In Review

2023



Brisbane Festival, the Festival Board and the Indigenous
Advisory Panel continues to build a Festival which
expresses its respect and acknowledgment of the various
Traditional Owner and Custodians of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander lands and waterways. Our respects
include the Brisbane Traditional Owners of country, along
with the neighbouring communities where the works are
performed and celebrated across Brisbane areas.

Always was

We acknowledge the continuing connection to land, waters, and communities where programs respectfully reflect and honour the Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise the fundamental role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to play in the creative and artistic events and celebrations and importantly the continued engagement with the Indigenous Advisory Group and the communities. We are committed to the development of opportunities for further growing the various cultural performances across the Festival.

Brisbane Festival and the Indigenous Advisory Group will continue to embrace, engage, and collaborate in partnership towards a progressive future.



From the Artistic Director

As the Hon Leeanne Enoch (Minister for the Arts) declared in her opening night speech of Brisbane Festival's World Premiere Performance of *Salamander*, 'This work is a tectonic shift for Brisbane Festival and the arts in Queensland.' The 2023 Festival by all accounts was a tectonic shift for our Festival and it was made possible through a community of passionate supporters coming together to support big dreams and vision and offering a shining beacon to our city.

We showed Australia and the world what Brisbane and this state is capable of through the arts with ambitious, bold and artistically excellent commissions like *Salamander* and *BANANALAND*. Both works made here in Queensland with local artists and global connections.

The world is now looking at us with curiosity and anticipation in the lead up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2032 and works of global stature like these and many others in this year's program offer insight into who we are and what we are capable of. *BANANALAND* will now tour to Sydney Festival in January 2024 and there is great international interest in *Salamander*.

With many world premieres and Brisbane firsts, audiences in 2023 were left awestruck and hearts racing. Through the support of our all our partners and donors this year's Festival was extraordinary. Marked by the ground-breaking incorporation of the mesmerising *Nieergoo: Spirit of the Whale*, with storytelling from Tribal Experiences, brought to life by 400 drones from Skyshows.

There were many outstanding moments across the Festival that captured the hearts and minds of our audiences. From the breathtaking display of light and technology in the City Botanic Gardens with *Lightscape*, to the fresh, bold, and new Australian musical theatre hit, *BANANALAND*, combined with the joy and community spirit of participation and celebration with our closing concert in Victoria Park, *All Together Now*. Brisbane Festival 2023 has been our most successful to date.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude for your passion, support and faith in this year's program and very much look forward to meeting with you soon to share the excitement for 2024.

"Every festival aims to connect communities, but 2023's Brisbane Festival did more than pay lip service to that goal... it was embedded in its surroundings with large and enthusiastic audiences and a buzz in the air." – ArtsHub

Louise Bezzina Artistic Director



From the CEO

Brisbane Festival 2023 was a triumph in every measure. Audiences attended in droves, the national media showed a keen interest in our cultural leadership and feedback from key stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive. As an organisation we grew stronger as well.

Thanks to our Access and Inclusion partners CPL – Choice, Passion, Life we launched our Disability Inclusion Action Plan; under the guidance of our Indigenous Advisory Group we engaged more First Nations artists than ever before and progressed the development of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. We also entered a new engagement with Earthed Consultants, who conducted a sustainability audit and will work closely with Brisbane Festival again in 2024 to develop a Sustainability Roadmap with our team.

It goes without saying how important our partners are to Brisbane Festival. We can only light up the city, deeply engage with our community, present major new works of scale and attract visitors to our hometown with the support of our Government shareholders, our corporate partners, our generous donors, our artists and our audiences. We are led by strong Board of Directors, have fantastic advisors across our sub committees and advisory groups and are blessed with the most passionate and committed Festival team in the business.

Thank you for making Brisbane Festival 2023 the best yet.

Charlie Cush
Chief Executive Officer



BRISBANE FESTIVAL ACKNOWLEDGES OUR JOINT PATRONS

Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM Governor of Queensland and Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD



