



I am writing as the operator of **Paramount** Cinema / Live theatre in Echuca. The **Echuca Paramount** is a 4-screen complex incorporating a 400-seat live theatre. It is a critical piece of local cultural and civic space where people come together for Film, Live Theatre, School events, Fundraisers, Festivals, and community screenings. These are all shared public experiences. We get NO government support or recognition in current Government policy and it is time for some recognition.

National cultural policy should recognise that culture depends not only on creation, but on **access** to this content. Cinemas and Live theatre are where the public come to discover these creations. We are talking about the entire cross section of our community. From Mums with toddlers, school children, teens and adults, to the old man on a walker. Without a viable exhibition sector, all films and particularly Australian films and documentaries have fewer opportunities to be discovered, discussed and experienced.

In our community (Echuca/Moama), the Cinema/Theatre is an important part of the Tourism matrix. It is part of the reason they come ...to see a film during the school holidays! We support local employment, main street activity and help to create social connection. It brings people into nearby restaurants, cafes and retail businesses, and provides one of the most affordable regular cultural activities available to families, young people, older Australians and community groups.

The next National Cultural Policy should recognise cinema exhibition (and our Live theatre) as essential cultural and civic infrastructure. It should ensure cinemas are **eligible** for relevant cultural infrastructure and regional development policy and funding. We also ask government to recognise the emerging Digital Mark II challenge. Our projection and related digital equipment were installed 8 years ago when our Complex changed from film to digital – it is now time for the next equipment upgrade. Our Live Theatre needs a lighting upgrade and mixing equipment upgrades. This all costs a lot of money, however, is essential for the customer experience.

Nationally, Independent Cinema Association (ICA) estimates that approximately 60% of the cinema projection fleet may require replacement or major refurbishment over the next four years, creating an estimated \$138 million renewal task. Without a planned national approach, some communities will lose access to local cinema or see service quality decline. A policy that supports Australian stories should also support the places where they are shown and that place is our local Cinema **"The Paramount"**.

Regards

Tim Davey (Director)

Paramount Cinema/Theatre Echuca