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Audiences in the regions



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Context

Almost 80,000 people moved from big cities to regional areas during the pandemic, with the biggest and longest lasting demographic shifts occurring in coastal towns near big cities

- ▶ With big cities being the hardest hit by the virus and lockdowns, the nation saw a rapid increase in counter-urbanisation, with many Australians moving from big cities to the regions. Data shows that 79,355 people moved out of big cities to regional areas during the period 2020-2021.
- ▶ According to the Regional Australia Institute's 'Big Movers 2023' report on the last intercensal period (2016-21), regional Australia 'saw a significant increase in net migration from capital cities, with a net gain of 166,073 individuals – almost triple the net gain of the previous intercensal period (2011-2016). This shift overlaps with the first year and a half of the COVID pandemic.' The report affirms that millennials and overseas-born residents show a strong preference for regional areas.
- ▶ However, the University of Melbourne's 'The Great Migration' report states that 'ABS internal migration data suggests that more people have been relocating to regional Australia and away from capital cities for at least the last twenty years. The pandemic, it seems, has simply amplified a well-established trend.'

While big cities have a higher concentration of arts experiences, the regions contribute significantly to Australia's diverse cultural landscape

- ▶ Regional Australia has a rich array of local arts and literary festivals, community-based arts projects, the preservation of First Nations cultural heritage, public art spaces and other avenues for nurturing local identity, talent and creativity.
- ▶ However, attendance rates are traditionally lower: prior to the pandemic data from the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated's (ACSPRI) 2019 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA) showed that inner-city dwellers were more likely to participate in arts and cultural activities (78%), compared to those living in outer suburbs (70%) or regional areas (54%).
- ▶ The digital divide continues to impact regional communities, with the Australian Digital Inclusion Index reporting that 'Regional Australia scored 69.8 on the digital inclusion index, below the national average of 73.2, while metro areas scored 74.8. Very remote Australia scored significantly below the national average at 62.6. Regional Australia also scored below the national average on all digital inclusion

markers, including Access, Affordability and Digital Ability, with Digital Ability markedly lower than the rest with a score of 59.7.

- ▶ Meanwhile, housing affordability is not keeping pace with population growth. The Regional Australia Institute's [Inquiry into Housing Affordability](#) details 'Pressures in regional home-rental and regional home-purchase markets are underscored by a weak flow of new housing that has not kept pace with a growing population over the past two decades. As a result, regional housing demand has been accumulating over several years.'
- ▶ While decentralisation is leading to population movement outside of the inner cities, remote communities in particular are faced with a lack of investment and government intervention – presenting a challenge for audience recovery. A [study by the University of South Australia](#) highlighted a crucial question: 'And what about the wide verandas of our small, remote inland cities? Without industry diversification and government intervention, these places are unlikely to benefit from the predicted population and economic growth.'

Attendance at arts events in 2023

Audience participation rates are generally lower than big cities – but the picture varies widely between large towns, small villages and rural properties

- ▶ In August 2023, 74% of regional audiences said they attended at least one kind of cultural event in the fortnight before data collection. This varied across different types of regional areas: 76% of those living in towns or small cities said they attended, compared to 70% in country villages or rural communities and 65% on farms, bush or outback properties.
- ▶ In terms of frequency, 52% of audiences in the regions said they attend performing arts events at least once a month or more. This compares with 63% of audiences in outer suburbs and 77% of big city audiences.
- ▶ Museum and gallery attendance is slightly higher in the regions (29%) relative to outer suburbs (27%), but lower than audiences living in a big city (38%).
- ▶ When asked about their recent attendance, regional audiences were less likely to have attended most artforms, with attendance rates at live performances, museums/galleries and festivals all lower relative to big cities and outer suburbs.
- ▶ Some forms appear better able to reach audiences in regional areas than others. For instance, in the past 12 months, 57% of regional audiences have attended libraries, 56% have attended theatres, 52% have attended cinemas or film festivals and 51% have attended contemporary music.

