



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES PERMANENT ENTRY

1. **DATA BASE No.** 00828
2. **NAME** *Bijou Theatre* (1896; additions, 1990s)
OTHER NAME R.A.O.B. Hall
3. **LOCATION** 115 Dempster Street, Esperance
4. **DESCRIPTION OF PLACE INCLUDED IN THIS ENTRY**
Lot 23 on Diagram 51885 being the whole of the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 1470 Folio 641.
5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA** Shire of Esperance
- 6a. **OWNER AT INTERIM REGISTRATION**
Esperance Theatre Guild Inc
- 6b. **OWNER AT PERMANENT REGISTRATION**
Esperance Theatre Guild Inc
7. **HERITAGE LISTINGS**
 - Register of Heritage Places: Interim Registration 26/08/2011
Permanent Registration 01/05/2012
 - National Trust Classification: -----
 - Town Planning Scheme: 27/09/1991
 - Municipal Inventory: Adopted 23/07/1996
 - Register of the National Estate: -----
8. **ORDERS UNDER SECTION 38 OR 59 OF THE ACT**

9. **HERITAGE AGREEMENT**

10. **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**
Bijou Theatre, a theatre of timber and corrugated galvanised iron construction in the Australian vernacular style, with elements of the Federation Carpenter Gothic design style, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

the place is the only known 1890s theatre of timber and corrugated iron construction surviving intact in Australia, and is rare as the oldest surviving purpose built theatre building in Western Australia continuing in operation for its intended purpose and the third oldest in Australia;

the place is a rare representative example of late nineteenth century small theatre design and theatre practices of the time;

the place has been central to the social and cultural life of Esperance since 1896, and as such contributes to the community's sense of place;

the place provides evidence of the rapid development of Esperance as the main port for Dundas goldfield in the mid 1890s, and was owned (1900-48) by Esperance Land Company Limited, which was significant in the town's development;

the landmark front facade of the place contributes to the streetscape of Dempster Street and, together with the distinctive interior of the theatre space, is valued by the community for aesthetic reasons; and,

the place was instigated, designed and built by Edward James McCarthy, a leading Esperance businessman and public figure, for South Australians Charles Townshend Hargrave (the Younger), Sir John William Downer and Hubors Giles.

The 1990s additions are of little significance