

## **Chair's Report Victoria Theatre Trust November 2020**

This has been a tough year for all New Zealand businesses, including cinema and the Victoria Theatre is no exception.

Having to endure two Covid lockdowns has meant our audience numbers for the year have dropped 30% on last year.

The Trust is giving financial relief to our operator the Vic Ltd, by effectively granting rental rebates on customer numbers and we have supported manager Philipp Jaser in every way we can through this year.

It will be quite some time until customer numbers recover to past years as new movies become available.

### **Fund Raising**

Early this year we began a Givealittle Page for the foyer restoration. Before Covid hit we had raised nearly \$70,000 including one \$50,000 donation from a private heritage trust. However with the lockdown hitting the country we decided to put a hold on our fund-raising programme. This will mean a delay to restoration project but we do plan to start this up again next year.

We did want to acknowledge the community support the Vic continues to receive from the community and so we celebrated the Vic's 108<sup>th</sup> birthday with a free film screening of The Great Gatsby. It has been ten years since we re-opened the theatre and we thought this was a good reason to celebrate the Vic's continued survival.

### **Our Audience**

Audience numbers have been increasing in the last two months but one problem has been that while the cinemas are open the movie offering has been much reduced. This is because the studios do not want to release films here until they cannot be released in the Northern Hemisphere. And of course they are largely closed.

Philipp Jaser has been doing a great job accessing a range of art house, classic and children's movies and tickets sales are getting back to near normal levels.

However the situation is improving and as more movies are released we are confident that the Vic will soon be thriving once again.

Around 12% of patrons are for live shows and private hires.

The Vic is still popular as a venue for local fund-raising events.

We held our third play reading series again this year with a range of new and classic plays with 130 people attending. We had some support from the Devonport/Takapuna Local Board and plan to continue with the series in the years ahead.

### **Income and Expenditure**

The audited accounts to end Oct 2019 are available on the Charities Website and we have copies here tonight. Our treasurer is available for any questions.

Over the previous 4 years the Vic has filled seats in the early 60 thousand per year with a public throughput of some 80,000. This last calendar year Covid has dropped this overall by a third and currently attendance is running at 40% down on last year. This is not

expected to significantly improve until sometime next year when new movie distribution is no longer restricted.

Operating revenue has been some \$55,000 plus another \$55,000 from grants. \$35,000 of operating revenue has been spent on maintenance and minor enhancements and after other costs have left an operating surplus of \$7,000. Separate to this the foyer refurbishment fund stands at \$70,000 towards the \$830,000 needed.

Enhancements have included completion of the multi-use Lounge bar/Cinema 4 space plus improved safety to the upstairs Albert Cinema with more handrails and floor lighting. Planning for changes to the footpath levels at the entry to accommodate wheelchair access are also nearing fruition.

The discovery of the 6 original drawings for the Vic held in the Auckland university archives is of more than a little interest to us. Copies are here tonight and reveal some of the original detailing.

### **The Trust Board**

We have a very stable board and all current members are continuing into the next year. Graham Chapman a civil engineer and a new resident in Devonport, has recently joined the Trust. Graham has an interest in heritage buildings and brings experience on trust boards. Libby Boyd and Hamish Grotian remain as trustees.

David Harrop continues as treasurer, Mark Pearce as secretary and Mark Sigglekow and Margot McRae as co-chairs.