

3B: Growing audiences and participation in arts and culture



Col Henry, *Lifesaver, lifesaver*, Swell Sculpture Festival 2008. Photo: Ruth Della

Audiences are a key component of building a sustainable arts and cultural sector in Queensland. The Plan and the sector's activities aim to encourage Queenslanders to participate in the arts and cultural activities as audiences, creators and volunteers. Participation in the arts helps to break down barriers between people, establish social networks and foster a shared sense of identity, belonging and security.

Audience trends

In 2007–08, attendance at subsidised arts sector events in Queensland exceeded four million. This total includes attendance data from organisations funded via the Cultural Infrastructure Program in 2007; the 2007 Queensland Music Festival; Sector Project Grants; Career Development Grants; Industry Development Initiatives; and Backing Indigenous Arts programs.

Arts Queensland, the arts portfolio and arts and cultural organisations took proactive steps to promote the arts and increase audiences. Some highlights include:

- **Test Drive the Arts** aims to grow new audiences for Queensland's performing arts companies and venues and create a more sustainable sector by giving more Queenslanders a taste for the arts. A joint innovation between Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts, the Test Drive the Arts program was launched in August 2007. Modelled on similar successful schemes operating in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, the 'try before you buy' initiative allows first-time patrons to experience the performing arts at venues across the state. Since the launch of the program, 21 000 people have visited the website, and complimentary tickets valued at over \$117 000 have been issued to Queenslanders.
- There were over 800 000 visitors to the network of **regional galleries** throughout Queensland in 2007. Over 57 000 people were involved in the educational activities associated with galleries' programming. These galleries are owned and funded by local councils.
- The **Opera First Timers** initiative proved successful in developing new audiences for Opera Queensland in 2007. This direct online marketing campaign contributed to a 23 per cent increase in subscriptions for 2008, as well as two sold out productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Turandot* in 2008.
- The **2008 Brisbane Writers Festival** drew record crowds of some 32 000, who were enlivened by five days of conversation between writers and readers about the ideas and passions that matter. This represents an increase of 20 per cent in audience attendance.
- Recognised nationally for excellence in arts and cultural engagement, the **Woodford Folk Festival** has more than doubled its aggregated attendance from 62 000 in 1994 to 127 000 in 2007. With high visitor satisfaction levels and high repeat visitation at 66 per cent, future demand is expected to continue to grow. In 2008, the Festival featured a week of celebration involving over 2000 performers and presenters and 400 events including concerts, dances, workshops, forums, street theatre, writers' panels, film festival, comedy, acoustic jams, children's programs, and special events. Similarly, **The Dreaming** has experienced solid increased attendance, with a 50 per cent growth in visitor numbers to 16 500 over 3 years from 2005–06 to 2007–08.



Character by Liquid Interactive for *Test Drive the Arts* flash animation

- In 2009, under the **La Boite Ambassadors program**, 100 specially selected Year 11 and 12 students from Queensland schools will enter a unique year-long relationship with the company as part of the La Boite team. The program aims to give Ambassadors a taste of how a professional theatre company works and the process of creating theatre. In turn, Ambassadors share their learning about and passion for theatre by introducing La Boite's work to their peers, schools and families. Ambassadors attend each La Boite performance for free and receive discounted tickets for family and friends.
- Software installed as part of the **ADVICE** pilot is providing a number of performing arts venues and companies in Queensland with improved access to and analysis of box office data. This will assist venues to develop audience-building strategies and to customise programming and marketing.

Cultural Infrastructure Program

2007 was the final year of the Cultural Infrastructure Program, with this program being redesigned as the s2m Program for funding small to medium organisations from 2008 onwards.

In 2007, over 1.6 million attended events, performances and exhibitions produced by, and participated in workshops convened by, organisations funded under the Cultural Infrastructure Program. **Table 6** summarises trend data on attendance and participation for organisations funded under the Cultural Infrastructure Program from 2004 to 2007. This data is drawn from acquittal reports.

