

Russell Place Substation signs up for Melbourne Open House 2010



an initiative of The Committee for Melbourne's Future Focus Group

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CitiPower's Russell Place Substation has joined the 2010 Melbourne Open House program, allowing the hundreds who missed out in 2009 to see it on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 July this year.

An initiative of the Committee for Melbourne now in its third year, Melbourne Open House is a free event showcasing Melbourne's unique architectural heritage. Its aim is to foster an appreciation and understanding of the value of architecture, urban design and design excellence.

MOH spokesperson Robert Larocca said last year the queues for the substation stretched down Russell Place and into Bourke Street and when the doors shut many people missed out.

"The substation is an important part of the city's infrastructure and for most people it is hidden, but on 24th and 25th of July the doors will open and visitors will get to see inside this gem.

"Once they descend three flights of stairs under Sarti's restaurant visitors will find a cavern stretching half a city block.

"The site has been part of the city's electricity supply since 1882 and the current structure was built in 1929.

"The first public electricity supply came from this site supplying electric street lighting in nearby parts of Bourke and Swanston Streets and reputedly powered the first electric lamps in the nearby Athenaeum Theatre.

"Inside, visitors will find a veritable history of electricity supply, from the highlight - the glass bulb mercury arc rectifiers - through to huge switches imported from the UK, and now the modern supply with no moving parts.

"The organising team has no doubt that the Russell Place Substation will be a star of this year's program," Mr Larocca concluded.

Keep your eye out for the 2010 program which will be available in the month before the event. The Victorian Government's State of Design Festival is the event partner of Melbourne Open House.

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