

TV's next DIMENSION

A new breed of TV is about to pour into the country as 2010 becomes the year of 3D, says **Jennifer Dudley-Nicholson**

THINK the plasma versus LCD television war is over? Think you know your LEDs and your full HD TVs? Prepare to take that knowledge to a new level this year; perhaps into a new dimension.

A 3D TV rush is predicted for 2010, with the first models due in Australian stores in less than two months.

Research firm DisplaySearch predicts consumers will buy more than 1.2 million 3D televisions in 2010, a figure that will leap to 36.2 million 3D TVs in only five years.

And that take-up could be further fuelled in Australia by the introduction of 3D Blu-ray movies, due out this June, and Foxtel's plans to broadcast 3D sports and movies next year.

But 3D televisions will come in just as many formats, sizes and shapes as other televisions, so consumers could have a challenging decision to make.

Manufacturers including Sony, Samsung, Panasonic, LG

and JVC have already committed to bringing 3D vision into Aussie lounge-rooms this year, and Curtin University research engineer Andrew Woods says the companies' plans are now being put into action.

"It was staggering to see the number of 3D displays on the show floor at (the Consumer Electronics Show) this year", he says.

"Samsung had at least 50 3D TVs on the show floor, all screening 3D content."

"3D TV will certainly take off this year, it's just a case of how fast."

Samsung will likely be the first company to launch the new breed of TVs in Australia, with a 3D version of its Series 8 television due in "early April," a spokesman confirms.

The company recently announced it was the first to begin mass production of 3D LCD and LED-backlit TVs. But Samsung also plans to dust off the LCD-versus-plasma debate by making 3D plasma TVs.



1

LG 47SL90

\$4944
LG: 1300 542 273
WWW.LGE.COM.AU
★★★★

LG's new entry into the LED market is a stylish one with a "borderless" design. The full HD 47-inch (119cm) screen has edge-to-edge glass with an anti-reflective coating. The 2.9cm-thick TV ticks all the boxes with a 3 million:1 contrast ratio, 100Hz TruMotion for smoother fast-moving images, four HDMI inputs and a USB port. Picture quality is impressive with plenty of detail in dark scenes. Colour reproduction is accurate. It also has Bluetooth so photos, music and videos can be wirelessly streamed to it.

2

SHARP LC40LB700X

\$2599
SHARP: 1300 135 530,
WWW.SHARP.NET.AU
★★★★

IT'S not a svelte LED TV but the Sharp 40-inch (101cm) panel is the only one to squeeze in a Blu-ray Disc player. There is also an Ethernet port for an internet connection so you can download bonus Blu-ray movie content. Combine this with its 1920x1080 screen and viewers have a full high-definition package. Sports and action-movie fans will appreciate its 100Hz screen that virtually eliminates motion blur. Sharp's Crystal Clear Technology is built into the panel to deliver fine picture quality.

3

SONY BRAVIA ZX1

\$4999
SONY: 1300 137 669
WWW.SONY.COM.AU
★★★★

SONY'S Bravia ZX1 resembles a piece of art. Its LED edge-lit panel is less than 1cm at its thinnest point. To achieve this look Sony has removed the tuner and inputs from the TV and placed them in a wireless box. It can send a full HD signal through the air to the screen without compromising quality. With the Bravia Engine 2 on board, the ZX1's picture is sharp and bright, and colour is realistic. The addition of Motionflow 100Hz technology allows for clear, fast-moving images, and it has four HDMI inputs and a USB port for viewing photos.

4

SAMSUNG 7000LED

\$TBA (DUE FOR RELEASE APRIL)
SAMSUNG: 1300 362 603
WWW.SAMSUNG.COM.AU
★★★★

SAMSUNG has pushed LED technology further with the 7000LED, first displayed at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Due in stores in April or May, the 7000LED's ace up its sleeve is the fact it is 3D-ready. The 40-inch (101cm) full HD screen is ready to accept a 3D signal over the airwaves, via a Foxtel iQ or from a 3D Blu-ray player. Of course, you'll need 3D active shutter glasses to see 3D. This TV is also thinner than the previous waif-like model and has a new four-leg table-top stand and backward tilt for improved viewing.

5

KOGAN LED

\$799
KOGAN: 1300 304 292,
WWW.KOGAN.COM.AU
★★★★

POTENTIAL LED TV buyers should expect higher prices for the slim-line technology, but not if the product bears the Kogan name. Kogan recently announced this 32-inch (81cm) model that comes with surprising picture quality on its 1366x768 HD screen. Colour reproduction is accurate and a solid contrast ratio renders blacks nicely for a product of this price. Being only 2cm thin, it is easily wall mountable and would suit a bedroom or kitchen. There are also three HDMI inputs on board for connecting a Blu-ray Disc player or gaming console.