Under the Cultural Infrastructure Program from 2004 to 2007, the trends are:

- Total attendance at events, performances and exhibitions increased by approximately 118 000 or 9 per cent from 1 297 824 in 2004 to 1 415 842 in 2007.
- The total number of events declined from 5546 in 2004 to 4801 in 2007. This is a decrease of 745 events or 15.5 per cent.
- Workshop attendances increased by some 137 000 or 220 per cent from 62 348 in 2004 to 199 435 in 2007.
- The total number of workshops increased from 4172 in 2004 to 5579 in 2007.

However, there are no simple trends of a continuing increase or decrease over this period; rather there are ups and downs across categories of attendance and participation each year. These variations can be attributed to particular programming decisions and the introduction or cessation of strategic initiatives by individual organisations.



Brisbane Writer's Festival 2008. State Library of Queensland. Photo: Justine Walpole

Table 6: Attendance and participation for organisations funded via Cultural Infrastructure Program, 2004–2007				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total number of events	5546	6053	6752	4801
Paid attendances	633 428	1 155 419 #	704 106	671 583
Unpaid attendances	664 396	953 651	496 301	744 259
Total attendances (paid + unpaid)	1 297 824	2 109 070	1 200 407	1 415 842
Number of workshops	4172	4001	4593	5579
Workshop attendances = participation	62 348	46 961	316 366 ^	199 435
TOTAL attendance and participation	1 360 172	2 156 031	1 516 773	1 615 277
Notes: # Significant increase in 2005 for paid attendance attributed to Access Arts' attendance figures of 448 640. ^ Significant increase in workshop participation in 2006 attributed to major increases for Circa, Access Arts, Arts Nexus, Contact and La Luna, as well as Museums and Gallery Services Queensland reporting on workshop attendances for the first time, with 193 230 workshop attendances in 2006.				

Major performing arts companies

Over 317 000 people attended the 2007 main stage seasons of the four major performing arts companies — Queensland Theatre Company, Opera Queensland, The Queensland Orchestra, and Queensland Ballet. A further 56 787 people participated in workshops or education programs offered by the majors in 2007.

Table 7 summarises trend data for attendance at main stage seasons and regional performances, as well as participation in workshops or education programs delivered by the majors over three years from 2005 to 2007. All four companies saw increased attendances between 2006 and 2007 at their main stage seasons. The data for the last three years appear to suggest an overall decrease in regional audiences for each of the organisations. The spiking in regional attendance in some years may be explained, in part, by the current provision of on-year full tours of companies and off-year half company tours.

The figures below have been sourced from the companies' annual reports and are indicative only, as there has not been consistent data classification and collection. Arts Queensland will be addressing this through provision of a standard data collection spreadsheet which will enable more accurate interrogation of trend data.

Table 7: Attendance and participation for major performing arts organisations, 2005–2007			
	2005	2006	2007
Queensland Ballet (QB)			
Total main stage audience	46 587	34 348	49 375
Regional audience	7 638	6 720	6 151
Workshop participation	264	483	434
Opera Queensland (OQ)			
Total main stage audience	84 131	70 762	79 808
Regional audience	2 559	3 952	1 611
Education program	30 362	16 350	28 000
The Queensland Orchestra (TQO)			
Total main stage audience	59 806	65 694	70 690
Regional audience	4 724	5 049	4 146
Workshop participation	500	1 638	650
Queensland Theatre Company (QTC)			
Total main stage audience	76 308	109 711	117 358
Regional audience	15 716	24 253	10 226
Education program	13 889	20 228	27 703
Notes on trends:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QB – Increase of 15 027 or 44% between 2006 and 2007; increase of 2788 or 6% between 2005 and 2007 for main stage. • OQ – Increase of 9046 or 13% between 2006 and 2007; decrease of 4323 or 5% between 2005 and 2007 for main stage. Significant participation under education program – increase of 11 650 or 71% between 2006 and 2007. • TQO – Increase of 4996 or 8% between 2006 and 2007; increase of 10 884 or 18% between 2005 and 2007 for main stage. • QTC – Increase of 7647 or 7% between 2006 and 2007; increase of 41 050 or 54% between 2005 and 2007 for main stage. Significant participation under education program – increase of 7475 or 37% between 2006 and 2007. 			

