

Summer cinema brings stars out

■ Russell Quinn

OUTDOOR cinemas, a mainstay of Perth's summer events calendar, are continuing their spread in the state's popular regional tourist centres.

Long-time favourites in the metro area include the Somerville at the University of Western Australia and the Pines Picture Gardens at Edith Cowan University's Joondalup campus, both of which operate as part of the Perth International Arts Festival.

"It's a tourist icon, it's one of the things to do in Broome."

- Paul Thomson

Deckchair seating for 1,000 and 600 respectively, along with nine Australian premieres this season and a 60-plus-year history at the Somerville (Joondalup enters its 11th season this year) ensure the PIAF offering remains Perth's most highly attended film festival.

Competing open-air venues in and

around Perth include Luna Palace Cinemas, which operates two outdoor cinemas - The Camelot in Mosman Park, which often features live blues and jazz to go with oysters and wood-fired pizzas, and the courtyard of Luna Outdoor in the heart of Leederville.

Movies By Burswood, found on the parklands near the casino, donates all profits to children's charities, while Kings Park's Moonlight Cinema presents Hollywood and cult classics until mid-March.

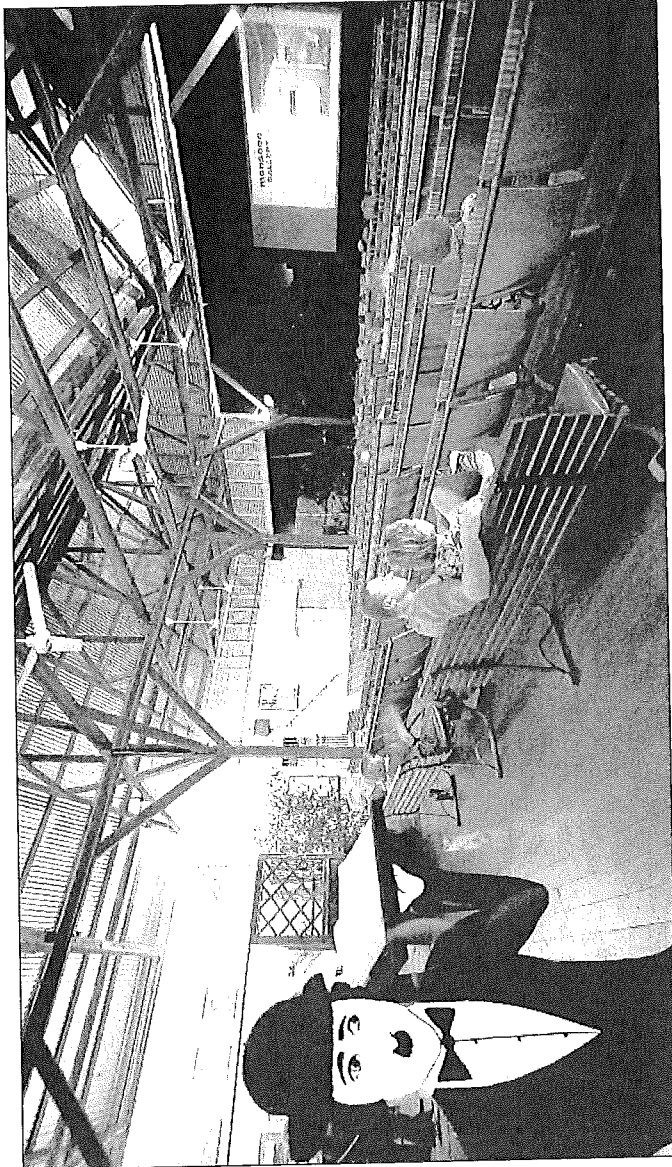
However, these two require patrons to bring their own chairs or rugs, as there aren't any deckchairs provided.

Further afield, Mundaring's Kookaburra Outdoor provides deck chair seating for about 120 in a bush setting, screening only on weekends until Easter, while Fremantle's Bohemia Outdoor at Princess May Park will run for three weeks in February.

But it's the regional areas of WA that are boasting the latest additions to alfresco cinema.

The world's oldest 'open-air picture garden', according to Guinness World Records, is Sun Pictures, located in Broome's Chinatown.

Almost six months ago the cinema's landowners, Ross Dewit and Marissa Ferraz granted a 20-year lease to Sun Pictures colleague and



BROOME SPECIAL: Sun Pictures, located in Broome's Chinatown, is the world's oldest open-air picture garden, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

coming over the top and people are sitting there - it's a very special place."

Previous outdoor cinema experiences (and a quiet word from a sibling) inspired Rainbow Jungle parrot park owner, Amber Kelly and her husband, Kevin, to establish Parrotiso's Outdoor Cinema on Red Bluff Road in Kalbarri two years ago.

Mrs Kelly says operating the cinema is challenging but worth the effort considering there aren't any other cinemas in town and it's something for families to do.

"It really took off last year as word spread about what we were

doing during the school holidays," she says. Margaret River film fan Matt Wilson is hoping to launch the inaugural Margaret River Outdoor Film Festival in January at the Margaret River Education Campus in the town's centre, pending approval from the university.

Grass Cinema, as it hopes to be called, plans to screen movies on Friday and Saturday until the end of February.

And property developer Nigel Satterley says he will put on a second free outdoor cinema event at his Busselton development, Provence Estate, early next year for residents of the local community.

owner of the pearling town's twin indoor cinema (called Sun Cinemas), Paul Thomson.

Mr Thomson says he took on the outdoor business after prospective buyers for both Sun Pictures and Sun Cinemas couldn't be found, despite the open-air offering having another successful tourist season (from April to October).

"People like to be outside, they don't want to sit inside, they want the freedom of being outside and looking up at the stars," he says.

"It's a tourist icon, it's one of the things to do in Broome.

"The cinema is right in the middle of a flight path, so the planes are