



The Theatre Royal was located at 669 Hunter Street in the city of Newcastle - 160 kilometres north of Sydney. Betts Theatre Royal opened under the direction of Edward L. Betts on the 16th June 1924 with *Hearts Aflame*. It was the Greater J. D. Williams Amusement Co. Ltd. management who had the world premiere of the Australasian Films production of *For the Term of His Natural Life* at the Royal on the 20th June 1927. In 1938, the Royal was leased to Newcastle Theatres Pty. Ltd. In 1939 the theatre was refurbished and reopened on the 9th March

1939 under the Northern Amusements Corporation Pty. Ltd. banner as the NEW Theatre Royal with the official opening film, *Suez* starring Tyrone Power. On the 7th August 1942, Hoyts Theatres acquired an interest in Newcastle Theatres Pty. Ltd. and the Theatre Royal's first film under the Hoyts banner was *The Ghost of Frankenstein*. The city of Newcastle first CinemaScope was *The Robe* at the Hoyts Civic on 18th November 1954 and in 1962, the Hoyts Royal became the first cinema outside of a major state capital city to be equipped for 70mm. Fitted out with Cinemeccanica Victoria X projectors [serial numbers 533/599] and a six track stereophonic sound system, the upgrade also required the new screen to be brought forward in front of the original proscenium. The Todd-AO 70mm screen opening measured 40 feet x 18 feet, with a 128 feet projection throw. The Royal reopened on the 15th March 1962 with *Can-Can* and during the period of the Roadshow Engagement [1958 to 1974], the Royal became the primary venue for Roadshow presentations in Newcastle. The Royal closed on the 17th September 1980 with *The Final Countdown* and was twinned, with the stalls area becoming cinema 1 and the original dress circle, became cinema 2. The Victoria X projectors were removed [installed at the Orana cinema Dubbo] with both screens equipped with DP75 projectors for 70mm presentations. Head projectionist Bruce Potter reopened the Royal Twin on the 18th December 1980 with *The Empire Strikes Back* presented in 70mm, *Sea Wolves*, *Fatty Finn* and late shows of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* which ran for 106 consecutive weeks. After the opening of the nearby Hoyts Charlestown multiplex, the Royal Twin finally closed on the 6th December 1989 with *Erik the Viking* and *When Harry Met Sally* as the last films.

70MM OPENINGS	OPENED	CLOSED	WKS
Can-Can	15/03/62	23/05/62	10
The Miracle of Todd-AO [30FPS]	15/03/62	23/05/62	10
Spartacus	24/05/62	25/07/62	9
South Pacific	26/07/62	28/11/62	18
Black Tights	29/11/62	19/12/62	3
Solomon and Sheba	20/12/62	06/02/63	7
Porgy and Bess	07/02/63	06/03/63	4
EL CID	07/03/63	01/05/63	8
The Alamo	02/05/63	05/06/63	5
Oklahoma! – <i>First Time Newcastle in 70mm</i>	06/06/63	10/07/63	5
The March of Todd-AO [24FPS]	06/06/63	10/07/63	5
Exodus	31/10/63	24/12/63	8
Barabbas	26/12/63	29/01/64	5
West Side Story	30/01/64	01/04/64	9
The King and I – <i>First Time Newcastle in 70mm</i>	02/06/64	01/07/64	3
Around the World in 80 Days – <i>First Time Newcastle in 70mm</i>	02/07/64	22/07/64	3
55 Days at Peking	23/07/64	16/09/64	8
Lawrence of Arabia	26/12/64	03/03/65	10
The Long Ships	15/04/65	02/06/65	7
Cleopatra	03/06/65	11/08/65	10
The Fall of the Roman Empire	03/02/66	16/03/66	6
In Harm's Way	17/03/66	30/03/66	2
Lord Jim	31/03/66	11/05/66	6
It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World	12/05/66	31/08/66	16
Circus World	01/09/66	28/09/66	4
Genghis Khan	22/12/66	08/02/67	7
Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines	09/02/67	26/05/67	16
The Professionals	27/05/67	21/06/67	4
The Greatest Story Ever Told	22/06/67	26/07/67	5
The Heroes of Telemark	27/07/67	16/08/67	3
The Agony and the Ecstasy	17/08/67	06/09/67	3
The Hallelujah Trail	07/09/67	20/09/67	2



