

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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TASMANIAN AMUSEMENTS PTY LTD COLLECTION

Picture Theatres, Launceston

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INTRODUCTION

At a meeting of Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd, held at the Menzies Hotel, Melbourne, on 4 April 1932, it was reported that the company had been incorporated. Miss Elvie Quigley and Messrs J L Thornley, M A Goodrick, C E Henderson and J E Heritage were present at the meeting. The Academy of Music premises and one shop attached, in George Street, Launceston, were leased and a contract made with the Paramount Company for the supply of films for two years. The Plaza Theatre opened on 14 May 1932. (1) The building was purchased c1934. The company purchased the business of the Avalon Theatre Co. Pty Ltd in 1934, leasing the Avalon property at 52 Melville Street, Hobart, before purchasing it in 1947. The National Theatre in Launceston was also leased for some years.

Proposed alterations to be made to both theatres and film contracts made with Paramount and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer were noted in the minutes of the directors' meeting in February 1937. The reconstructed Plaza Theatre opened on 20 August 1937. (2) During the Second World War proceeds from pictures shown in Launceston and Hobart on alternate Sunday nights were donated to the Red Cross Society.

Wide screens were installed in both theatres in 1954, the most profitable year in the company's existence to that time. The company retained a Melbourne office for the buying and booking of films until 1956. The effect of drive-in theatres was discussed at a directors' meeting in Melbourne in November 1956 and it was resolved that an objection be made to the granting of a licence for a drive-in theatre in Launceston.

In 1957 the company's various activities were separated into the Plaza, Avalon, Sweet Bars, Tatler and Theatrette companies. Tasmanian Amusements became a partner in Murray Collins Enterprises in 1957. Murray Collins was the lessee of the Hobart Tatler theatrette.

Tasmanian Amusements (Advertising) was formed in 1958. In September of that year it was reported at a directors' meeting that television was having a very adverse effect on mainland theatres and forecast that a similar position would eventuate when television came to Tasmania.

The company leased the Tatler Theatrette in Launceston from 1958. The outlook for the company was unfavourable in 1963 and the Plaza Theatre was sold in 1964. The building was subsequently demolished. (3) Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd and associated companies were sold to Village Drive-In (Essendon) Pty Ltd on 4 July 1971. (4)

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in November 2002.

References:

1. *Examiner* 14, 16 May 1932
2. *Examiner* 19, 21 August 1937
3. *Examiner* 30 January 1964
4. Information supplied by the donor

1.Minutes of Meetings

1/1	Tasmanian Amusements Proprietary Limited, minutes of meetings, 4 April 1932-21 August 1944 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1932-1944
1/2	Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 31 October 1944-23 November 1954 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1944-1954
1/3	Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 23 November 1954-27 April 1964 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1954-1964
1/4	Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 8 June 1964-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1964-1968
1/5	Murray Collins Enterprises, minutes of partners meetings, 15 July 1957-16 December 1968	1957-1968
1/6	Tasmanian Amusements (Avalon) Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 15 July 1957-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1957-1968
1/7	Tasmanian Amusements (Plaza) Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 15 July 1957-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1957-1968
1/8	Tasmanian Amusements (Sweet Bars) Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 15 July 1957-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1957-1968
1/9	Tasmanian Amusements (Tatler) Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 15 July 1957-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1957-1968
1/10	Tasmanian Amusements (Theatrette) Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 15 July 1957-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1957-1968
1/11	Tasmanian Amusements (Advertising) Pty Ltd, minutes of meetings, 30 September 1958-16 December 1968 (includes directors and shareholders meetings)	1958-1968

2.Share Certificates

2/1	Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd, book of scrip certificates, nos. 1-25, all endorsed 'cancelled'	1932-1944
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| 2/2 | Tasmanian Amusements Propriety Limited, book of preference share certificates issued, nos.1-49, all endorsed 'cancelled' | 1934-1951 |
| 2/3 | Book of preference share certificates issued, nos. 51-92, all endorsed 'cancelled' | 1951-1958 |
| 2/4 | Book of ordinary share certificates issued, nos. 26-59, all endorsed 'cancelled' | 1951-1967 |

3.Miscellaneous Records

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| 3/1 | Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd to Village Drive-In (Essendon) Pty Ltd, offer to sell shareholdings | 1969 |
| 3/2 | Tasmanian Amusements Pty Ltd, certificate of registration Plaza Sweet Bar | 1952 |

OTHER SOURCES

QVMAG, Community History, 1998.MS.0087

Launceston Reference Library, Local History Collection, news cutting file "Plaza Theatre"

Anne Green, *The home of sports and manly exercises: places of leisure in Launceston*, Launceston, 2006, p. 73