MILLION GROSS BOX OFFICE





QUEENSLAND



PERFORMANCES GIVEN





SOLD OUT PERFORMANCES





WORLD **PREMIERES** 32 NEW

WORKS



ATTRIBUTABLE TO BRISBANE ECONOMY



MEDIA REACH



PARTNERS



VOLUNTEERS

MORE THAN 2,500

TOTAL ARTISTS

2,234 **QUEENSLAND** ARTISTS

MORE 170 FIRST NATIONS **ARTISTS**



INCREASE IN TOTAL VISITOR NIGHTS



INCREASE 39% IN O/NIGHT VISITOR **EXPENDITURE**





AN INCREASE OF

54% 2022: 261 DONATIONS 2023: 402 DONATIONS



RECORD PHILANTHROPIC INCOME

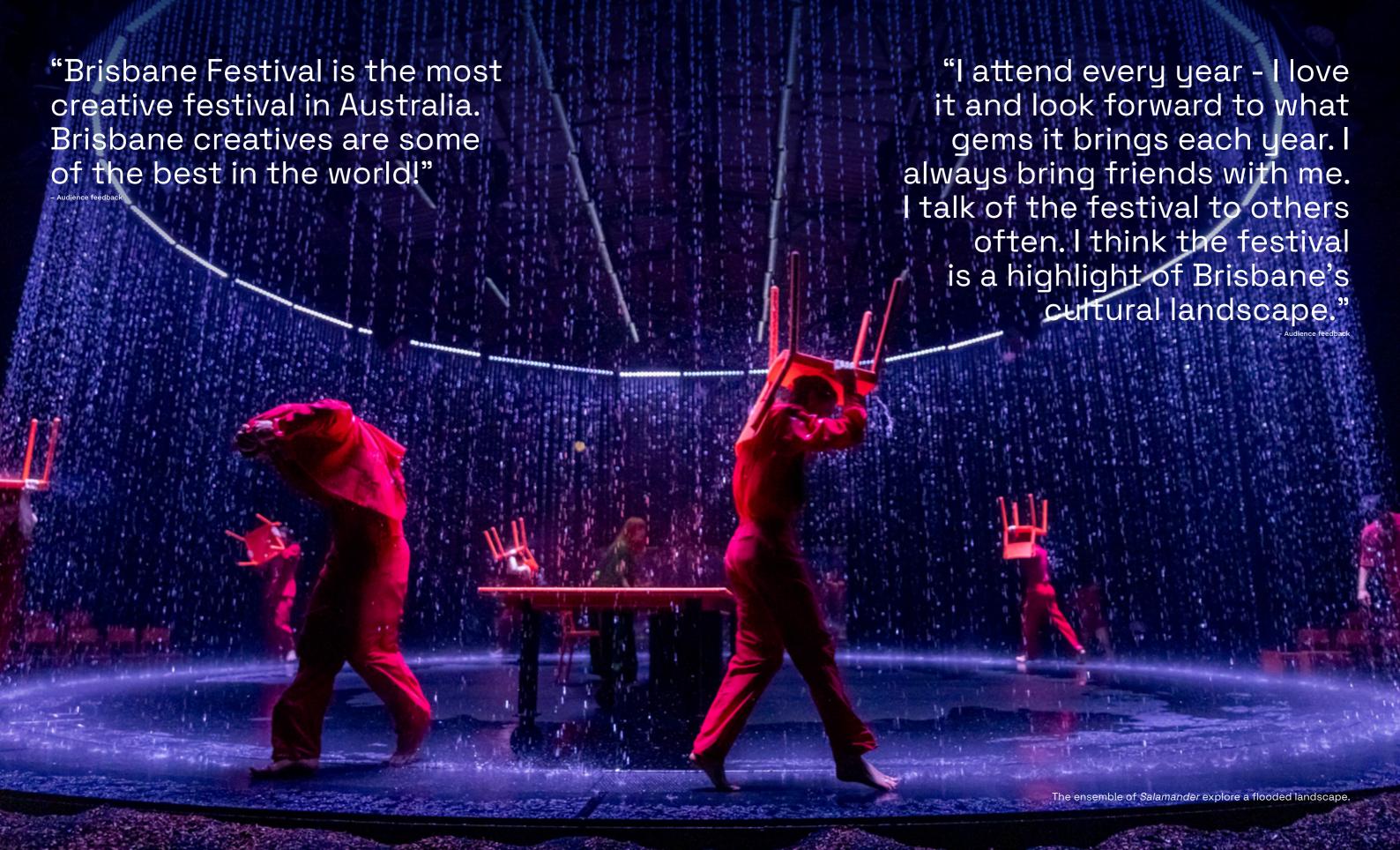
\$1,717,382

UP \$179,159 ON 2022



283,400

AUSTRALIAN RETIREMENT TRUST BROADCAST AUDIENCE REACH



The dinner table is where the best conversations take place. At the start of the year we made an offer, articulated by Priya Basil in her book, *Be My Guest*. She highlights the importance of conversation, mediated through the sharing of food, she talks about hospitality.

In 2023 we embedded hospitality into our program. We invited Brisbane to gather, to break bread, to share and to receive. Implicit in our invitation was the offer of welcome, of community, of the opportunity to see more, and become more, than we were before. Our artists shared their most intimate moments and their highest values. Audiences met our invitation with joyous response, exploring the myriad of beautiful offerings from our artists and collaborators.

We met at the epic dining table that was the centerpiece of Maxine Doyle's and Ev Devlin's highly anticipated world premiere, *Salamander*. We partook of the intimate offerings of theatre, dance, circus and performance art offered to us by artists who held nothing back in their stories of adversity, triumph and transition.

We drank deeply of solace and transformation in our First Nations programming, from the wondrous drone light show *Niergoo: Spirit of the Whale*, the ceremonial *Jarrah* and the culturally rich *Tracker*, the tender emancipation of *West End Stories*.

We came together with community to dance, to rollerblade, to party, to tell stories, with events that brought the art directly to the people in their homes. From the ever-popular classical music Serenades to the rave review Common People Dance Halls, the transformational West End Stories and the delicious creations of Fashion Collab, communities in the north, south, east and west found something right on their doorstep to chew upon.

Brisbane gathered enmasse. The party of the year, *Riverfire by Australian Retirement Trust*, was received with great fanfare, and many were witness to the magic of *Niergoo: Spirit of the Whale*. In a first for Brisbane, modern technology met ancient truth. 400 drones took to the sky to tell the 65,000 year old creation story of Meanjin / Brisbane. The month-long celebrations closed out with the ecstatic energy of 10,000 Kazoos at our closing celebration, *All Together Now*.

To drink deeply, to dine well, to take a story or two for the road, and a blessing for the year to come.

This was Brisbane Festival 2023.





In 2023 Brisbane Festival continued to champion and celebrate First Nations artists. Fifteen incredible productions and exhibitions of genre-defying scale, from the culturally rich *Tracker* from *Australian Dance Theatre*, the ceremonial *Kuramanunya* from *Karul Projects*, to the joyful energy of *Moorooka Block Party*, and the gathering of Nations for our welcome event at *Jarrah (Mother Earth)*.

We acknowledge the powerful support of our Indigenous Advisory Group, Aunty Raelene Rallah-Baker (Girramay, Birri, Yuggerah), Shannon Ruska (Yuggera, Toorabul) and Aunty Bridget Garay (Kemer Kemer Meriam Nation). Working in-front and behind-the-scenes to ensure welcome was made to each of the cultural groups that travelled to Brisbane to present their stories, and embedding local knowledge and storytelling profoundly into Meanjin works and productions. With their leadership, Brisbane Festival continues to deepen and contextualise our authentic connection and embrace of culturally-powerful First Nations works and practices.

Highlights

Unique and utterly original, audiences of thousands delighted in the fusion of cutting-edge technology and our 65,000+ year history, when 400 drones took to the sky to light-weave the creation story of the Moreton Bay islands. Directed by Shannon Ruska, *Nieergoo: Spirit of the Whale* gave audiences a mesmerizing, never-been-seen-before spectacle that presented a compelling inroad to our local First Nations histories.

Hide The Dog was a world-first on many fronts, a show for children written by First Nations writers specifically exploring Australian First Nations and Māori identity, in a trans-Tasman collaboration that was wholeheartedly embraced by culturally diverse families.

"As a first generation immigrant mother endeavoring to teach her daughter to have pride in her ancestry and speak her language confidently, I cannot stress the primacy of plays such as 'Hide the Dog' being supported and presented on multiple platforms. This representation and exposure are so very necessary for our individual and shared identity-making."

– Nothing Ever Happens in Brisbane





Salamander was the jewel in the 2023 Brisbane Festival Program, generating rave reviews and with tales of its success reverberating around the world.

A promenade dance-theatre work housed in an industrial warehouse, transformed by two pieces of bespoke labyrinthian sculpture, *Salamander* was created by international contemporary arts luminaries, Maxine Doyle and Es Devlin both from the UK. The production brought together a powerhouse of Australian and Queensland creatives, including *Australasian Dance Collective* ensemble members, composer Rachael Dease, lighting designer Ben Hughes, and costume designer Bruce McKinven as well as Rozina Suliman.

