



Open Air Cinema:

The definitive guide

*Everything you wanted to know about outdoor movies,
but were afraid to ask*



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Why people love outdoor movies

History of Open Air Cinema

Open-air cinema is over a hundred years old; it was invented in the same decade as the aeroplane and the automobile.

The oldest constantly operating outdoor cinema, Sun Pictures, is located in Broome, Western Australia. According to Guinness World Records, it holds the title of the **Oldest Open-Air Cinema in Operation**. This year, it is celebrating 100 years since its opening night on 9th of December 1916!

First drive-in cinema was invented in 1914 in Las Cruces, New Mexico (USA). **The first Australian drive-in** opened in 1954 in Burwood, a suburb of Melbourne. Drive-ins were great for families with small children.

Highly popular in sixties and seventies of the 20th century, drive-in cinemas eventually went out of style. There are only a handful of them still in operation in Australia, simply because the land they occupied became too valuable. Yet, drive-ins are still adored by many people around the World.

First Australian Drive-in opened in 1954 in Burwood, Victoria.



Sun Pictures in 1950s. Broome, Western Australia



Resurgence of Outdoor Movies began early this century, with the invention of inflatable movie screens.

Lightweight, wind resistant and portable, they made it possible for companies to bring movies to remote places and to create movie theatre in any location. The inflatable movie screen found its legs initially in Germany, followed by the USA.

It came to Australia thanks to the enthusiasm and persistence of outdoor movie specialists, such as Smart Digital Australia.

Technology of movie projectors has also changed. The profession of projectionist is becoming obsolete. Projection booth with movie projector was replaced by the digital (or video) projector. DLP (digital light processing) is the most widely used cinema technology since 1999. DLP is considered the best solution for outdoor movies.

Changing values of our society also played a role in open-air cinema comeback. People want to spend more time outdoors, and to be together with friends and family. Open air cinema gives just that – breathtaking scenery, fresh air, opportunity for socializing and positive emotions.

Open Air Cinema Today

Traditional, or hardtop, cinemas work really well for the latest movie releases. However, not everybody goes to the cinema to watch the latest movie.

Families with small children, people with disabilities, people living in remote communities, far from traditional movie theatres, may find it difficult to go to the traditional movie theatre.

Going to the movies can be a costly entertainment, so if there is a more affordable opportunity, we will all jump into it.

All of us would go to the movies to be entertained and be relieved of the pressures of the day. What we need is having a relaxed and entertaining experience. You do not need the latest movie to achieve that!

The open air cinema is an experience very different from the traditional movie session. Imagine sitting on a deck chair or on the grass, having a laugh and a giggle with your friends over a glass of champagne and a BBQ or snacks,

enjoying the warmth of the summer night. Truly a memorable and fantastic experience!

Outdoor cinema has a romantic flair about it. The movie screen can be located among the most beautiful scenery or near iconic architectural landmarks, like in this selection of the [best open-air cinemas in Europe](#). Outdoor movie theatre can bring unusual and even bizarre experience, like [hot tub cinema](#) in New York. For many drive-in devotees from yesteryear, it is a great way of traveling back in time for recollection of the day they were taking their partner to the drive-in for a fun and entertaining night out.

Australia, with its laid-back outdoor culture and great weather, is a fertile ground for open air cinemas. The popularity of outdoor movies is definitely on the rise. New outdoor venues appear every year; inflatable screens have become a must-have feature of many small businesses, such as holiday parks, beer gardens, sports clubs and hotels. Local councils offer movies in the parks for community, because we all love outdoor movie nights!



One of the most famous outdoor cinemas in Rome, Italy

Types of outdoor movie events

Outdoor cinema systems are used for a wide range of events, both paid and free, each of them having their own peculiarities.

- ▶ fundraising event – very popular with schools, sporting and social clubs
- ▶ community / local government event – popular with local councils and service/community groups
- ▶ cultural diversity events – popular community events for cultural and indigenous groups
- ▶ corporate event – great for staff and customer relationship building
- ▶ business event – paid screenings at outdoor cinemas and other venues
- ▶ drive-in movies – old-style outdoor movies
- ▶ dive-in movies – perfect for aquatic centres
- ▶ backyard movie events – for home

Fundraising events

Fundraising events are one of the most popular applications for outdoor movies. Schools and sporting clubs are always looking for fresh and innovative fundraising ideas. Outdoor movie events have proved to be both efficient fundraisers and highly entertaining activities. Their popularity is on the rise, which comes to no surprise: Regular fetes and BBQ have been around for many years, while outdoor movies are still a novelty.