Attendance at the Cultural Centre

The state-owned cultural institutions at the Cultural Centre are major deliverers of cultural programming in Brisbane and regional Queensland. The Queensland Art Gallery, the State Library of Queensland, the Queensland Museum and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre allow a greater proportion of the state's significant cultural collections and visiting collections to be on public display.

The first collaborative marketing campaign was conducted across the Cultural Centre at South Bank to promote the activities of the precinct as a destination in 2007–08. This included the release of two detailed program booklets, *Summer in Brisbane* and *Winter in Brisbane*.

In 2007–08, over 3.8 million people visited the major cultural institutions at the Cultural Centre in Brisbane. Visitation increased by 1.2 million people compared to 2006–07. Key achievements over the last two years include:

- In 2007, GoMA staged an artistic coup, securing the exclusive Australian rights to host the **Andy Warhol exhibition**. Running from December 2007 to April 2008, the exhibition attracted critical acclaim, and was attended by a record 232 389 visitors. A major new programming initiative of late-night openings, *Up Late*, featured the Warhol exhibition and film program, talks and music performances by local, national and international performers. *Up Late* extended access to a broad range of audiences, with over 20 000 people visiting during these evenings.
- For the first time, the *Out of the Box Festival for 3 to 8 year olds* extended across the Cultural Centre Precinct. Staged in June 2008, the festival attracted 60 000 children, parents, carers and teachers over its six-day program, with ticket sales increasing by 8 per cent compared to the 2006 festival. **Out of the Box 2008** commissioned three new works — *Funny Voices* in collaboration with Queensland Theatre Company; *Red Earth, Blue Water* with Jagera Jarjum; and *Beeware* through the State Library of Queensland. Children and their families enjoyed a range of cultural experiences including performance, visual art, the written word, and natural history with *Critters* at the Queensland Museum.
- From June to September 2008, **GoMA staged Picasso & his collection**. This world-class exhibition attracted 206 580 people, with 54 per cent of patrons being visitors to Brisbane from regional Queensland, interstate and overseas. The exhibition featured a Contemporary Media Lounge designed specifically as a space for young people to sample contemporary media through live streamed TV, music, videos, catalogues, journals and magazines from across Europe.
- **kuril dhagun**, the Indigenous Knowledge Centre at the State Library, presents exhibitions, events and activities exploring Indigenous culture and history and reaching out to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. In 2007–08, kuril dhagun programs attracted over 25 000 people.
- The internet provides Queenslanders with new opportunities to access the state’s cultural collections, regardless of where they live, their age or mobility. In 2007–08, over 26.6 million web page views were recorded on the websites of the State Library of Queensland, the Queensland Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery.



Move it! QPAC’s Out of the Box Festival for 3 to 8 year olds 2008. Photo: Justine Walpole

Table 8 summarises attendance data at the Cultural Centre over the last four financial years.

Table 8: Attendance at major cultural institutions at Cultural Centre, 2004–05 to 2007–08				
	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) [includes Gallery of Modern Art GoMA]	350 765 (QAG)	325 730 (QAG)	859 413 QAG – 452 477 GoMA – 406 936	1 304 440 QAG – 541 226 GoMA – 763 214
State Library of Queensland (SLQ)	164 624 – total onsite visits	174 215 – total onsite visits	638 062 – total onsite visits	1 286 25 – total onsite visits
Queensland Museum (QM)	790 314 – all campuses 584 304 – QM South Bank	786 065 – all campuses 573 923 – QM South Bank	775 937 – all campuses 569 405 – QM South Bank	747 228 – all campuses 523 793 – QM South Bank
Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC)	610 000 – attendances	575 000 – attendances	550 000 – attendances	692 000 – attendances
Notes on trends:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QAG – Trend is increasing attendance over last four years. In 2007–08, attendances at QAG peaked at 1 304 440. This represents an additional 445 027 visitors and a 34 per cent increase on attendances in the previous year. • SLQ – Trend is increasing attendance over last four years. In 2007–08, onsite visits at SLQ peaked at 1 286 257. This represents an additional 648 195 visitors and a 50 per cent increase on visits in the previous year. • QM – The trend is decreasing attendance at QM South Bank (8% decrease on previous year) and Cobb+Co Museum (7% decrease on previous year) with increased attendance at The Workshops Rail Museum (21% increase on previous year) and the Museum of Tropical Queensland (2% increase on previous year). • QPAC – Trend is variable attendances between 2004–05 and 2007–08. There was an increase of 142 000 or 26 per cent from 2006–07 to 2007–08. 				

