined its position. i.e. the service is sound based as well as visual so the onlooker must be near the speakers to hear the program screened. this alt-tv screen is the first of its kind in australia; its success will determine the installation of alt-tv screens in sydney, brisbane and other cities. it's very easy to find being at such a major intersection of melbourne...while at this intersection look down swanston street and up bourke street. these vistas are probably the most culturally important to melbourne.



location: intersection of bourke and swanston streets

owner: victor smorgon group

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peter edwards

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joshua rosenthal

installed: 11 august 1998