Planning a fundraiser? Do your maths to find out whether it will be beneficial to own the screen or to hire it.

It depends on whether you are planning a one-of fundraiser or going to run a series of movie nights. It also depends on whether you could use the equipment for other activities. For example, schools are using projectors and audio video control systems on a regular basis. Sports venues organise holiday programs for kids, and movies can be incorporated in the program.



Decide on the ways of generating revenue. Consider the following options:

- ▶ set up entry fee
- ▶ sell merchandise
- ▶ offer food and beverage
- ▶ provide other related paid activities (jumping castle, face painting)
- ▶ attract sponsorship

Community events

Local government councils are always looking for new ways of engaging their local community. Outdoor movie brings the community together in a relaxed and happy environment. The gathering also provides an opportunity to communicate important information to the community.

Local government councils are one of the biggest organizers of outdoor movie events. There are a number of reasons outdoor movies work for councils:

- ▶ Outdoor movies are a great reason for the community to get together to have fun and relax
- ▶ The event enables the council to bring the community to a specific venue or back into the CBD
- ▶ The council can communicate with the community in a relaxed manner, educate people on certain topics and promote ideas
- ▶ The council is being seen to do something for the community
- ▶ The council can provide entertainment for specific ethnic or specific interest communities

There are two major and specific issues that come into play when a local government body is involved. When an organizer wants to provide an event for the community on council owned property the demands by the council can be quite onerous and demanding. Equally when the council engages an outdoor cinema operator to provide the event, the council also will have certain demands to the operator.



When an organizer wants to provide an event for the community, for fun or for profit, councils will generally demand some or all of the following:

- ▶ Town planning permit
- ▶ Occupancy certificate
- ▶ Event permission (Which will encompass things like security, water, first aid, lights, toilets, parking, neighbourhood consent, and sound).

When an outdoor cinema operator is engaged by the council, the permits and certificates are probably not required.



However, among the demands to the operators, there will be the requirement to organise security. Some council venues will not allow stakes placed in the ground so weights will be required for the screen. Generally electrical cables used at council events or on council property will need to be tagged and tested every 3 months.

Cultural events

Up until recently, outdoor movie events have been screened only for larger community events. Now with smaller size outdoor inflatable movie screens, smaller events are possible in more compact areas. This is perfect for specific or ethnic/indigenous communities.



Outdoor movie events really work for indigenous communities.

Most of these communities are in remote areas far from civilization and modern amenities, including hardtop cinemas. Outdoor movies can be used to entertain, to provide training and to educate. Many of these communities are looking for creative ways of keeping the younger generation in a healthy and caring environment.

Outdoor movies can greatly assist with this. The events need not be expensive. Apart from movies, the movie systems can be used for Blue Light Disco, showing live sport events, musical videos, and playing active computer games.

Drive-ins

An alternative to the typical outdoor movie event is the drive-in. The equipment required to screen the movie is the same as normal but the sound is broadcasted on FM so that everybody can receive the film's soundtrack on their car radio, phone or most MP3 players with the FM radio. Drive-ins work particularly well in the cooler months and as a novelty to the normal outdoor movie event.

The inflatable movie screen will be a big one, typically 10-12 metres wide with a skirt of about 2 metres, so everybody can see the movie. The projector will need an output of 6,500 to 10,000 ANSI lumens. Plan the parking layout to optimise attendance capacity. Four wheel drive vehicles need their own parking area so everybody could see the screen.



Backyard Movies

Backyard movies are the latest craze and a huge success. Backyard movie theatre can bring the experience of an outdoor movie event right to your doorstep, to the comfort of your own backyard.

Thanks to the latest technology, outdoor movies have come down in size and can now be screened in the average backyard. It is possible to watch not only movies but also live sports and TV in your own backyard or perhaps maybe on your farm! Imagine sharing the event with Daisy or even Donald and all your friends and relatives!

Imagine! In your own home or backyard you can very easily screen:

- ▶ DVD movies
- ▶ Live TV/Sports
- ▶ Cable TV
- ▶ Electronic games such as PlayStation, Xbox and Wii
- ▶ Computer images

Think comfort and convenience. With your own backyard you can place whatever cosy bit of furniture! Why not take a couch outside and snuggle up to your loved one whilst the kids enjoy the fresh air and play active computer games. Invite your mates over and watch the big game live on the giant inflatable movie screen whilst enjoying the BBQ with cool refreshments. The big game could be followed by the movie of your choice. How cool is that! The possibilities are limitless.