Inflationary pressures

On average, audiences in the regions who have attended recently say they spent less on tickets

- ▶ More than half (57%) of regional audiences participating spent over \$50 compared to 65% of audiences in outer suburbs and 69% of those in big cities.
- ▶ Regional audiences indicate they feel less stable financially (and more pessimistic about their future finances) than those in outer metro and regional areas, and many are being selective about what they attend right now.
- ▶ Almost half of regional audiences (47%) say they are 'worse off' financially than they were one year ago, compared to 43% in big cities. One person from a rural community said, 'Many are going through a difficult time, both with life, families and financial hardships. Most arts and cultural organisational activities are aimed at people who are financially well off and able to afford to attend. Catering for those not so financially well off would, I am sure, be appreciated for these individuals and families.' (Australind, WA).
- ▶ Audiences living in regional areas are also slightly more pessimistic than big city audiences about their future financial circumstances, with 26% of those in regions expecting to be 'worse off' in the coming year, compared to 22% of big city dwellers.

Regional audiences are eager to have access while higher travel and fuel costs may limit their ability to travel, even to towns close by

- ▶ Due to financial reasons, over half of those living in regional areas (56%) have looked for free/cheap things to do, and 51% are taking longer to make decisions about what to go to – trends that are similar in big cities and outer metropolitan areas.
- ▶ Possibly linked with less volume of content, the data shows that regional audiences are slightly less influenced by reviews: 61% say they'll be most attracted to events with great reviews, compared to 64% in outer suburbs and 65% in big cities.
- ▶ Although regional audiences are more likely to be pessimistic about their future finances, they are also more likely to say they think their attendance frequency will increase, possibly because they anticipate increasing options after the pandemic, and in some places, recovery from natural disasters.
- ▶ When responding to the survey, many regional people call for more access. For example, one person said they wanted cultural organisations 'To do more events in small towns and rural communities in Benalla.' (Benalla, VIC).

Participating online

Online channels are playing an important role across Australia to help connect arts and cultural activities to their audiences – but many regional audiences want to participate face-to-face

- ▶ Three-quarters of big city (76%), outer suburbs (75%), and regional residents (75%) found out about a recent cultural activity or event they attended via a digital channel.
- ▶ In terms of participating in online or digital arts experiences, 40% of audiences in regional areas participated in an online experience in the fortnight before data collection, on par with big city audiences (40%) and slightly higher than 37% of outer suburbs audiences.
- ▶ Audiences in regional areas were the least likely to be paying for online arts and culture experiences (24%), compared to those in outer suburbs (26%) or big cities (35%). Those paying are most likely to be purchasing single online experiences (10%), subscribing to platforms to access content on-demand (8%) and making donations (7%) – while fewer are subscribing to programs/seasons which include the online experience (3%).
- ▶ Regional audiences are spending less on digital experiences, with 20% of those participating online spending more than \$100 in the fortnight before data collection. This is lower than big city audiences (26%) but higher than outer suburbs audiences (16%).
- ▶ Many regional audience members appreciate the chance to access arts experiences from home, given financial and geographical restraints. One said, 'I would love access to more professional theatre productions that I could watch online. As a regional town/city we get to see very little, and it costs a lot to travel to and stay in Sydney or Melbourne for a show. I would be prepared to pay for shows to watch online.' (Port Macquarie, NSW).
- ▶ Regional audiences are the least likely to say that online experiences play a role in their life right now (48%), compared to 50% of outer suburbs and 54% of big city audiences. In the regions, audiences say online arts events and experiences are playing a small (41%) or substantial (7%) role in their life, while another 52% say they play no role. One respondent said, 'Where I live there are low levels of IT literacy as well as poor access to internet services and computers - and it cannot be counted on as being a replacement.' (Broken Hill, NSW). Another said, 'Streaming and, in particular casting, can be buggy and frustrating - I have experienced poor quality and syncing problems.' (Don Valley, VIC)

Cultural tourism and touring

Taking into account both regional residents and domestic tourists, the most common arts experiences audiences have in the regions are fairs/festivals and museums/galleries