This project exemplifies the creative potential of Brisbane Festival to contribute to and elevate the Queensland arts ecosystem, and the international zeitgeist, through a global-local making process.

Premier local dance artists had the opportunity to work with some of the world's leading artists, allowing inroads to global networks as well as building Queensland's artistic reputation. Local design professionals and students were engaged in hands-on roles working the international guest teams, building capacity for local artsworkers and inspiring students of the craft. Brisbane Festival and Brisbane's artistic reputation was invigorated by national and international media coverage.

"I had the great privilege last weekend of visiting, albeit briefly, Brisbane Festival. I arrived just in time on Thursday evening to see the biggest talking point at Artistic Director Louise Bezzina's annual jamboree in the Queensland Capital: Salamander. Let's just say the dance work, by British choreographer and director Maxine Doyle and international set designer Es Devlin did not disappoint.

The country's preeminent dance critic, Deborah Jones, reviewed the show in The Australian's daily art pages last week, and gave it a rave assessment. Jones, too, made a salient point: Bezzina took a great risk in programming such a mammoth work – it is performed across two football pitched size spaces in an old dockside warehouse in Northshore, on the Brisbane waterfront – and should be commended for it. I agree with everything Jones said. It is a remarkable show. Buy, beg for or borrow a ticket."

Tim Douglas – The Australian



"an extraordinary theatrical work encompassing diverse art forms"

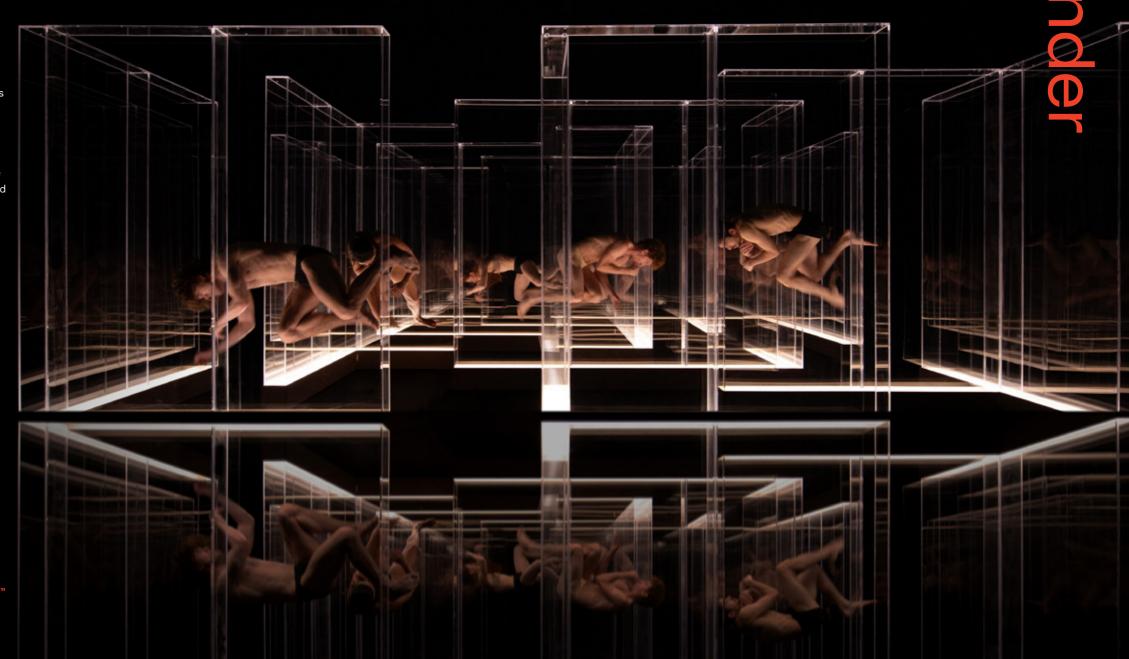
Suzannah Conway - Artshub

"Salamander is a rare gift. It would be a crime if other festivals were not to dive in."

Deborah Jones - The Australian

"Taking dance theatre into a heightened experiential realm, Salamander is a work of global stature."

Olivia Stewart - The Guardian





A bold new Australian comedy musical created by Queensland darlings Kate Miler-Heidke and Keir Nuttall, *BANANALAND* made its debut to rave audience and media reviews. The story of a dream gone wrong but gone right, our anti-hero Ruby Semblance leads a ragtag punk collective to become a runaway kids entertainment sensation, all along asking our audience to consider the True Meaning of Art.

Proudly co-commissioned and co-produced by Brisbane Festival and Queensland Performing Arts Centre, it is exciting to be creating innovative new works in a field where few Australian companies are making, and a real triumph for whole the creative team.

This Brisbane Festival flagship connected powerfully to many different audiences, extending far beyond its heartland of passionate musical theatre fans. It opened up musical theatre as a genre to new fans, including Kate Miller-Heidke diehards, Queenslanders who lived for the many Brisbane-isms, and the thousands of parents seeking reprieve from the tyranny of children's entertainment. From Brisbane to the world, BANANALAND has already commenced touring, with its first stop at Sydney Festival 2024, and interest extending into 2025 and beyond.

"The pandemic reminded us that, regardless of all the selfish reasons we perform (and there are many), live performance can be a truly spiritual experience. Spiritual in a sense that it is one moment in time in which people congregate together for a shared experience. You can't do it over zoom. Sport does this too, but with less contemplation of the human condition. Although some disagree.

So much of this show came together in the three workshops that Brisbane Festival and QPAC generously afforded us. And the spirits of all our cast, and some other actors who helped us along the way, are in the final product.

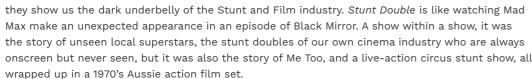
We hope you laugh, we hope you cry, and we hope you see something of yourself in our characters. Most of all, we hope you feel what it is to be in one moment in time with a room full of strangers. All here for one moment in time."

- Kate Miller-Heidke & Keir Nuttall

Stunt Double

Stunt Double is the latest gift from creative maestro's THE FARM. This production was the first Major Festivals Initiative for The Farm, seeing the work chaperoned by Brisbane Festival through the process of Creative Development to Pre-Production. This commission led by Brisbane Festival saw a transformational opportunity for The Farm through Perth Festival, Darwin Festival, Canberra Theatre and Gold Coast's Home of the Arts all coming in board.