Backyard cinema events are great for:

- ▶ Movie parties
- ▶ Birthdays
- ▶ Anniversaries
- ▶ Wedding parties
- ▶ Major sport events

The new Backyard Movie System makes it very easy. It takes 3 minutes to inflate the screen. All you need is to connect the powered speakers, super bright HD projector and your own playback device – you are ready for hours of entertainment on the fresh air!



How to prepare a movie night

Venue: Where to screen?

Outdoor movies can be held wherever the organizer wishes to screen the movie. If it is on council grounds, a number of permits will generally be required. Local government councils have specific requirements, so allow plenty of time to negotiate your requirements with the appropriate people at the council.

School grounds of course are very popular, particularly when the school is hosting the event. Other less obvious locations include country and suburban race tracks, sports grounds, caravan parks, shopping centre car parks and company premises.

The basic requirements to be considered at any venue include parking, security, lighting, water, permits, if any, and catering.

Decide what type of seating is expected. Are you planning to provide beanbags, blankets or summer chairs? Will the visitors be sitting on the grass? In this case, advise them to bring rugs, low beach chairs or camping chairs.



Outdoors or Indoors?

The weather will normally make this decision very obvious! In the summertime the inflatable outdoor movie screens will give a magnificent picture anywhere it is practical.

The size of the screen is determined by two factors: the size of the audience and the venue. A smallish screen will look great near the swimming pool of a holiday resort, while if the background is the vast open landscape with a mountain at the back, the small screen will be lost in this space!



Australia is blessed with some absolutely fantastic and picturesque places to hold outdoor movies. Think about:

- ▶ Beach foreshore
- ▶ Parks and gardens
- ▶ Sports grounds
- ▶ Town square
- ▶ Horse racing grounds
- ▶ School grounds
- ▶ Golf courses
- ▶ Swim pool centres
- ▶ Show grounds

The good thing is that screening movies does not have to cease when the summer has finished. Movies look great indoor in basketball stadiums, gym centres, club rooms, town halls, aquatic centres and the like. For indoor use we recommend portable screens, like [SmartFold](#).

Weather; Cancellations

Naturally for an outdoor movie event the weather is all important! The three important elements within weather are rain, wind and temperature. The most important thing to remember is that people only attend outdoor movie events is for fun and entertainment. They do not have to be there! Therefore if it is blowing a gale or raining, people will simply not attend.

Conversely, if it is a beautiful, warm evening, it is reasonable to expect a very good attendance, all things being equal.

There is however some good news! Wind normally dies down with the sunset. So it maybe blowy at 4.00 PM and one may well wonder if the evening will go ahead. On most occasions, the wind will be negligible by sunset. The further inland the more stable the conditions are. As with all rules, there can always be an exception to this rule.

Generally speaking, the Weather Bureau gets it right, but as we all know, not always! Mother Nature is very keen to remind us - she is the boss around here! The Bureau predicts the weather 7 days in advance.

Two or three days before the event check the weather forecast. If it gives an unqualified report of "sunny" for the big day, it probably will be. On the other hand if it says "stormy weather with gale force winds", it probably will be. The tricky part is when it says something like "possible isolated showers with periods of sunshine"!

If you need to cancel / postpone paid event, it's a good idea to notify the ticket holders sending SMS to their mobile phones. In all circumstances, keep communicating with the audience using your social media channels.

You need to have a backup plan for an alternative date. Most equipment providers will offer a weather guarantee which provides an alternative screening under condition that the event has been postponed by the agreed time. It is important to make alternative arrangements before the technical crew has departed from base. Once they are on the way, the organizer will be up for technical crew costs as a minimum.



What to take into consideration?

- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Toilets
- ▶ Lighting – it is dark when the movie finishes!
- ▶ Safety and security – inform the Police of your event. Consider using crowd control fencing
- ▶ Ticket sales and distribution
- ▶ First aid – you may need to have St John Ambulance or a Level II certified first aid person in attendance
- ▶ Water fountains may be required
- ▶ Catering arrangements – check with the local council for food handling requirements

Movie Selection

One of the more difficult questions asked is what movie title should be screened at the big event. There is no easy answer to this. A good solution is to get a few people together and form a workable subcommittee to select the movie. The first thing to do is define the audience. Is it going to be a family event, an adult movie, a children's event or something else? Generally movies on DVD/Blu-Ray disc are available 6 to 8 weeks after they have finished screening at the local hardtop cinema.