- ▶ More than half (54%) of regional audience members say that due to financial reasons, in the past 6 months they have stayed closer to home for leisure/entertainment. This compares to 43% of audiences in urban areas.
- ▶ A large proportion of those living in villages, rural communities, farms or bush/outback properties travelled outside of their local area to attend the event they most recently attended (51%). Among these, it was most common to visit a big city (66%) or a town or small city (21%).
- ▶ One person in a rural community argued, 'How about some touring of big shows (alternative performers can do these too) as to attend 'big' shows, one has to travel huge distances.' (Ballan, VIC).
- ▶ Combining locals and visitors, those attending in big cities were more likely to attend live performances than those travelling to other locations. In comparison, audiences in outer suburbs were most likely to attend a cinema (59%) and audiences in the regions were most likely to attend a fair/festival (40%) or visit a museum or gallery (51%).

Programming preferences

Audiences who live in the regions are showing interest in a wide range of art and sounds that reflect 'our strong, beautiful and unique nation'

- ▶ In 2023, most audiences in regional areas say they'll be most attracted to events that are fun and uplifting (80%) – a preference which exists in other areas too. One person from a rural community said, 'Post-pandemic, I personally would like to see performances that are joyous, uplifting and remind us of importance of connection.' (Ulladulla, NSW).
- ▶ There is also an audience for challenging, topical things (41%), though at a slightly lower level than in big cities (52%). One person in a regional community said, 'Do not underestimate our sophistication and appreciation of art', (Mooroopna, VIC), while another said, 'Be more engaging, less political and judgemental' (Stirling, SA).
- ▶ Four in ten (39%) regional audience members say that in the coming year, they'll be most attracted to stories that are 'about or from my local community', which is higher than the rate in big cities (32%) and outer suburbs (28%). One regional person said, 'Keep telling Australian stories and making Australian art and sounds that reflect our strong, beautiful and unique nation.' (Ballina, NSW).

- ▶ There are signs of decreasing appeal for evening or late events. One person explained, 'Events at night prevent many people going out during the winter months due to poor rural road lighting and the overall conditions of the roads after the floods. If there was better street lighting or some sort of transport option, then I believe more people would venture out. Over a certain age, people prefer not to drive at night.' (Seymour, VIC)
- ▶ Increasing matinee sessions could be worth considering, in order to support audiences' commute. One person said, 'There are not a lot of events of interest enough to us that warrant a 50-minute drive in the dark dodging kangaroos, to get to the nearest theatre. More matinee performances would be great so that we can get home in time to lock up the chooks.' (Heathcote, VIC).

Ticketing and marketing behaviour

Regional audiences are slightly more likely to plan ahead – but many memberships don't represent good value for money for those out of big cities

- ▶ Regional audiences are less likely to have purchased a subscription or membership for a cultural organisation (29%), compared to outer suburbs (41%) and big city audiences (51%) this year. One person explained, 'Subscriptions are often focussed around major arts organisations in the capital cities – in my case, Melbourne. I live in a regional area.' (Castlemaine, VIC)
- ▶ Finding out about events is complex and the key awareness channels vary across all geographic areas. The top information channels used by regional audiences include the following:
 - Emails from arts organisations (43% of regional audiences reported emails as their main source of information for their latest arts activity, relative to 46% of outer suburbs and 47% of big city audiences)
 - Word of mouth was key for 35% of regional audiences (relative to 34% of outer suburb and 37% big city audiences)
 - Websites was a source of awareness for 34% of regional audience (relative to 40% of audiences in the outer suburbs and 42% in the big cities)
 - Facebook was the main information source for 26% of regional audiences (compared to 20% of outer suburbs audiences and 16% in big cities).
- ▶ Facebook, radio/TV and brochures/flyers are all in greater use by regional audiences compared to those in other areas in order to find out about events.