Stunt Double showed The Farm at their best, subverting genres and tropes, engaging and lampooning the idea of entertainment itself as



Cleverly using audience volunteers to provide the role of movie extras, this offered an exciting new way to engage with theatre - by being in the cast and onstage. The participants were thrilled by the opportunity to participate in a live production and experience the atmosphere backstage, and their contribution meant every night's performance was electric and fresh.

Audiences were blown away by the sheer talent on the stage, it was fun and ridiculous, but it also presented a very endearing emotional arc that people took to heart.

"Using the inner strength of her character, Maya Dove turns the raw and naïve young Tae into a wiser one giving an authentic and truthful performance that is astonishingly good."

Tae Tae and the Land Of Yaaas!

Endearing itself to audiences in its premiere season, Tae Tae and the Land Of Yaaas! is a triumph of disability-led art on the mainstage. Shake & Stir, in association with CPL - Choice, Passion & Life, have created a wonder of modern theatre that sparkles in its energetic defiance of stereotype and limitations.

Our two new leads embraced their debut mainstage opportunity, with Maya Dove bringing a raw and earnest edge to Tae Tae, and drag queen Maxi Shield (of Ru Pauls Drag Race fame) bringing the quintessential flawed fairy godmother to effervescent life.

Inspired by the true story of Estee Lee and written by her sister Nelle Lee, it is a heartwarming tragicomedy that challenges outdated notions of happily ever after. Giving space to an extraordinary life story, this process required all parties to step away from their understanding of industry norms into a new creative space that prioritised and elevated inclusion at all levels of the development and production.



The Making of Pinocchio (UK)

Masterful theatre made its Australian debut with The Making of Pinocchio. Brisbane audiences were utterly charmed by the charismatic young couple creatives, Rosana Cade and Ivor Macaskill, with their seminal work The Making of Pinocchio. This work has been lovingly built since 2018, alongside and in response to Ivor's gender transition.

Created with a true craftsman's eye for detail and a meticulous attention to stagecraft, this work resonated on a deep level with queer audiences and allies, bringing to life a complex issue with exquisite care. This show was also an exemplar on embedding accessibility into a mainstage production, with flawless captioning, relaxed lighting, audio description and other a ccessibility features provided as standard.



"In its audacity and complexity, The Making of Pinocchio blurs the line between the familiar and the taboo, creating a space for contemplation and reflection, and beckoning the audience to a place where honesty, creativity, and self-acceptance converge."

- Theatre Haus



Soweto Gospel Choir

We were fortunate to welcome 3-time Grammywinning Soweto Gospel Choir for two shows, their renowned African Gospel show Hope, and History of House in collaboration with ARIA-nominated DJ Groove Terminator.

Soweto Gospel Choir brought an ecstatic vibe to The Princess Theatre, with both events selling out within days, and audience interest demanding a second show. The piping hot energy and community connection generated at these events was visceral, drawing in so many different audiences who were there for the beautiful Gospel music, and along the way embracing connection to African culture, enjoying the trip down memory lane experiencing the bangers of the 80s and 90s music scene, and the captivating dancefloor where all were welcomed



Lightscape made its Queensland debut at Brisbane Festival capturing the hearts and Instagram feeds of Brisbanites, who flocked to the multi-sensory immersive experience in their thousands.

Brisbane Festival's partnership with Sony to present *Lightscape* was an outstanding success. *Lightscape* attracted significant audience numbers from a diverse demographic, achieved excellent customer satisfaction, offered Brisbane Festival a new highly popular element within the program broadening our audience, and offered an enormous commercial return on investment.

The thirteen illuminated installations were created by a portfolio of diverse artists, from the beautiful projected illustrations by First Nations artists, to the wondrous 'Fire Garden' from artist Brian Thunder, and the crowd favourite, the 'Winter Cathedral' from Mandylights (UK).

Visitors came to enjoy their date-night, family gathering, or ecstatic pre-game gathering, enjoying delicious food and beverages at conveniently placed food rucks scattered throughout the park. Social media overflowed with incredible imagery and stunning video as people gathered with their loved ones to take in this internationally renowned exhibition.

'Having more theatre and shows on in and around Brisbane is so great for the whole vibe of the city and adds to our appeal. I heard so many people say at Lightscape that they wished some of it was a permanent installation'

- Audience feedback

'Lightscape' by Brisbane Festival is a breathtaking lighting display. The curation of the walk is expert. Each installation complements the section of the gardens in which it has been placed and each installation works harmoniously with the existing flora.'

– Theatre Travels



160,000 VISITORS



27 MillionMEDIA REACH



\$5.5 Million IN SALES





In 2023, Brisbane Festival continued to demonstrate the transformative power of the arts, bringing people together through our Community Partnerships Program. At the heart of our Festival is a commitment to sharing the diverse stories of our communities and creating opportunities for people to connect and celebrate their unique talents.

Throughout the 2023 program, we made this happen with the generous support of the Queensland Government, rolling out three inclusive programs that celebrated a variety of artforms.

The response from our community, artists, donors, and partners has been incredible, making this third round of our Community Partnerships Program a unique and special part of the Festival program.

West End Stories

West End Stories: Meeanjin Recovered provided a platform for important First Nations stories of Brisbane and supported the development of an entire concert's worth of songs.

West End Stories: Meanjin Recovered, made through multi-year development in collaboration with West End Elders and song writer Jessie Lloyd, and performed on Kurilpa/West End ground, the concert saw an overflowing audience held in rapt attention to hear the intimate songs and personal stories of Brisbane Blacks Elders Aunty Dawn Daylight, Uncle Adam Hopkins, Uncle Barry Tanner, and Auntie Chantay Link.

West End Stories evolved from a collaboration between Jessie Lloyd and First Nations Women's Healing Group "Ya'Djin Yadu Wonga" as part of Brisbane Festival in 2022. Stories of healing that were shared in 2022 inspired Jessie to further explore First Nations storytelling across Community and in more depth in 2023. With thanks to our partnership with Tafe Queensland which supported this project with access to space for rehearsal and performance.



"It is important for future generations and important for us to tell our stories, our way. It's a great thing that the Brisbane Festival has done for our community."

- Community Support Worker

Common People Dance

The popular Common Dance People Project was back once again but this time with an engagement program that spanned the city.

Common People Dance Project brought back the '80s vibe with dance workshops and parties, inviting everyone to join in and have a good time. With a proven track record for delivering arts experiences that create strong community connections, Brisbane Festival engaged Neridah Waters and Common People Dance in 2023 to deliver a eight-week program of dance workshops and dance parties across seven Neighborhood Community Centres in Brisbane suburbs.