Double headers, or 2 movies on the same night, can be popular. To be successful, they need to be of a similar classification. Screening a kids' movie followed by an adult movie generally does not work. The parents cannot be at home with the kids and be at the movies at the same time.

To ensure a good attendance it is critical to screen the right movie for the occasion. If you are encouraging families to attend, keep the movie rating to G or perhaps PG. Disney movies are always a safe choice. There are many others which are family friendly, but remember the ratings are there for a reason!

Family movies are best shown on a Saturday night when the whole family can be there. Higher rated movies may be better screened mid-week.

You will never be allowed to screen a movie that is on at the same time as in a regular cinema. Some movies are not available for outdoor screening but may be available for indoor screening.

The best solution is to select say 3 to 5 movies and send in the request for the film licence to the distributor. You will normally receive a response within 24 hours advising availability and cost.

Many movies are available in 35 mm film format as well as on DVD. The advantage of 35 mm film is the movie can normally be screened earlier than a film being screened on DVD. The disadvantage of film is that it is considerably more expensive to set up and operate on the night. A 35 mm projector is a big and expensive piece of equipment and a licensed projectionist is normally required to operate the equipment. The alternative with DVD is much simpler; No licensed operator and a lot less equipment is required. However for commercial events an experienced audio visual technician is normally employed to set up and screen and the projection equipment for the movie night.

Movie catalogues are available at: roadshow.com.au and amalgamatedmovies.com



Licence

In general, the Commonwealth Copyright Act allows movies screened in a private backyard to be free of any licence requirement. Beyond the backyard, all screenings are deemed to be a public performance and liable to licence requirement. This includes movies screened on private land such as private golf clubs and the like.

There are two main licensors of movie rights in Australia, Roadshow on behalf of the most film studios and film distributors, and Amalgamated Movies on behalf of Sony/Tristar.

There are a number of other art houses which provide licenses for their studios, but the above licensors control about 95% of all film studios.

Film studios generally charge a flat fee for the movie licence or a percentage of the gate takings. Factors involved in determining the fee include:

- ▶ The customer. A primary school fundraiser will attract a lower fee than a corporate end user!
- ▶ The distance from the nearest hard top cinema
- ▶ The expected size of the audience

The penalty for screening a movie without a licence is generally up to \$250,000 for the promoter and for the exhibitor. The procedure for obtaining a licence is for the promoter or exhibitor to get in touch with the licensor and request permission to screen the stated movie. The licensor will request specific information and then give the permission to screen on payment of the licence fee. Not all film studios and not all films are available for licensing all the time. When seeking a licence it is wise to request 3 to 5 movies in case the number one choice is not available. For Roadshow movies apply at: roadshowppl.com.au and for Sony/Tristar apply at amalgamatedmovies.com.

Planning to show TV programs? No license is required for live events broadcasted via free-to-air television.

Security



Most public events require a security presence. Security is required for two reasons: to look after the audience and to protect the exhibitors' equipment. Some children and indeed some adults are wilder than others! It is important that the technical crew is allowed to inflate and assemble the equipment in an orderly manner. Unfortunately some children become very excited and need to share their love of ice cream and cola with the outdoor movie screen! The equipment is expensive and this behaviour is simply not acceptable. It also prevents the technical crew from getting the movie to start at the agreed time.

Either a security guard or a suitable adult should be in the vicinity of the screen before and after the movie screening.

The technical crew should also provide simple security barriers or temporary crowd control fencing which for the most people will provide an automatic no go environment around the screen and equipment.

Regulations (smoking, alcohol, pets)



Open Air Cinema is, in most cases, a smoke-free event. However, it may be a good idea to have a “smoker’s corner” where the breeze will not blow the smoke across the audience and annoy non-smoker. The availability of such a facility should be sign posted and included in the announcements prior to the start of the movie.

Decide on whether the event will be alcohol-free. Many events offer a licensed bar and also allow BYO.

As long as alcohol is consumed responsibly, rubbish bins are provided and security guards are on the watch, there should not be a problem.

