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A Star is Born – the Story of the Star Cinema

The Star Community Cinema is located in the grand setting of the Eaglehawk Town Hall, just a few minutes' drive from the heart of Bendigo in central Victoria, and offers a unique experience, atmosphere and film program. It has been operating as a non-profit community owned project since April 2005 and is largely run by volunteers.

The Star Cinema first operated in the Eaglehawk Town Hall in the middle of last century. History tells us that the Lyric Cinema operating in Bendigo and the Star in Eaglehawk used to swap movies at interval using the tram that ran past the Lyric in View Street all the way out to the end of the line – the Star Cinema in Eaglehawk. The tram conductor would meet the projectionists out the front and exchange reels.

The original Star Cinema ceased operating by the 1960s, likely due to the success of the introduction of television, however in 1999 a pioneering woman called Joan Rodger brought big screen cinema back to Eaglehawk with the opening of the 'new' Star Cinema. In her Star Cinema, couches replaced the hard old cinema seats, patrons were offered a glass of wine and even a meal as part of the 'gold class' package.

In early 2004, when Joan decided to retire from the world of cinema, a passionate group of people soon rallied to save the Star. After a series of public meetings and much discussion with local Council and other bodies, the Star Community Cinema Association was formed, taking over the Cinema in April 2005. Funding to purchase the business was obtained from state and federal sources, business planning and legal advice were provided free by loyal, local supporters and a new enterprise was born.

The Star Cinema is unique in Australia. It encompasses huge community engagement through its fundraising capacity and shares the space with traditional users like the Dahlia and Arts Society and the local footy club who have been using the building for generations. The Bendigo Amateur Movie Makers group now calls the Star home and are keen to start using the facility to show locally made films.

The Star is adding a unique ingredient to the arts and tourism attractions of Bendigo but more importantly it is providing a place for the Bendigo community to relax in, enjoy and be proud of. The Star celebrates community life from all over the world but loves its home in Eaglehawk.

A grand sense of history, enhanced by comfy crimson couches and a licensed bar serving up local wines and snacks, means that the Star Cinema represents a special venue for many people, local and beyond. Equally important is our film policy that ensures those who live locally have regular access to a number of films that they would otherwise miss experiencing on the big screen unless they travelled to a larger city.

If you'd like to know more or receive our monthly program of films and events, please go to our website www.starcinema.org.au or telephone 5446 2025. We look forward to seeing you soon at the Star!