Common People Dance provided a safe and fun creative space for people to experience the arts. Feedback from workshop participants has been exceptionally positive, rating their experience as 7 out of 10 or higher. Over half of all Common People Dance participants giving it 10 out of 10.

"My cheeks hurt from smiling so much - love the fun and happiness."

- Workshop Participant

"I know Common People Dance is making a real difference. It has a flow on effect. It's helping so many people get through tricky times."

- Workshop participant



7 COMMUNITY CENTRES

COOPERS PLAINS, STAFFORD, SHERWOOD, BRACKEN RIDGE, SANDGATE, BARDON, DARRA



49 WORKSHOPS



MORE THAN 700
PARTICIPANTS



459 TO THE COMMON PEOPLE DANCE PARTIES



Fashion Collab

Fashion Collab celebrated self-expression through fashion, putting a special focus on inclusivity for LGBTQIAX+ and neurodivergent communities through a six-week program of costume design workshops. Facilitated by local arts practitioners Ehud Joseph, Soraya del Castillo, Dr. Lenine Bourke, Annika Strand and Kristy Power, the workshops provided a space for participants to explore self-expression through costume design with the aim of exhibiting or wearing their unique creations at *The Stitchery Collective's Bowerytopia* event.

Fashion Collab was delivered in partnership with QUT Foundry and Neighbourhood Centres Queensland.



53PARTICIPANTS

"I think the Brisbane Festival has a unique capability to work in a grassroots level; to connect with communities in very different facets of the greater Brisbane area. I know that there are communities that have really thrived, and projects that have lasted way longer than the actual Festival has. That's an investment in Brisbane."

- Ehud Joseph, facilitator, Fashion Lecturer and arts practitioner

In 2023 we continued to take Brisbane Festival out into our community, with programming running the duration of the Festival at Westfield Chermside, West Village West End and King St in Bowen Hills.

From an epic festival experience for families - Kidchella, at Westfield Chermside - to an oversized ode to arcade games with ESC. With Us at King St, and highly-anticipated elusive performances by a flamboyance of *Flamingos* at West Village – the festive energy certainly made its way across Brisbane.

"Thank you for all the fun activities and freebies at Westfield Chermside. My little one has loved the various activities you have made available, especially during school holidays."

- Westfield Chermside Kidchella attendee







The grand entry to Brisbane Festival returned in 2023, proudly sponsored by Australian Retirement Trust

An inner-city wonderland of food, wine, entertainment and discovery, the popular South Bank destination was humming both day and night.

The free programming six days a week included hundreds of artists, as well as one major installation - Hiromi Hotel: YU KA 夢花 by internationally renowned artist Hiromi Tango designed to both boost mental health and encourage conversations about it. Offering a creative and contemplative space for audiences by day, the installation also lit up as a dance floor by night, keeping the festive fun going late into the early spring evenings.

Hiromi Hotel: YU KA 夢花 was a major drawcard to the Australian Retirement Trust Festival Garden, bringing families and friends alike to play amongst and take photos with the huge flower structures.

FESTIVAL GARDEN SNAPSHOT 348,892 22,239

AT FESTIVAL GARDEN



SOUTH BANK PIAZZA



CASE STUDY AIRBNB

Airbnb joined the Brisbane Festival Partner family in 2023 for the first time as the Festival's inaugural Community Engagement Partner.

Bringing the much-loved and highly-attended free *Serenades* program to neighbourhood hubs in 2023, Brisbane Festival worked with Airbnb to delight the local community in stunning Saturday and Sunday afternoons of live classical music throughout the duration of the Festival.

Brisbane Serenades travelled across all corners of Brisbane, lighting up over 23 suburbs with a free celebration of music and community.

Audiences enjoyed program highlights including Camerata & Nina Korbe, YATRA,

Australian Voices and many more.



To further elevate this partnership of community engagement, Brisbane Festival worked closely with Airbnb to proudly present the Community Hero program. This program showcased the stories, voices, and people in this city whose positive contributions help make Brisbane such a wonderful place to call home.

These selected individuals had the opportunity to share their stories either through interviews at one of our Brisbane Serenades events during the Festival or as a part of a portrait installation at Australian Retirement Trust Festival Garden (captured by Creative Photographer, Thomas Oliver). The Brisbane Festival team worked closely with Airbnb throughout the year in the lead-up to the Festival to ensure that the Airbnb brand, both at Brisbane Serenade locations and through the Community Heroes activation, was effectively represented without detracting from genuine engagement.



CASE STUDY AIR CANADA

In 2023, Air Canada came on board as a Silver Partner of Brisbane Festival.

Air Canada were aligned to Eternity by Circa and Lightscape by Sony Music Entertainment.

Eternity, a new site-specific circus performance held in St John's Cathedral, is a new commission by internationally renowned local performance company Circa. A world premiere for Brisbane Festival, Eternity was designed for cathedrals and other sacred spaces, and showcased in St John's Cathedral.

Following enormous international success in the US and UK, the global smash hit *Lightscape* finally landed in Brisbane, lighting up the iconic Brisbane City Botanic Gardens and seeing over 160,400 attendees over the month of September.

Air Canada played an integral role in promoting *Lightscape*, supporting the festival through supplying prizes for the 'Win flights to New York + tickets to *Lightscape*' acquisition and sales campaign.

The competition was a huge success, garnering over 35,500 entries and helping the Festival's subscriber database increase by 45%. A true partnership with reciprocal benefit and ROI.



CASE STUDY

THE STAR ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

The Star Entertainment Group was the Presenting Partner of a program highlight from Brisbane Festival 2023 – *Nieergoo: Spirit of the Whale* by Tribal Experiences and Skyshows.

Nieergoo: Spirit of the Whale, a world premiere for Brisbane Festival, was a three-dimensional multicolour drone show celebrating the Turrbul and Yuggera dreamtime story of the creation of the Moreton Bay islands. The work was accompanied by music by Guy Webster and directed by storyteller and Co-Chair of Brisbane Festival's Indigenous Advisory Group, Shannon Ruska.

Nieergoo: Spirit of the Whale was an adored event and attracted some of the highest community interest and engagement in Brisbane Festival history for an installation work. Highlighting The Star's highly-anticipated new Queen's Wharf precinct, the Festival was able to help build brand awareness and community connection to what will be one of the staples of our river city in the coming years. This 2-day event was also part of Brisbane Festival's free programming.