Allowing pets can attract many dog-owners. All you need is a set of rules. We recommend restricting the entry of dangerous and restricted breeds and advising the owners to keep dogs on the leash, so that everybody’s experience is positive.



How to make a movie night a success

The movie or the live TV event is only a part of the evening’s experience. It is important that when the people leave at the end of the evening, they say: “Wow! What a great night!”, “What a blast!”

To give the viewer a fantastic experience, whether they are attending a fundraiser, a free event or a commercial movie night, we recommend combining the movie with other experiences, creating a terrific night out.

As an example, the promoter might decide to screen The Blues Brothers - truly a successful, fantastic and entertaining movie. But screening it on its own would be a little ho-hum! Imagine having a live Blues Brothers Band playing, all dressed up in the gear, while the audience is watching the sun going down and waiting for the movie to start.

Add a stall called “Soul Food Café”, serve fried chickens and an Orange Whip, referencing to the movie scenes, and all of a sudden we have a wild and entertaining experience. The viewers will not forget that night for a long time. Everyone will also talk a lot and tell all their friends about a great time they had at the outdoor movie night!



Here are some more ideas to make the event/party a really enjoyable evening.

The first is to provide live music playing as people arrive and up to the start of the movie. This is neither difficult nor expensive. A three piece band, playing music appropriate to the event, gets everybody into the right mood. Normally cool jazz or smooth pop music work really well. One of the organizers might know somebody who plays in a band. Senior kids from the school are often looking for live experience and will play for that experience and for watching the movie for free! As always, it is just a matter of how you put it to them, or how you sell the idea! Think about it for a moment.

No access to live bands? Use the power of speakers supplied with the system. Play a CD or broadcast a radio station (a great way to promote your local community radio station or get a sponsorship from a famous FM!).

Another idea is to play console games from producers like Nintendo, PlayStation or Xbox. Games on the big screen are always a big hit.

However, if you have a lot of kids, small or big, then you may have a problem, as not enough kids will get a go. With majority of console games, you can only play up to 4 people at a time. Fear not, as there is a solution! Use Just Dance, a rhythm game available on all gaming platforms. It can even be played with a smartphone app!



There are no controllers to worry about, and excellent music with a great beat makes everybody move. Experience shows that almost everybody gets up and dances, from bubs to seniors. It is that captivating!



The good thing about the dance idea is that it does not require a brilliant image on the screen. People understand that the image on the screen will improve as the sun sets.

Outdoor cinema allows connecting the movie with life. Showing a movie about dogs? Allow the dog owners bring their pets and run a little dog show. Screening a film for Valentine's Day? Add chocolate, flowers and champagne. Showing the movie for the kids? Invite a face painter and a balloon twister; let the little ones jump on the thematic jumping castle.

Whatever you do, you need to create the atmosphere, get everybody into a great mood and relieve people of the day's pressures.

They will soon relax and enjoy themselves. They will depart saying -what a great evening it was! The other good part is that the cost is minimal, if anything at all. Enjoy!

Promoting event

Every movie event, no matter who the organizer is, requires promotion. But so does any event when you are inviting more than a couple of friends!

A professional event organizer will often consider the following basic fundamentals which of course will vary from client to client:

- ▶ Advertisements and PR in the local newspaper
- ▶ Promoting event online, via social media
- ▶ Radio advertising and PR (consider offering free giveaways)
- ▶ Paid TV advertising
- ▶ Signage outside the intended venue
- ▶ Posters in retail shop windows
- ▶ Posters and movie schedules in hotels, motels and caravan park reception desks
- ▶ School newsletters
- ▶ Direct mail
- ▶ Screen advertising for the next week's movie schedule
- ▶ Submitting event to [WeekendNotes](#) and relevant websites

Attracting audience requires time, so allow for it! The normal time from announcement to show time is about four weeks. People need time to plan and prepare and to get them into frenzy! It is important that people start talking about the upcoming event, share it on social media and get excited.

Once good people are at the event, it is important to follow through and give them a great time. When people talk about what a great night out they had at the outdoor movie, it makes having a follow up event at a subsequent time a real breeze!



How to set up the movie system

It is a good idea to appoint one person to be responsible for looking after and setting up and pulling down the gear.

