



Title: The Famous Broken Hill Silver City Cinema Saved.

Category: Heart of the Community

Club Name: Broken Hill Musicians Club

Entrant: Michael Boland

- 1. Provide an outline of the program, project or cause that addresses each of the following aspects:**
 - a. The program/project/cause objectives**
 - b. The support the club provided, i.e. was it financial, in-kind, staff volunteers or use of club facilities?**
 - c. A timeline of activities/events**
 - d. Any developments made since implementation (for example: if the support spans multiple years, how has the program grown? Will the club provide support again? Will the program be enhanced in the future?)**

As with many regional towns and cities across New South Wales, Broken Hill was staring down the barrel of losing its only Cinema, the famous 70-year-old 400-seat art deco masterpiece the Silver City Cinema.

Then came the announcement from 82-year-old John Wren, the last picture show men left in Australia, that after 40 years of ownership of the Cineam that the 31st of July 2022 will be the final curtain for the famous single-screen Theatre.

This news left Broken Hill reeling, it smashed the city like a sledgehammer, Broken Hill loves its cinema and the pride of place it takes in the CBD, one of the last reminders of the mighty days of this mighty and proud mining City. For the people of Broken Hill, losing its Cinema felt like that fateful day in 1993 when the mighty North Mine padlocked its gates for the last time.

But just like that day in 1993 when they all said Broken Hill was done for, finished and heading down the path of becoming a mining ghost town like so many other mining towns that came before it, the Cineam raised again to service the growing renewable energy boom town of Broken Hill.

The comeback path for the Silver City Cinema commenced at the Board Meeting of the Broken Hill Musicians Club on the 6th of June 2022 when a unanimous decision was passed by the Board to purchase the Broken Hill institution and save it from closure, with all current Cinema staff to be offered jobs with the Musicians Club.



After the heart of the Broken Hill community was torn from it, The Broken Hill Musicians Club stepped into that gaping hole that was left and became the Heart of the Community.

The Come Back Commences:

- 27th September 2022: Charity Screening of Grease in memory of Olivia Newton-John.

During the handover period, the Cinema reopened for a local breast cancer support group fundraiser, with the support of the Wren Family and Paramount Pictures. The Musicians Club kicked off the fundraiser with a \$1000 donation, with the combined proceeds of the event raising \$2,577 for the local charity.

August - October 2022: The renovations commence.

The Musicians Club Board has grand plans for the grand old picture house, and it commenced with new carpet, paint, lighting and floor standing. This is the first stage of turning the Theatre into a Regional New South Wales masterpiece.

November 2022 onwards: The Picture Show Returns, and the Silver Screen is back in Broken Hill.

Opening day is locked in for Thursday 10th of November, 2022, lights camera action movies are back with Black Adam, Black Panther and more.

Community:

Since the charity event and the November reopening of the Silver City Cinema, the Musicians Club has supported a number of community groups and made available the cinema available also, this as included.

Broken Hill Community Free Kid's Christmas Party and screening of DC League of Super-Pets. The Musicians Club Social Committee provided free gifts and party a party box for each child.

Menindee and Willcana Schools and School Holiday Program Screenings. Both remote indigenous communities on the banks of Barka River rely on Broken Hill as a service centre, and over a number



of years, the Broken Hill Musicians Club has provided support to both communities, and this has now extended to the Cinema with free screenings of latest release kids movies the clubs social community also provides the kids with a free drink and popcorn.

Free popcorn for all at the Broken Hill Christmas Pageant, the local Christmas Pageant rolls pass the Cinema each year, with the Cinema providing a great shaded vantage point to watch it from and during the 2022 event, the Musicians Club gave free popcorn to all, by the end of the night some 700 boxes of free popcorn had given away.

1000 free kid's tickets given to local sporting groups to be used to encourage junior sport participation.

Partnered with Screen Broken Hill and the Broken Hill City Council for a free community screening of UnIndian, with special guest the director himself Anupam Sharma, Anupam provided a Q&A session after the screening for budding local filmmakers.