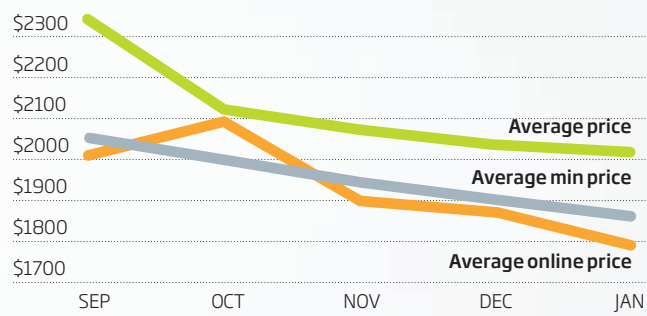
TOP GAMES 10

- 1 Mass Effect 2 (Xbox 360)
- 2 Mario Kart (Wii)
- 3 Wii Fit Plus (Wii)
- 4 Wii Play (Wii)
- 5 New Super Mario Bros (Wii)
- 6 Wii Sports Resort (Wii)
- 7 Cricket (Wii)
- 8 Modern Warfare 2 (PS3)
- 9 Mass Effect 2 (PC)
- 10 Just Dance (Wii)

SOURCE: GFK AUSTRALIA, WEEK ENDING JANUARY 31



TELEVISION PRICE PLUNGE



Long-time plasma proponent Panasonic will join this trend mid-year, according to consumer electronics group director Paul Reid.

Reid says the company will deliver full high-definition 3D plasma TVs to Australia, accompanied by 3D Blu-ray DVD players so users can experience films such as *Avatar* and *Monsters Vs Aliens* in the way they were designed to be seen. "We've put a lot of work into developing 3D TV in full high definition in order to get the best out of the technology," he says. "Seeing really is believing."

Both Panasonic's and

Samsung's offerings will use 3D Active Glasses to add the extra dimension to TV viewing. These glasses must be connected to the TV and will produce two images: one for each eye. When connected to Panasonic's 200Hz screen, these 3D glasses will deliver 100 images per second to each eye to create a smooth 3D effect. Woods says this advanced delivery is important to the success of 3D because "poorly shown 3D TV can give people a bad impression" of the technology, dooming it to the fate of 1970s-style, schlock-horror 3D.

Reid also argues that plasma

TVs will deliver a better 3D effect because of the smooth delivery of fast-moving images — a claim that will be tested when 3D TVs emerge.

He admits that 3D televisions will attract a "premium price", though, bucking a trend that has seen the average price of all TV formats fall significantly in the past year.

Retail and Technology reports the average price of panel TVs in Australia fell \$181 between 2008 and 2009 to only \$1331. New LED-backlit TVs claimed the largest price fall, though they are still in the minority.

Despite the 3D TV "tax", Woods says there will be so many 3D TVs released in 2010, tech-hungry consumers will probably upgrade to a 3D set without seeking one out, and use it to watch regular, 2D television. "In many cases the 3D capability will be on a TV set that consumers are interested in buying anyway," Woods says.

"They may not buy the 3D glasses immediately, but in time they might see the benefit in it."

THE TWEET LIFE

TECHSPERT

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How to: Befriend and influence people on Twitter

Tom Hanks is on it. Demi Moore updates it daily. But Lily Allen and Ricky Gervais are quitting.

"It" is Twitter and it's the internet's media darling.

But this website is different to established social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. A good way to think of Twitter is as a site full of Facebook status updates. Twitter users update their website regularly with tweets, which are sentences up to 140 characters in length.

It's good to join Twitter with favourite topics in mind, so your tweets are focused, but some users update the site with details of everything from their pets to their morning commute.

New users must sign up for an account at twitter.com and

should be careful to choose a catchy nickname.

Rather than friends, Twitter users accumulate followers.

You can find Twitter users worth following by searching for friends, colleagues or celebrities.

Reply to tweets by selecting a shortcut. This inserts an @ symbol before the name of your target (@mrskutcher, for example) and ensures it will appear in replies.

To "retweet" what a Twitter has said, use a shortcut or type "RT" followed by a user's name and message.

More advanced Twitter users post photos or video links in their tweets, using services such as twitpic.com or twitvideo.com

Got a question for our tech team? Email it to techspert@news.com.au

FANATICS CHOICE

www.carltonaudiovisual.com.au

See No Evil

Sick of staring at a stack of black boxes and the constant hunt for one of your seemingly hundreds of remote controls? Well why not hide the electronics away, put the speakers into the wall, and control your system from any (or every!) room of the house with a sexy, intuitive and powerful mount on your wall keypad system.

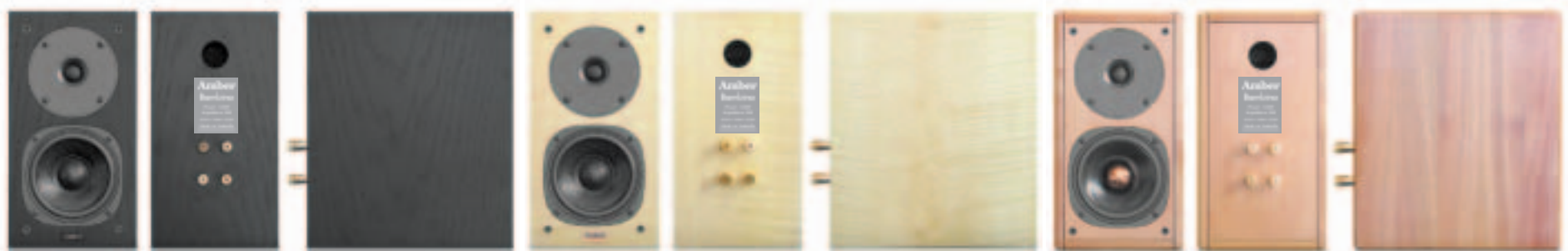
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