Manpower needs to be arranged for the various event activities. Projection area may need to be made secure and cable covers may need to be provided for cables within the

Technical set-up

The very first thing to do with screening a movie for a client is to be prepared. It is important to know the movie licence is in place. A site inspection is a very good idea, particularly for larger or far away events with complications. Are there any ambient light problems which could wash the glorious movie picture right off the screen? This can easily happen with car parks and street lights. It is obviously essential to anticipate the size of the audience so as to know the size of the inflatable movie screen to take to site plus the amount of the audio requirements!

Security of the equipment and of the patrons is important. It is a good idea to place a security fence around the intended front of the movie screen. This can be as simple as hi-vis traffic cones, lightweight crowd control barriers or special signage.



Ground Preparation and screen set-up

To set up an inflatable movie screen the ground should first be cleared of sharp objects and then the tarpaulin laid down. The movie screen is then rolled out, unfolded and tethered correctly. **Only then it is inflated.**

The outdoor inflatable movie screen should be the first item to install because that is what the event organizer wants to see, and that is what provides the wow factor for the event.

A site visit or description is therefore highly important. It must be determined if the event is to be set up on the

surface. If it is to be on grass, the question must be asked if stakes or pegs are allowed or should weights be used.

If the event is on a hard surface there is of course no discussion! Shot weights are very popular for this task. Where water saving is not an issue, water containers will also do the job.

The movie screen should have adequate skirt so that the people up the back can see clearly. The skirt is the distance from the ground to the bottom of the white image area. A 5 metre screen as an example will have a skirt of at least 1 metre whilst a 10 metre wide screen will have a skirt of about 2 metres.

The inflatable movie screen must be tethered to the ground. This is for both safety and stability. If a big wind blast suddenly comes up and the screen is not tethered, it may suddenly take off! This could be very dangerous!

Quality outdoor inflatable movie screens are generally certified to withstand winds of up to about 35 km/h. If the

screen is correctly tethered, winds will not be a problem.

However, in case of strong winds the attendance will be minimal. People only attend outdoor movie events because it is fun and relaxing. A gale force wind of 35 km/h plus does not fit into this definition!



Sound

It is important to get the sound system working as soon as possible and start playing the agreed music out to the audience. This will ensure a great environment with lots of very happy people. The music will get everybody in the right frame of mind, make them relaxed and happy. Everyone will have a night to remember.

The two most important things with a movie are image quality and sound. High quality stereo sound is paramount. 5.1 and 7.1 are a waste of time, because there are no walls in the great outdoors!

Active or powered speakers work really well with outdoor movie. They are easy to set up and provide high quality clean sound. If you can see the movie image clearly and hear the movie soundtrack, you will have the most enjoyable evening. However without one of those, all will be lost.

Projection

A decision must be made to use front or rear projection. This is easy with 3 to 5 metre wide screens featuring an easily removable nylon black back on the screen frame. Real estate may determine the availability of rear projection. Rear projection can be tidier and away from the audience, but does not work in all circumstances. When a professional rear projection screen surface is used, there will be a drop off of brightness of about 510%. When the theatrical quality Lycra screen material is used, the decrease of brightness will be minimal.

Most inflatable outdoor movie screens have an aspect ratio of 16:9, otherwise known as HD, or wide screen. Most DVD movies are published in this ratio. Blue Ray movies have a slightly different aspect ratio but will generally work well with the DVD HD ratio.

A big question often asked is how bright the projector must be to place a great image on the movie screen. In short, a lot less than you anticipate!

We have all worked with projectors in the office and at home where there is lots of light, if not ambient light. The big difference with outdoor movies is that there is no ambient light with the exception of street or car parking lights. For a 3-4 metre wide screen we find 2300 ANSI lumens to be adequate.

For a 5 metre screen we normally use 3000 ANSI lumens. For a 6-8 metre screen we would normally recommend 4,000 to 5,000 ANSI lumens. For a 10 metre wide screen we would recommend a projector with about 6,000 ANSI lumens.

Certainly you can use more lumens if you wish; you will not get any allergy for using too many lumens! The snag is that once you have reached a screen's optimum level of brightness doubling the ANSI lumens will not double the visible brightness to the human eye.

There are two major projector types around at the moment, LCD and DLP. Liquid Crystal Display is largely a Japanese invention whilst DLP comes to us from Texas Instruments. DLP has got considerably better over time and is now the preferred technical solution for movie projection. DLP is sharp, crystal clear and the blacks are considerably blacker than the alternative.

A professional operator will carry a spare set of all major components. This is critical with cables, DVD players and projectors. It is too late to run back to base when the event is about to start!