Major sponsor of the Broken Hill Perfect Light Film Festival, the Cinema will also be made available to the festival organisers.

The Musicians Club is looking forward to growing our community engagement and sponsorship going forward.



2. Provide a brief insight into why this program, project or cause was supported by the club.

In your answer, summarise:

- a. **How the project, program or cause was first presented to the club. For example, did a member present it to the Board or Executive team, was it part of a ClubGRANTS submission, did it come from a local business or the community based on a need, was a survey conducted to identify areas of community need, etc.**
- b. **Why it was important to the club to support this community need.**

The Musicians Club CEO Michael completed working experience at the Cinema before moving on to his first casual job some twenty-plus years ago and knew the importance of the Cinema to the local community.

As John Wren's health started to fail him and closure looked likely, a business plan focusing on the need to keep the Cinema open for the community of Broken Hill and the surrounding area was put together, making the discussion an easy one for the Club.

Cinemas and Theatres are highly valued civic institutions in regional areas like Broken Hill, in an area of limited entertainment options, the Cinema is more than a place to watch a movie they are a place of pride, a place to network, a place to meet, a place for a first date or a 50th anniversary, a place to sneak a first kiss, a place to bring the children, a place for all.

Regional Cinemas are the Heart of the Community, and by keeping the old picture house open, the Musicians Club became the Heart of the Community and the Heart of Broken Hill.

3. Provide an outline of the positive impact the club's contribution had on the community.

The Silver City Cinema has been saved and has become once again the civic centre of Broken Hill, the Club has provided the Cinema for many local groups commencing with the charity Screening of Grease in memory of Olivia Newton-John.

Some 350 local children and their caregivers that may not have been able to access the experience of a movie on the big screen packed into the Cinema for a free screening of DC Super Pets with a party box being provided by the Musicians Club social committee.

The children in the indigenous communities of Menindee and Willcana on the banks of the mighty Barka River have been through a lot over the last few years, from drought, the world headline-making fish kill at Menindee, being unable to access basic services we all take for granted during



Covid outbreaks in 2021 and then massive flooding over the summer of 2022/23 leaving many homeless or unable to get home.

It was an absolute joy to provide over 300 free tickets to the Willcana and Menindee Public School School Holiday program. It was heartwarming to see so many happy children that have been through so much with a smile on their faces, popcorn and drink in hand heading into the Cinema to view the latest Hollywood family movies close to home in a place they feel safe and happy.

The home of famous artists such as Pro Heart and his bushman of the bush and the location of over 35 feature films including some classics and new classics such as Pracilla Queens of the Desert, Mad Max 2, the new Mad Max, Fly Doctors tv series, Last Cab to Darwin, Wake in Fright and countless tv commercials.

The community is bound to be full of creative people, and the Musicians Club loved partnering with Screen Broken Hill and the Broken Hill City Council for a free community screening of UnIndian, with special guest the director himself Anupam Sharma, Anupam provided a Q&A session after the screening for some 60 local filmmakers.

In March, the Musicians Club and the Silver City Cinema look forward to welcoming the Perfect Light Film Festival to Broken Hill and Cinema as a major sponsor of this amazing community event.

The City Council is still cleaning up all the dropped popcorn from our 700 boxes given away during the 2022 Christmas Pageant.

4. Add any credits here (optional).

The Wren Family, in particular, John Wren for trusting his legacy in the hand of the Musicians Club.

Board of the Broken Hill Musicians Club.

Broken Hill Musicians Club Members.

Mell Winert - Musicians Club Operations Manager.

Logan Pasco - Musicians Club Cinema Manager.

Barrier Truth Newspaper.

ABC Broken Hill and the Far West.

Southern Cross TV Broken Hill.

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STORY



The Community of Broken Hill.

5. Supporting material:

<https://www.facebook.com/ABCBrokenHill/videos/3112169865701392> - Facebook

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/broken-hill-cinema/101467746>

2 x articles

1 x Facebook snippet

2 x images