- ▶ Improving awareness channels is on the radar for regional audiences, as one person living in a country village or rural community said, 'It would be good to have an overall directory that lists events. A lot of exhibitions or shows are missed because they are not noticed initially. Or may become obvious when it is too late and already booked out.' (Gisborne, VIC).
- ▶ Another suggested leveraging social media to facilitate community-building and word-of-mouth: 'Everyone is on social media now. Start creating online, short content videos about upcoming plays and concerts. [...] Create a group on Facebook of like-minded people who love the theatre, so they can arrange to go to plays together. I don't have many friends in Port Pirie as I'm quite new to the area [...] so I would love to connect with people around here who love it as much as I do.' (Port Pirie, SA).
- ▶ More advanced marketing is helpful when targeting regional audiences. Regional audiences are slightly less likely to buy tickets at the last minute, so building confidence in planning ahead is key, particularly where events involve travel or family/caring arrangements.
- ▶ Parents and caregivers plan well in advance of school holidays – and will likely be thinking carefully about what to prioritise when travelling into big cities over summer. One person said, 'I am a mother/stepmother with 4 children, so finding free, local events for the kids has been a big priority given how expensive life has become. School holidays in particular can be very costly if trying to find events with a per head price.' (Whittlesea, VIC)

Understanding the mood

- ▶ While other OECD countries are experiencing an inflow into metropolitan cities, Australia has seen the opposite trend for almost 15 years. The pandemic accelerated counter-urbanisation, with inner city dwellers flocking to regional areas in higher numbers.
- ▶ Along with the appeal of open spaces and shorter commute times, the shift to remote working has enhanced the appeal of regional places even further. Professor Pauline McGuirk, the director of the Australian Centre for Culture, Environment, Society and Space research centre at the University of Wollongong says: 'What COVID has done is introduce at scale the opportunity to work from home and consider doing so on a long-term basis.'
- ▶ With inflationary pressures continuing to put strain on already higher costs associated with the travel and time it takes to journey into cities, attracting audiences from outer suburbs and regional areas is likely to get harder in the short term. Artists and cultural organisations have an important role to play in maintaining their connection with regional audiences.
- ▶ Exciting work is underway to improve infrastructure and land use to ensure the regions continue to be vibrant places for residents and visitors. There is a case for arts



and cultural organisations to stay abreast of state government-funded regional plans and projects in NSW and VIC and invest in ways to align recovery efforts with broader investment strategies.

- ▶ The next decade will be a defining period for the regions. Liz Ritchie, CEO at Regional Australia Institute said: 'We are at a tipping point to get this once in a generation transformation of regional Australia right, but we must think big, we must think long term, we must Shift our Gaze from the bright lights of capitals to a nation that is more diverse and dispersed.'

Queenstown, TAS and The Unconformity Festival



Key examples

Queenstown, TAS and The Unconformity Festival

- ▶ Queenstown is located on the remote West Coast region of lutruwita/Tasmania. As the largest town on the West Coast, Queenstown's population has risen and fallen following the 19th century mining boom, and is currently home to 1,808 residents.
- ▶ While the Queenstown population fell by 10% between 2016 and 2021, tourism is increasing in the West Coast region, and the creative community is growing, offering new economic opportunities that contrast with the cyclical nature of mining and other major industries present in the region.
- ▶ Local artists, cultural organisations and creative businesses are attracting national and international recognition, and garnering significant investment in TV productions, festivals and other projects.
- ▶ Consultations on a new Cultural Strategy for the region emphasised the importance of community cohesion and sharing opportunities across the region. One local resident said they want to see 'a balance between preserving the region's rich cultural heritage and embracing new ideas and industries. By taking a collaborative approach and working together with the local community, government and businesses, it is possible to create a vibrant and thriving culture that benefits everyone.'
- ▶ Based in Queenstown, arts organisation The Unconformity produces arts-led cultural development, tourism and education projects in partnership with the community, alongside a biennial contemporary art festival that is driving transformational change for the region.
- ▶ Described as 'a conglomeration of concepts and experiences shaped by the western fringe of lutruwita/Tasmania', since its beginning in 2010, the festival has focused upon re-imagining the future of the region through reflecting its history in new ways.
- ▶ The most recent festival, held in October 2023 attracted between 2,000-3,000 people to Queenstown. Artistic Director Travis Tiddy says, 'We work hard to engage both locals and visitors, and for a town of 1,400, that level of attendance is really strong. Our data shows that 1,500 people experienced one of the festival highlights in a local quarry, basking under the celestial glow of Luke Jerram's extraordinary Museum of the Moon, and artistic installations commissioned by the festival saw between 600-800 attendees; strong audience engagement for independent artists participating in the festival.'
- ▶ This year's event was the first festival in five years, after the 2021 event was cancelled on the opening night due to a sudden COVID-19 lockdown in the state.
- ▶ Travis says that part of the challenge for the festival is telling local stories in a unique way – merging experimental contemporary art and community heritage in a way