Power

The availability of electrical power is a critical requirement. Luckily for DVD movies, normal single phase household power is sufficient. If a power outlet is not available within about 50-60 metres, a generator may be required.

A generator with inverter provides the best quality power. For most movie systems a 5 KVA generator is suitable. The blower should be operated from a different power point to the rest of the equipment, if possible.



How to generate revenue with outdoor movies

Before making profit, calculate your expenses.

Expenditure for the event will include but not necessarily limited to:

- ▶ movie licence fee
- ▶ purchase of food and beverages
- ▶ entertainment provided, such as clowns, music and so forth
- ▶ provision of movie technical operation
- ▶ security
- ▶ permits
- ▶ promotion

As for the revenue, the first and most obvious idea is ticket sales - that goes without saying! Apart from selling tickets, there are a lot of ways of making profit from a movie night.



Sponsorship

One of the easiest is to sell sponsorship and/or advertising on the big screen prior to screening of the movie.

At the big end of town you can go and get a bank or a car manufacturer to sponsor the event for a large amount of money. At the other end of town you could get 20 small businesses like hair dressers, builders and plumbers to get an ad on the big screen for as little as \$100 each. Or something in between!

The big boys can provide TV commercials for screening with all the bells and whistles. Other folk may be happy to simply have their business card scanned and made into a

PowerPoint slide and shown as an advertisement on the big screen. There are many low cost alternatives between the two types of productions.

Promotional messages can include banners at the bottom of the screen below the white viewing area, banners along fences, handouts and posters. Any promotional message can include a line like "Sponsored by...." with the advertiser's logos.



Screen advertising

Movie events are a great opportunity to screen promotional slides. These can be used for sponsors' announcements, paid advertising, community announcements and of course venue announcements.

A winery hosting a movie event has a great opportunity to showcase their products in front of the audience. Why not to promote wine sales and probably the restaurant and banquet facilities before the movie starts, using the giant inflatable screen?

A school may use an outdoor movie event as a fundraiser. Promotional slides provide a fantastic opportunity to raise cash. Parents with a business will normally support the school where they have children. The sponsors' slides can be sold for say \$100 each and with say 20 sponsors, \$2000 is instantly raised.

The slides are very easy to prepare in Microsoft's PowerPoint®. The ad may read as simply as "Sponsored by Mary's Hairdressing" with address and phone number, and of course Mary's logo. With an appropriate design template Mary's ad suddenly looks very professional!

When preparing the PowerPoint slide show it is important to adjust the aspect ratio. PowerPoint's standard aspect ratio is 4:3, just like traditional TV. Most outdoor inflatable movie screens use the DVD aspect ratio or HD wide screen of 16:9. To change the aspect ratio within PowerPoint go to Design and then Page View and select 16:9.

This should be done before you build the slide show so that all images and logos are formatted in the desired ratio. If the aspect ratio is selected after the show has been built the logos and images will probably look distorted. No one likes their logo being distorted!

After the presentation is finished, it can be converted to a short video, using the same PowerPoint. With minimal time and money expenses, one can achieve big brand exposure – right on the big screen!



Food and beverage

Most outdoor movie events will be catered for to some degree. If the club has a bar and catering facilities you are in a great position already. Businesses like restaurants are great for contra deals and promotions. They cost both parties very little cash but offer the movie goer fantastic value.

For a fundraiser, the norm is the standard barbecue supplemented by the sweets, soft drinks and ice-cream. Licensed premises will sell beer and wine.

Food and beverage is a great way to raise funds. It is important to understand that sales will cease almost as soon as the movie commences. If you want to sell a lot of food, do not invite movie goers to bring their own picnic hampers! It is one or the other!



Popcorn remains a huge success and a winner for all. Customers love it and they will pay incredible amounts of money for it. The cinema does very well because of the unbelievable gross profit that popcorn delivers. Apart from drink, there is nothing like it on earth!

Wineries and the like will probably make available hampers with cheese and biscuits and other gourmet goodies together with their own refreshment! Wineries with a restaurant will probably promote the dinner event prior to screening the movie.

More Fun! More Magic! More Entertainment!



Smart Digital Australia Pty Ltd

Your Outdoor Movie People



Unit 8, 52 Corporate Boulevard BAYSWATER VIC 3153

Phone: +61 3 9729 6300

ABN 67 796 955 627

Email: info@smartdigital.com.au

Web: www.smartdigital.com.au