

## STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

### Pioneer Walk-In Picture Theatre and Kenna Residence, Alice Springs

The Pioneer Walk-In Picture Theatre is located on the corner of Parsons Street and Leichhardt Terrace in Alice Springs. It was built in c1942 by Mr Leslie Joseph ('Snow') Kenna, a prominent figure in Alice Springs from when he arrived in 1934 until his death in 1967.

For many years the Pioneer Theatre played an important role in the social life of people in the Alice Springs region. It is strongly associated with the development of the film and cinema industry in the Northern Territory, from the silent films of the 1930s through to the development of 'cinemascope' films in the 1950s and beyond. The Film 'A Town Like Alice' premiered there on 24 July 1956.

The Pioneer Theatre ceased operating as a cinema in the mid-1980s, and was converted into a Market Place. In 1988, plans to demolish the building were prevented by community protest. It was subsequently purchased by Youth Hostels Australia and transformed into a Youth Hostel.

The site includes the former cinema itself, with the entry, projection room, open-air seating area, and screen still apparent; and the single storey 'Kenna Residence'. The tower above the entry, with its distinctive Art Deco styling, remains a landmark in Alice Springs.

The cinema is believed to be the only remaining example of an open air picture theatre in the Northern Territory.