**NEWCASTLE ROYAL  
PREMIERED TODD-AO  
CAN-CAN  
15th March 1962**



**FIRST 70MM BLOW-UP  
IN HARMS WAY  
17th March 1966**



ROYAL NEWCASTLE  
669 Hunter Street, Newcastle

OPENED 16th June 1924  
as the, Betts Theatre Royal

70MM OPENINGS - Continue	OPENED	CLOSED	WKS
The Great Race	21/09/67	01/11/67	6
Is Paris Burning	02/11/67	15/11/67	2
The Dirty Dozen	16/11/67	16/12/67	5
Khartoum	18/12/67	31/01/68	7
Gone with the Wind – <i>First Time Newcastle in 70mm</i>	01/02/68	06/03/68	5
Battle of the Bulge	07/03/68	27/03/68	3
Cheyenne Autumn	28/03/68	10/04/68	2
Grand Prix	11/04/68	22/05/68	6
The Sand Pebbles	23/05/68	12/06/68	3
The Bible: In the Beginning	13/06/68	17/07/68	5
Guns for San Sebastian	18/07/68	31/07/68	2
The Sound of Music	01/08/68	19/02/69	29
2001: A Space Odyssey	20/02/69	13/03/69	3
Far From the Madding Crowd	13/03/69	16/04/69	5
Camelot	17/04/69	11/06/69	8
Ice Station Zebra	24/07/69	20/08/69	4
Finian's Rainbow	21/08/69	10/09/69	3
Ben-Hur – <i>First Time Newcastle in 70mm</i>	16/10/69	12/11/69	4
Seven Brides for Seven Brothers – <i>First Time Newcastle in 70mm</i>	13/11/69	26/11/69	2
Star!	27/11/69	17/12/69	3
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang	18/12/69	11/02/70	8
Sweet Charity	12/02/70	18/03/70	5
The Lion in Winter	21/05/70	10/06/70	3
Winning	11/06/70	15/07/70	5
Those Daring Young Men in their Jaunty Jalopies	13/08/70	09/09/70	4
Hello, Dolly!	10/09/70	30/09/70	3
West Side Story - <i>reissue</i>	01/10/70	14/10/70	2
Patton	29/10/70	11/11/70	2
Valley of the Dolls - <i>reissue</i>	18/11/70	25/11/70	1
Castle Keep	26/11/70	02/12/70	1
Oliver! – <i>reissue</i>	03/12/70	24/12/70	3
Funny Girl	26/12/70	03/03/71	10
Cromwell	04/03/71	21/04/71	7
Waterloo	17/06/71	14/07/71	4
Too Late the Hero	15/07/71	21/07/71	1
Around the World in 80 Days - <i>reissue</i>	02/09/71	15/09/71	2
Lawrence of Arabia - <i>reissue</i>	30/09/71	20/10/71	3
The Last Valley	28/10/71	03/11/71	1
Song of Norway	09/12/71	26/01/72	7
The Great Battle	27/01/72	09/02/72	2
Tora! Tora! Tora!	10/02/72	08/03/72	4
The Sound of Music - <i>reissue</i>	10/08/72	06/09/72	4
The Cowboys	05/10/72	18/10/72	2
The Andromeda Strain	16/11/72	22/11/72	1
Young Winston	10/05/73	06/06/73	4
The Three Musketeers	02/10/74	23/10/74	3



Greater Union Strand theatre, their 70mm titles will be tabled in separate storyboards.

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Thank you, Ralph Lucas, Greg Donnan and Bruce Potter, for their wonderful account of the 70mm film titles which were presented at the Newcastle Royal theatre between 1958 and 1974. It is not too often when researching one of the many theatres for *Australia in 70mm*, you come across a detailed account of a theatre's history in 70mm.

For the two other theatres in Newcastle which presented 70mm, independently operated Kensington cinema and the



**AUSTRALIA IN 70MM**

**THE SOUND OF MUSIC**  
1st August 1968



**THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**  
18th December 1980





**Hoyts ROYAL TWIN**  
669 HUNTER ST. Ph. 263 488

ROYAL TWIN OPENED  
18th December 1980