that engages both newcomers to the town and those that have lived there for generations. Travis stated: 'It is a large program for a small town - but our focus is upon creating different access points for our diverse audience into the program.'

- ▶ Certain works, like Guided Memories by artist Emma Bugg, become 'mooring points' for people to share and discover stories of the place through a contemporary art lens.
- ▶ The final event of the festival is a football game, 'The Unconformity Cup', where 'The West' play 'The Rest' on Queenstown's infamous gravel oval, a symbol of the mining community's grit and determination.
- ▶ However, rather than focusing on any one event, Travis emphasises that the process of co-devising and making the festival with artists and community members is most important.

Cairns, QLD and Cairns Art Gallery

- ▶ Home to 171,970 residents, Cairns population has grown an average of 1% in the five years preceding the 2021 census, making it the fifth-most populous city in Queensland. However, with pandemic border closures causing 9,000 tourism jobs to be lost as of 2022, audience recovery is likely to be some time away.
- ▶ Cairns-based audience members want to improve perceptions of the regions, and broaden understanding of the breadth of opportunity outside of big cities. One said, 'A lot of people down South think Cairns is the end of the line, but we're a gateway to a huge area up west and north and I don't think there's that understood everywhere down south.' (Cairns, Qld)
- ▶ Additionally, Cairns audiences are conscious of a lack of touring opportunities, with some feeling they are missing out on being able to attend major acts. One audience member said, 'Once/twice a year I go to Brisbane from Cairns to performances. I look forward to Bangarra in September in Brisbane. I wish more orchestras would visit Cairns. Queensland Ballet comes once a year?' (Cairns, QLD).
- ▶ Cairns Art Gallery is one of Australia's leading regional galleries, celebrating the unique heritage and living culture of tropical North Queensland. The Gallery welcomes local and touring exhibitions from around the country, allowing local audiences to gain access to world renowned artists and artworks.
- ▶ Andrea Churcher, Director at Cairns Art Gallery said that despite the fact that '[local audiences] tend to go for more local artists, because they know local artists,' one touring exhibition – Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly series – helped to attract larger, more diverse audiences. She stated, 'It was successful because it's one of the most important series of paintings, so suddenly audiences were having access to that and not having to travel. There was a lot of goodwill from local audiences who would not have to travel to see great art.' Additionally, she said, 'The brand identity brought in a lot of male audiences – where our audience has been traditionally female.'

- ▶ Removing the entry fee also made for successful audience engagement – particularly in attracting new audiences: ‘When it was \$5, there were a lot of walkaways. It’s a real barrier, even when it’s a dollar entry. A lot of tourists say things up here are expensive. If they don’t know they’ll like the exhibition, they don’t want to spend more money.’

