

## LED:

### Power White Tetra™ LEDs for Tokyo and Sydney

Now that white LEDs are at the point where they can compete with white neon, it will be interesting to see how quickly the technology is accepted and implemented into major sign installations in Australia.

GELcore have recently released - Tetra Power White LED Strip featuring the next generation of high-power 1-watt LED devices. The Power White strip is a great alternative to fluorescent and neon in retail, restaurant and commercial applications. They produce 10x the light output of traditional white LEDs.

Sydney based Switched on Innovations in conjunction with Daikan Japan have supplied the first major installation in the world with the new Power White Strip. One of Japan's largest banks, UFJ, is illuminating its signs with these LEDs at a high profile site in Tokyo that compares to Times Square in New York. At least half a million people go past this site each day!

Aside from the comfort of the GE brand name, the UFJ management chose the neon alternative for its Longevity (up to 50,000 hours) and 4 year warranty. The progressive sign company Daikan, was able to supply the sign at the same price as the neon specification. How it could do this came down to the cost savings in the manufacturing process, using GELcore's Tetra™ system with pre-installed LED modules on flexible, heavy-duty wire, and a modular system to build the channel letters.

Ed Darmanin from Switched on Innovations has been providing sales and technical support to Daikan which is an interesting example of how companies can ignore local dynamics to collaborate cross-border using the latest communication technologies.

In Australia Artee Signs of Kirawee in Sydney have been the first company to use the Power White Strip. An installation in Oxford Street Sydney is about to be commissioned. David Jones and Caltex are also considering the product. Ed Darmanin says the potential of this product is absolutely enormous. Progressive sign companies like Daikan in Japan and Artee Signs in Australia are leading the way.

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Australia's got the same problem with any product, which is population. There are only so many people who can use a specific type of sign."

"Educating the Australian market is a challenge," admits Donna Blackwood, marketing manager at Adaptive Components. "Our main customers are still in the manufacturing industry. People love them and say they want them in their newsagency, for example. But when we give them a price they're a little shocked. Plus, those who are older are not so comfortable with the technology."

"A lot of people will still have the view that it's expensive and complicated," says Volker Rademacher. "And unfortunately there are products around that are complicated to use. We get a lot of neon companies coming to us who are a bit concerned. But once they get

into it they realise how easy and simple [our system] is."

"There's a fair bit of ignorance out there as to what LEDs can do," says Neil Uppington at Jefferson Bay Neon, who sounds a significant note of caution. "I don't think people really know what an LED is, because the technology is still new.

"Now [some] LED signs at airports are changing to plasma. Plasma is relatively new, but it's been more widely accepted than LEDs have because it's something that sits in people's lounge room and they are aware of it. They know what its capabilities are, although there are problems with it - the burning sensation on the screen, for example."

For fixed signage, the issue is and remains neon, and the fact that some LED suppliers are neon experts branching out. Darmanin contends many LED suppliers are doing the technology - and the end-user - a disservice by failing to properly understand it. "If they can build something that's cheaper, they will, and a lot of people will buy the cheapest thing because they don't understand what they're getting.

"Some of the early LED suppliers didn't do the industry a service at all because of problems with their systems. There were many single points of failure inherently built into the system. The LEDs were generally assembled on printed circuit boards in series parallel, a bit like Christmas tree lights: if one went out, they all went out. The other thing that kills LEDs is not having a regulated power supply, and a lot of systems only use basic transformers."

Those wondering what the future holds need look no further than the United

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## Mood Control Systems

Smartlite Australia's leading LED supplier to the signage and internal lighting market introduces its new range of Micro High Brightness RGB led bulbs and/ or fittings.

These are more than just bulbs or fittings; they are complete mood altering systems providing colour and /or motion. They are designed to retrofit into existing installations or new venues. The bulbs are available as MR16 (halogen bulb down or uplight) or Edison Screw bases to fit into existing or new light fittings; no extra drivers or wiring or transformers required just take out the old and put in the new. The most remarkable aspect of the bulb is the small hand held IRC remote system that allows full control of the bulbs and fittings. The remote allows control of colour from a choice of 16 preset colours, dimming, flashing or automatic colour change options plus many other features and combinations. One remote can control any number of fittings or bulbs. The light fittings that are available range from IP68 underwater fittings to hanging, side wall or direct ceiling fittings and different looks of round ball or cylinder. The light fittings are all driven by the above MR16 Bulb.

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