



This family tradition of community service continued with his son Rupert Giudice who became managing director of the Lyric and enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy during World War Two.

Rupert's daughter Mrs Elaine Bishop (Giudice) is equally imbued with community spirit. After extensive discussion with her mother, Elaine decided that her grandfather would have supported the new use of the site.

Elaine Bishop has provided a wealth of history of the site and the Lyric Theatre.

The precinct has an interesting history. Hill's Bazaar next door opened in 1853. The Olympia roller skating rink later opened on the site and probably explains the flat flooring of the Lyric. The dress circle seats sloped at only 17 degrees in a theatre that held 1600.

In 1954 the Lyric Theatre became the first country theatre to show widescreen Cinemascope films.

The advent of television was not too far away, and when Bendigo's BCV8 opened in 1961, theatre crowds diminished rapidly.

Rupert Giudice commenced discussions with the City of Bendigo, suggesting that the council acquire the Lyric as a community

theatre for live productions. Council declined and it would be another two decades before Bendigo gained such a venue, the Capital.

The Lyric Theatre finally closed in 1965 when two long serving projectionists Ken Hill and Jack Steele screened Mr Hobbs Takes a Vacation.

On Saturday July 8 1967, a little after 2pm, a passerby raised the alarm after seeing smoke billowing from the building - the Lyric was spectacularly engulfed by fire.

The fire quickly destroyed the interior and all that remained was tangled and twisted corrugated iron and steel girders. The fire damaged outer walls.

For more than 30 years the façade that thousands of theatre-goers once passed through would be the street front for businesses of all sorts and needs.

Construction of the new Bendigo and Adelaide Bank headquarters has seen the site of the Lyric - synonymous with progress in Bendigo - emerge as a new meeting place in our city.



**WHAT I LIKE IS...**

*"It's great being all together. The open space, facilities, layout and colours make it a pleasure to work in. We're extremely productive in this environment."*

— Graeme Harvey  
Chief Manager  
Strategic Solutions