Disability and Inclusion Action Plan

Brisbane Festival is proud to have developed our inaugural Disability Inclusion Access Plan in 2023 and is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible celebration of arts and culture. This transformative plan embodies our dedication to ensuring that people with disability have equal access to and participation in all aspects of the festival. By embracing diversity and removing barriers, we aim to create an environment where everyone can fully engage, appreciate, and celebrate the arts.

Brisbane Festival is committed to being a leader in access and inclusion for people with disability. To do this, we have developed four areas of focus, each with a set of actions for implementation over the life of this plan.

- Access and inclusion We will identify and reduce barriers for people with disability in accessing Brisbane Festival's physical and digital spaces
- Economic participation and employment Through practices that acknowledge and directly
 address barriers to inclusion, we will provide the conditions for people with disability to
 economically participate in the festival
- Engagement and participation We will work directly with the disability community, inviting
 their engagement and harnessing their feedback and expertise to maximise the outcomes and
 impact of its access and inclusion efforts
- Sector and community development Brisbane Festival will be a role model for the
 adoption of accessible and inclusive practices for arts and events in Queensland. Through a
 commitment to continuous learning, we will build confidence and capability and use this to
 influence those around us to create a legacy of access and inclusion that extends beyond the
 festival and towards the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Brisbane Festival would like to acknowledge the assistance and input of the many contributors to the creation of this document, with special thanks to our Official Access and Inclusion Partner, *CPL – Choice, Passion, Life.*

Access and Inclusion Partner



choice • passion • life





Undercover Artist Festival 2023

Brisbane Festival was once again privileged and proud to umbrella the biennial *Undercover Artist Festival* in 2023.

The programming theme for Undercover Artist Festival 2023 was 'Our Power', encouraging d/Deaf and disabled artists to step into their power and share their voices, stories and talents with strength and authenticity.

From emotionally meaningful productions that touched the hearts of audiences to light-hearted dance routines, Undercover Artist Festival presented a collection of talents that shattered stereotypes and illustrated the power of d/Deaf and disabled artists on stage. In 2023, Undercover Artist treated audiences to thought-provoking theatre, unforgettable musical performances, quick-witted humour, immersive poetry, captivating cabaret, and, for the first time, an all-accessible dance floor.

We're so proud to be part of Brisbane Festival, and CPL's work supporting the development of the new Brisbane Festival Disability Inclusion Action Plan is a natural extension of the fantastic relationship we have. The Brisbane Festival team are committed to a more inclusive and accessible BrisFest for all, and we see that in some of the programming choices this year – *Tae Tae in the Land of YAAAS!* by shake&stir and Jodee Mundy's *Personal* are just two examples of the disability-inclusive programming that includes Undercover Artist Festival's entire program and some other incredible works, too. I'm excited to see how the Plan's implementation welcomes more artists and more audiences to join the Brisbane Festival fun in future!

Disability-led work not only promotes the agency of the disabled artist as the key decision-maker driving the work, but also the enhanced authenticity that is unlocked when we trust disabled voices to tell disabled stories. It's powerful stuff!

- Madeleine (Maddie) Little, Undercover Artist Festival Director

Brisbane Festival's Giving Program enables meaningful investment in artists through the commissioning of new works and ensures that a significant portion of the programming remains free and accessible to all in the community.

Earlier this year, Artistic Director Louise Bezzina invited audiences to the dining table of Brisbane Festival 2023. Our much-loved Festival donors were the first to accept this invitation to gather, reflect and celebrate with us. They are the visionaries and early adopters, and their unwavering generosity has been instrumental to the success of Brisbane Festival 2023.

Brisbane Festival is grateful for the phenomenal support shown by our giving community this year. In 2023, the Giving Program received philanthropic income of \$1,717,382 from 385 donors, another record-breaking result. There were 402 donations, up 54% on 2022. We cannot thank you enough for backing us and for the impact that your giving has had on artistic programming. An incredible 23 diverse Festival projects were made possible through the Giving Program in 2023.

It was a great joy to welcome new donors the to the Festival this year and we are equally grateful to those loyal returning supporters who saw the need and increased the value of their gifts. Festival donors once again positively responded to the matching messaging during our EoFY campaign, with thanks to our incredible Giving Committee who collectively matched donations received to the value of \$466,500.









"I went to see the amazing Salamander. It is a stunning experience – I can't just call it a show or a performance – it is an experience. And I loved it. My warm congratulations. I actually immediately wanted to go again to unpack more of it - but unfortunately not sure I can get in to another performance now with other things in the way (that pesky Brisbane Festival – so many shows!!). Off to BANANALAND tonight and Flamingos tomorrow night. You are a star, Louise and we are very lucky to have you in Queensland!"

- Elizabeth Jameson AM

Brisbane Festival's philanthropy strategy focuses on engaging our community through purposeful communications and an array of enriching events. From the series of Giving Program eNews to a suite of fundraising functions held throughout the year, these initiatives serve as the cornerstone of connection with our cherished supporters. We were also delighted to offer Brisbane Festival ticketing and hospitality services exclusively to donors through the VIP Concierge and it was a thrill to observe our Friends experiencing so much of Brisbane Festival 2023 during September.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members of our dedicated Giving Committee for their philanthropic leadership and advocacy – we simply could not have achieved such a successful Brisbane Festival 2023 without your support. We appreciate and acknowledge the guidance and advice of our Chair, the Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley, who stewards the program so graciously - he is a wise and thoughtful counsel to the Festival always.

While celebrating the extraordinary success of this year's Festival, our team is swiftly transitioning towards future plans and driving fundraising forward. As we reflect, debrief and report, we're already confirming works for the eagerly anticipated Brisbane Festival 2024 and implementing strategies to ensure these projects can be realised.

Once again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the remarkable community of Festival donors for your continued support of the Giving Program - thank you for joining us at the dinner table of Brisbane Festival 2023.



"Dear Brisbane Festival fabulous people what a brilliant time you have given our city. I have appreciated the constant sparkle courtesy and generous spirit. I am now in recovery after all the gorgeous events. Thank you. Thank you. Lots of love."

– The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO



AN INCREASE OF

54%

2022: 261 DONATIONS 2023: 402 DONATIONS



RECORD PHILANTHROPIC INCOME

\$1,717,382

"The practical support of Festival Donors allows Louise Bezzina to commission new work for Brisbane Festival. Your donations create opportunities for local artists to write, design, light, costume, direct and perform. You open access to Festival events for the public. The involvement of local artists, the showing of new work and the accessible community events give Brisbane Festival its unique character. The Festival makes Brisbane a better place to live, to work, and to make a life. It gives people from around the State, around the country and around the world a reason to visit. It builds a more confident, creative, and inclusive community."

