

## **Pulp cinema is not closing down**

### **Statement by SunCom**

Media reports over the last few weeks have created the impression that the Pulp cinema is being closed down by Stellenbosch University (SU).

This is definitely not the case. In fact, SunCom endeavours to upgrade the facility and equipment to offer an even better experience to the Pulp Film Society. In addition, the theatres will be utilised more efficiently and made available to a much broader community as conference and event space.

Unfortunately a perception has been created in the media that the Pulp cinema has to close down because the lease agreement with the tenant, Mr Werner de Swardt, is being terminated unilaterally by the University. There is even some notion that this is due to debt. SunCom confirms on both counts that this is not true.

Mr De Swardt's contract with the University to operate the venue is coming to a natural end. The tenant agreed to the expiry date of the lease agreement and agreed to vacate the premises as a condition to his lease in 2016. It is thus untrue that the contract coming to an end, could have come as a shock – as was reported in the media. Mr De Swardt was well aware of the conditions of the contract and it has been clearly communicated to him well in advance. (This refers to Mr De Swart having a contract with the University to operate and rent the venue and not the Pulp Film Society being able to make use of the venue.)

The tenant also did not enter into discussions with the Neelsie management to renew the contract, even a month after he received a notice from the Neelsie management to remind him that his agreement was coming to an end. Mr De Swardt has also benefitted hugely this year, as the Pulp Film Society's money was paid over to him although he did not render a service to them, and the University also offered him many months of 0% rental during the lockdown period.

The Pulp Film Society does not utilise both the theatres all the time.

Going forward, the space will be managed by the newly established Central Events and Conferencing Office (CECO\*), a unit within SunCom, which is a division of the University. CECO is, among other things, tasked to ensure the optimal usage of all spaces through the implementation of a strategy to promote conferencing and events and to promote Stellenbosch as a preferred destination for such. They will also utilise the two theatres more efficiently to a much broader community, whilst still offering the Pulp Film Society a home, but with better equipment.