Geraldton, WA and Museum of Geraldton

- ▶ Western Australia’s creative economy was better positioned to weather the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other states and territories, having undergone a total of 12 days in lockdown and freezing their domestic borders. Due to the lack of restrictions compared to other states during the 2020-21 period, WA increased in productivity and exceeded growth trajectories across household incomes.
- ▶ Geraldton is the third most populous city in Western Australia’s Mid West region. It is 424 km north of Perth, and home to over 41,000 residents. The waterfront regional city of Geraldton is particularly known for its mining, agriculture and eco tourism industries.
- ▶ In the last 12 months, Greater Geraldton has seen some of the highest population growth rates in the country (5%), largely due to internal migration. Geraldton has been identified as one of four ‘creative hotspots’ in Western Australia, due to its innovation in connecting the arts with other sectors and supporting grassroots organisations.
- ▶ The Museum of Geraldton is one of nine museums and cultural sites managed by the Western Australian Museum, and operates with free entry and a suggested donation of \$5. The Museum of Geraldton holds a distinct permanent collection closely tied to the local area, and hosts rotating travelling exhibitions.
- ▶ Sara Walker, Learning and Engagement Officer at Museum of Geraldton notes that different times of the year bring in different audiences and programming needs. She says, ‘Because of the large number of tourists, we have our permanent displays - and most of the time they’ve never seen them before. Meanwhile, the rotating exhibitions which are different every school holidays with different programs every time is really for the locals.’
- ▶ As a port-side city, Sara says, ‘We do get large cruise ships passing through, where we can have up to 750 people through in a day – which is multiple times our usual visitation numbers’. And although ‘...most visitation throughout the year are tourists passing through,’ the Museum strikes a balance between catering for locals and tourists. She notes, ‘Rotating travelling exhibitions ensure local audiences have something new to engage with, particularly for local families during school holidays.’
- ▶ Due to a regular suite of school holiday programming, Sara points out, ‘We have families in town that come to the museum every school holidays because they know there’s something new on.’ The key factor for success is consistent delivery, as ‘there’s a regular assortment of activities that families know they can expect when they visit.’

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- ▶ Some of the key programs run by the Museum of Geraldton include their Museum Trails and their Drop-in Science Hour. While these programs change according to theme and exhibition in focus, the consistent format and delivery of these hands-on activities builds confidence amongst audiences and especially younger regular visitors. Sara highlighted that the Drop-in Science Hour are 'so that kids can see objects in a museum and handle them and get a sense of the tactile nature of history'.
 - ▶ Relationships within the region bring additional value to the Geraldton community. Sara also highlighted that the WA museum has 1 of the 2 full-time arachnologists in Australia on staff, Dr Mark Harvey, who flew up to the Museum of Geraldton and was able to give public talks about spiders, coinciding with the popular Sixteen Legs exhibition produced by Bookend Trust. The exhibition toured the Museum of Geraldton in 2022 and involved a range of specimens that visitors could explore under a microscope, and a trapdoor spiders' burrow which provided experiences of 'things that kids wouldn't normally get to see.'
 - ▶ Sara noted that 'Dr Mark Harvey provided a lot of information, so that allowed me to be that conduit of the museum based in Perth', which ensured that expert knowledge was shared to those facilitating the public programs. Sara indicated that for cultural institution in the regions, 'when you have resources brought up from cities, you tend to make the most of it –so we made sure he got to speak to schools – like Meekatharra School of the Air, which is an online school for children living on pastoral stations and remote locations in the Mid West.'

Northern Rivers, NSW and NORPA, Love for One Night



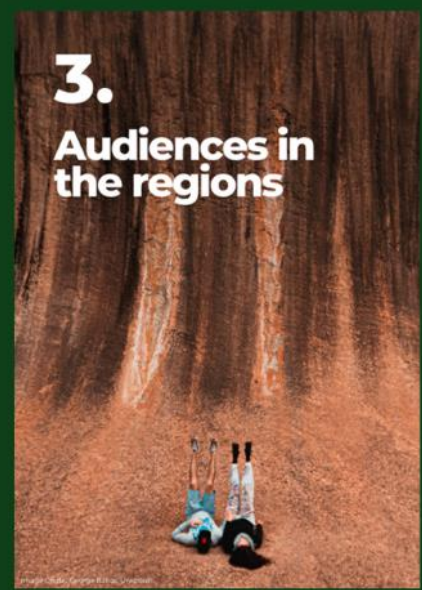
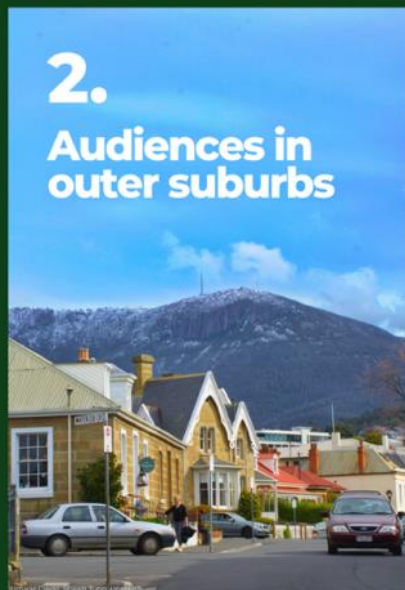
Northern Rivers NSW and NORPA, Love for One Night