– The Honorable Justice Thomas Bradley, Brisbane Festival Giving Committee Chair













say you've made this city of ours really rock - again - is an understatement. Perhaps a way to describe it all was decadent delight of mischief, music and mayhem, the tag line from Bite Club: 2nd Serve, one of several performances I saw. Then throw in your amazingly choreographed jigsaw of exceptional extravaganzas - arts, culture, comedy, skill, talent, humour, mass fun, gardens lit like an alien landscape, fireworks, drones. And the occasional low-flying Globemaster. The result? You really made it happen and we got the best of the best. Brisbane Festival puts us hugely on the map and I'm so proud to be part of it. Bring on 2024 and count on my modest but passionate support again. I'm still smiling."

BRISBANE **JAVITS3**

DONORS MAKE IT HAPPEN

The Giving Program supports key areas of need within artistic programming, creating opportunities for local artists, commissioning new work and ensuring access for all through reduced-priced tickets and free events.

All philanthropic income from the Giving Program goes directly towards Brisbane Festival programming. The generosity of Festival donors was crucial in delivering the following key programming this year.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC.

BANANALAND

BRISBANE SERENADES

This production was supported through the Giving Program by Haymans Electrical.

CAMERATA CINEMATHEQUE

This project was supported through the Giving Program by the Mather Foundation.

ERTH'S SHARK DIVE

ETERNITY

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Philip Bacon AO and Cass & Ian George.

FASHION COLLAB

FESTIVAL GARDEN - FREE PROGRAM

HIDE THE DOG

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC.

HIROMI HOTEL: YU KA 夢花

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Paul, Susan and Kate Taylor.

LIGHTSCAPE

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Philip Bacon AO.

MOOROOKA BLOCK PARTY (2023)

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Carolyn Vincent - The Ubuntu Foundation.

NIEERGOO - SPIRIT OF THE WHALE

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Philip Bacon AO.

PERSONAL

This project was supported through the Giving Program by The Dalwood-Wylie Charitable Foundation

SALAMANDER

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC, Carolyn Vincent - The Ubuntu Foundation and Cass & Ian George.

SIVA MAI CLUB

SONICLINES

STUNT DOUBLE

This project was supported through the Giving Program by Tim Fairfax AC & Gina Fairfax AC.

TAE TAE IN THE LAND OF YAAAS!

THE MAKING OF PINOCCHIO THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MUSIC

TRACKER

This project was supported through the Giving Program by the Siganto Family Foundation and Jodie Siganto

YIRINDA

"Where can I start with the superlatives? 2023 Brisbane Festival was another September of brilliance. To

FESTIVAL DONORS MAKE IT HAPPEN – THANK YOU!

estival Donors

If you would like to become involved with the Giving Program by making a tax-deductible donation to Brisbane Festival, please contact Head of Philanthropy Fabienne Cooke on fabienne@brisbanefestival.com.au or 0411809047.

BRISBANE 14/11/S33 DONORS MAKE IT HAPPEN

GAME CHANGERS

Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Philip Bacon AO
Haymans Electrical
Paul, Susan and Kate Taylor
Carolyn Vincent - Ubuntu Foundation

HIGH COMMISSIONERS

Justice Thomas Bradley and Dr Matthew Yoong Conscious Capital

Dalwood-Wylie Charitable Foundation

Frazer Family Foundation

Gallus Partners

Cass and Ian George

Simon and Prue George

Jody and Stephen Gosling

Andy Greig and Ingrid Asbury

Ms Cate Heyworth-Smith KC and Dr Ben Duke

Kim and Michael Hodge

Shaun and Sue Kenny

Dr Susan and Andrew King - ASHER Capital

Wayne Kratzmann AM

Tim and Amanda Mahony - TKM Capital

Mather Foundation

Simon and Nicole Morrison

Kevin and Laura Perkins

Liz Pidgeon and Graeme Wikman

Ben and Fiona Poschelk

Siganto Foundation

Jodie Siganto

Courtney Talbot

Michele and Michael Taylor

Phillip, Marisa and Bella Vecchio

CREATIVE CHAMPIONS

Anonymous

The Hon Justice Sue Brown and Lisa Worner

Nick and Gavle Carter

Drs Frank and Ailbhe Cunningham

Judith Cush

Fisher Dore Lawyers

Rhyll Gardner and Rusty Graham

Lancush Pty Ltd

Russell Mann and Margot McLay

Rebel Penfold-Russell OAM

Rod and Judy Pilbeam

Shepherd Family Foundation

Simon White and Chanelle Simpson

Penny J Wolff and Peter J Wolff

THE COMMISSIONERS

Antoinette Aquilina and Gary Hutchins

Matt and Eliza Baxby Louise Bezzina

Virginia Bishop

Bryce Camm and Mark Lightfoot

Andy and Katrina Carrick

Nanette Carroll

Kim Challenor

Marshall and Fabienne Cooke

Heidi and James Cooper

John and Regina Cotter

Charlie and Alicia Cush

Jamie and Kate Duffield

Jack and Tamara Fahy - MaxGrains Australia

Marian Gibney

Wendy and Bryan Gibson

Jeff and Amanda Griffin

Michelle Boyd

Valmay Hill and Russell Mitchell

Drs Elizabeth Hodge and Daniel Hagley

Elizabeth Jameson AM and Abbe Anderson

Joli Boutique

Susan Learmonth and Bernard Curran

David Lyons

Sarah and Ari McCamley

Amanda Newbery

James and Prue Pateras

Libby Patrick

The Hon Justice Anthe Philippides

Dare and Andrea Power

Liam and Sarah Prescott

Rachael Rigg

Dr Kieran and Suzie Rowe

Di Riefall allu Suzie R

Catherine Sinclair

Paul Spiro

Melinda Taylor

Marie-Louise Theile

The Hon Justice David Thomas and Jane Thomas

Tony and Linda Young

THE INDEPENDENTS

Anonymous

Christopher and Margot Blue

Isabel Brew

Melissa Brown

Alison Campbell

Cathi Collier

Sheryl Cornack

James and Sarah Goodman

Gary and Julie Kordic

Ross Molloy and Cath Nicholson

Danniella Nocelli

Emily and Chris Pickford

Edwina Piper

Alexandra and Chris Poiner

Susan and Matthew Pople

Anna Reynolds and Ian O'Connor

Leanne and Koen Rooijmans

Marty Rowen

Dr Eva-Marie Seeto

Alison Smith

John Smithwick

Andrea and Craig Templeman

Jenny Usher and Peter Good

David and Judy Usher

Sarah Zeljko

BFFS

Anonymous

Andrew Battersby

Paul Bertinato

Terry Bower

Pam Buchanan

Jonty Flottmann

Connor Gass

Isabella Gass

Leeor Groen

Julia Herne Nina Lamprell

Samuel Longfield

Michael Morris

Naomi Murphy
Danielle and Jason Organ

Mrs Pattie Pozzebon

Ben Previtera and Maddie Brooks

Ewen Thompson

Alex Woodward

Social Media & Web



IMPRESSIONS VIA DIGITAL ACTIVITY ALONE

WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS 2,978,354 40% Increase



FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS
115,317 21% Increase



TWITTER FOLLOWERS 173,300



TIKTOK FOLLOWERS

1,118 (NEW CHANNEL STARTED IN 2023)



