

They've long been history; now drive-ins are historical

July 3, 2007

[Read later](#)

Clay Lucas

[Email article](#) [Print](#) [Reprints & permissions](#)


Photo: Penny Stephens

TWO of Victoria's three drive-ins have been classified by the National Trust in a bid to protect a movie phenomenon that refuses to die.

The National Trust has classified the Coburg and Dromana drive-ins, and is considering classifying the third, Dandenong's Lunar Drive-In. However, classification offers the drive-ins no legal protection.

Drive-in theatres were almost wiped out in the 1980s by the video recorder and spiralling property prices.

But Melbourne's three remaining drive-ins have boomed in recent years — especially in summer. They also come to life during school holidays, as Coburg's did last night, despite the cold.

National Trust chief Martin Purslow said it was a first for his organisation to classify a drive-in. "But heritage is not just about grand 19th-century houses. It's also about protecting popular cultural phenomenons," he said.

Victoria once had 60 drive-ins. And Australia's first opened in Burwood in 1954, two years before the arrival of television.

"They (also provided) the perfect backdrop for romantic dates," Mr Purslow said.

Many closed in the 1980s as once cheap outer-suburban land became housing estates or shopping centres — and the video recorder infiltrated lounge rooms.

Melbourne's only other remaining drive-in, in Dandenong, is run by former Village Roadshow manager David Kilderry, who also runs the website [drive-insdownunder](#).

He said it was wonderful drive-ins were being recognised as important to Melbourne's history. "The drive-in cinema is the only place where the two greatest icons of the 20th century — the car and the motion picture — come together.

"In 50 or 100 years' time, there will be more interest in a drive-in than there will be in one of (Melbourne's) old historic buildings.

"The drive-in theatre will be no different to the Regent Theatre, which they wanted to demolish in the 1970s."

<http://www.drive-insdownunder.com.au>

Recommended



[Hurstville mayor Con Hindi's daughter makes \\$330,000...](#)

NSW



[Thousands demand Iggy Azalea be stripped of her...](#)

Entertainment