- ▶ In recent years, the Northern Rivers NSW community has been affected by the Black Summer Bushfires, the pandemic and 2022's flood and storm events, which saw more than 6,200 homes lost.
- ▶ Local arts organisation [NORPA](#) creates its own brand of original work that connects to regional communities through adventurous and site-specific theatre. NORPA has developed a reputation for creating engaging and popular works that combine dance, physical theatre, live music and story.
- ▶ In 2022, six months after the floods destroyed its venue, Lismore City Hall, the company produced a new site-specific work. 'Love for One Night' was staged at the Eltham Hotel, and all 12 performances sold out within 2 days of opening night – 3,200 tickets sold. A further 700 people watched a live stream of the performance through Australian Digital Concert Hall.
- ▶ Executive Director Libby Lincoln says the show appealed to theatre lovers and those less familiar with the form. She says, 'We have bold audiences that want new, original local work. But not everyone in the community feels comfortable to enter some venues. Bringing a show to a pub, it takes away that barrier.'
- ▶ Speaking about the content of the show, she said, 'The show itself was accessible with its themes and portrayals. It wasn't threatening. In Lismore, we have a reputation for making theatre everyone would enjoy. Audiences know they're going to have a good night.'
- ▶ The production went on to win a PAC Impact Award in 2023. Libby notes, 'It really reinforced how theatre can deliver economic, social, and cultural outcomes for a region. We're pleased it went further than just a cultural offering.' The company recently attended APAX to explore re-staging it with national partners: 'It has a strong cultural tourism value. We see it as a viable and important product to test partnerships with tourism businesses for a regional company.'
- ▶ Continuing their outdoor work in November 2023, the company is presenting Flow, a free outdoor community event celebrating kinship, culture and connection. Yaegl Bundjalung man Mitch King is joined on stage by sound artist Blake Rhodes, and the work is directed by Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal. All 3 performances at the Lismore Quad were snapped up within one week, with 2,100 tickets booked, and the 2 performances (1,400 capacity) at the Maclean Showgrounds are 80% allocated. Libby says, 'We were thrilled to offer Flow for free to the community. It's not sustainable but it's so important at this time to bring the community together.'
- ▶ One audience member said, 'I am looking forward to once again attending NORPA events, post COVID and post flood disaster' (Lismore, NSW). While getting the programming right for local audiences is key, the company said, 'We're still in the thick of it, the confusion and uncertainty. But our hand has been forced and so we have to move forward.'

Tips for connecting with audiences in the regions

- ❑ Consider the feasibility of travelling to audiences living in the regions, as many are eager to attend, but may be struggling to get into big cities or other areas.
- ❑ To attract outer suburbs residents into other areas, communicate any travel incentives, accommodation offerings and other cost-saving initiatives as well as information about other things happening in the area so the trip feels more worthwhile.
- ❑ To attract audiences in from big cities and outer suburbs into the regions, give them plenty of notice. Despite the trend towards last minute commitments, some audiences are considering their options (and logistics) well in advance.
- ❑ Keep fun, uplifting, connective and escapist events on the agenda for 2024 and 2025 and continue supporting local talent to cultivate your region's vibrancy and identity.
- ❑ With a significant proportion of regional audiences engaging in online arts and culture, consider how to use resources to best connect with audiences' needs, tastes and preferences online.
- ❑ Last-minute events and offers can be targeted to 'hyper-local' audiences, people likely to be in the area for another reason, and those with easy public transport connections.
- ❑ Use email, websites and Facebook to connect with regional audiences – and explore ways to amplify word of mouth and social reviews, with recommendations from trusted sources being especially powerful right now.

City lights to red dirt:



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