530+

ORGANIC SOCIAL POSTS (INSTAGRAM & FACEBOOK PRIMARY CHANNELS)

8,361,462 246% increase
IMPRESSIONS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY WITH ADDITIONAL SPEND ON BOOSTING KEY ORGANIC SOCIAL AND FOCUS ON SHARING ON-TREND, CHANNEL FIT CONTENT.

1,893,800
FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS REACHED

Win a trip to New York
35,513 COMPETITION ENTRIES
29,333 WEB PAGE VIEWS
25,173 NET DATABASE GROWTH

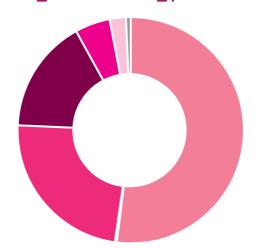


The Golden Kazoo Hunt 370,000+ IMPRESSIONS 164,000+ REACH 8,372 ATTENDANCE AT CLOSING EVENT



6,044
INTERSTATE/
NATIONAL CLIPS

Media coverage by media type



4,271 TV

1,809 online

1,570 RADIO

610 INFLUENCER SOCIAL

610 PRINT

MAGAZINE

A TOTAL OF

8,446MEDIA CLIPS



5,550 SYNDICATED ARTICLES



ASR VALUE OF

\$9.1 Million

National coverage

VOGUE AUSTRALIA, THE GUARDIAN, THE AUSTRALIAN, LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE, QWEEKEND, SKY NEWS, SCENESTR, ABC RADIO NATIONAL

Highest volume of coverage nationally



Foundation Partners



Partnerships



Brisbane Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council

Strategic Partner



Star Partner



Platinum Partner



Community Engagement Partner



Gold Partners



































Silver Partners























Bronze Partners



























































































ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Louise Bezzina

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Charlie Cush

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anna Reynolds Philip Bacon AO Kim Challenor David Lvons Simon Morrison Amanda Newbery

Anna Palmer Michelle Tuahine

Graeme Wikman

Chair Deputy Chair

INDIGENOUS ADVISORY GROUP

Aunty Raelene Rallah-Baker

(Girramay, Birri, Yuggerah)

Shannon Ruska

Co-Chair (Yuggera, Toorabul)

Aunty Bridget Garay Co-Chair

(Kemer Kemer Meriam Nation)

GIVING COMMITTEE

The Hon Justice Thomas Bradley Courtney Talbot Philip Bacon AO Eliza Baxby Heidi Cooper David Lyons Anna Palmer

Chair Deputy Chair

Associate Producer

Associate Producer

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Kylie Cobb Min Collie-Holmes Fabienne Cooke Rebecca Drummond

Secretary Sarah Farnsworth

Bella Ford Nicole Klein

Tim Pack

Charlie Sayer

Rachael Rigg

Marketing Manager **Executive Producer** Head of Philanthropy Finance Director and Company

Head of Business Systems and

Operations **Executive Producer** Head of Marketing and Communications

Technical Director Marketing and Communications Director

Head of Partnerships and Engagement

ADMINISTRATION

Rae Anderson Raquel Campbell Kira Feeney Hannah Flannery Georgia O'Byrne Jess Summit

Volunteers Coordinator Ticketing Executive Volunteers Assistant Ticketing Assistant Admin Assistant Office Manager

FINANCE

Lorelle Edwards

Finance Assistant

PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

Georgie Beauchamp Nicole James Alan Jenner Alex Woodward

Partnerships Administrator Events Executive - Lightscape **Events Executive** Partnerships Executive

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Bivi Jill Chew Digital Marketing Coordinator Carlia Fuller Marketing Specialist Tom Lyttle Digital Systems Specialist Sampson Smith Marketing Specialist

PHILANTHROPY

Jenny Usher Feena Callinan

Philanthropy Coordinator Philanthropy Administrator, **Executive Assistant**

PROGRAMMING

Elizabeth Hunt

Nicholas Southey

Ben Poschelk Paul Taylor

Melinda Wells Logistics Coordinator Leah Clark Creative Producer Mayella Dewis-Koroi Creative Producer Claire Dix Producer Erin Fitzsimon Associate Producer Emily Gillhome Production Simon Mula Creative Producer Moale James Producer Emma Joslin Production Coordinator Fiona MacDonald Creative Producer Eleanor Miller Producer Imogen Millhouse Associate Producer Simon Mula Creative Producer Nadia Okorn Niche Producer Marketing

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

Janella Ang Production Administrator Jack B- Jones Technical Coordinator Christophe Broadway Mclane Catterall Richard Clarke Kat Harch Blake Howson Rebecca Lawes Laura McCabe Andrew McNelley Richard Middleditch Paul Mulcahy Madeline Pollard Jamie Taylor Jason Waide

Operations Manager Technical Coordinator Production Manager Technical Manager Technical Coordinator Operations Coordinator Production Administrator Technical Coordinator Technical Manager Production Manager Signage Coordinator Technical Manager Technical Manager

AGENCIES

Aruga Atmosphere Photography Bigfish Dowling & Dowling Design Josh Mcintosh optikal bloc PHD Media

Publicity Photography Brand & Website Graphic Design Site Design Video Advertising



BRISBANE



BRISBANE FESTIVAL

Festival House, L2, 381 Brunswick Street PO Box 384, Fortitude Valley Qld 4006

- 07 3833 5400
- brisbanefestival.com.au
- brisbanefestival@brisbanefestival.com.au
- f Facebook.com/BrisbaneFestival
- Instagram.com/brisbanefestival
- twitter.com/BrisFestival
- tiktok.com/@brisbanefestival



Government



Brisbane Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council