Engaging Queenslanders as creative participants

Queenslanders engage in a range of ways in the arts and culture — not only as audience members, but also as active participants. Participation might involve attending workshops with artists or arts and cultural workers to develop particular skills; community members collaborating with one another and professional artists to co-devise performing arts events or to stage exhibitions; volunteering to produce local arts and cultural festivals; and preserving collections in local museums or cultural heritage centres.

Festivals make a vital contribution to Queensland’s cultural life — they reach large and diverse audiences, and provide a vehicle to support arts and cultural development, particularly new work, innovation and artistic diversity. They engage communities in new forms of cultural activity and help to build a sense of connection, belonging and place.

The **2007 Queensland Music Festival** coordinated 40 events in 21 communities across the state. Highlights included *Pig City*, an outdoor spectacular that celebrated Brisbane's contemporary music history, and *Lift Every Voice*, a free concert in Caboolture featuring young Australian jazz artist, Aaron Choulai, the Tatana Village Choir from Papua New Guinea, The Birralee Blokes, the Balkan folk inspired Martenitsa Choir and an uplifting finale with local community choirs. Led by some of Australia's leading artists, aspiring musicians and songwriters participated in Song Trail workshops in Emerald, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Gympie.

Through the inaugural Brisbane Backyards program, **Brisbane Festival 2008** co-hosted eight intimate events with local residents. Celebrating the quintessential backyard 'get-together', audiences sat under the stars, among the roses and in the shadow of the Hills hoist and enjoyed some of the finest live music from Australia and around the globe.

Many arts organisations and the broader arts portfolio offer workshops programs and education programs to engage Queenslanders in a range of arts and cultural activities. A number of programs focus particularly on children and young people. For example, Opera Queensland's ***Moving Opera!*** program provides five professional artists to deliver week-long school residencies. The workshop intensives explore music theatre processes, and develop vocal and choral techniques and performance skills. Each residency culminates with a school performance for students' peers and families.

In January 2009 the State Library of Queensland's Indigenous Library Services piloted the **Culture Love** school holiday arts program on Darnley Island and Hopevale. Delivered by Speakout, these workshops employ and build skills of local Indigenous arts workers to provide children and young people with opportunities to create and showcase their work in their own communities. Activities include VJ-ing, digital music, stop motion animation, stencilling, jewellery making, collage and textiles, lino and screen printing.



African Children's Choir, *Sing Sing*, Townsville, Queensland Music Festival 2007. Photo: atmosphere photography

Since the release of the Plan, Sector Project Grants and the Regional Arts Development Fund have supported activities that engage a diverse range of audiences as well as participants as co-producers including:

- The 2008 **Noosa Longweekend Festival** staged *Finders Keepers* — find the performance, keep the experience, with funding support of \$29 448. With the public spaces of Noosa Shire as the stage, roving artists, dancers, actors and storytellers entertained audiences throughout the ten-day festival.
- Brisbane musician **Emma Dean** was awarded \$15 000 towards producing her debut CD of original pop theatre songs, *Real Life Computer Game*. Launched before a capacity crowd at the Judith Wright Centre in June 2008, the CD met with early critical and audience acclaim. Since then, Emma has signed with a manager, secured a distribution contract and produced a video clip. A finalist in Commercial Radio Australia's *New Artists 2 Radio*, Emma's songs are regularly played on JJJ and community radio.
- Brisbane City Council received funding of \$29 920 to run a series of workshops for 60 young refugees to tell their stories through music and dance and create performances for the **2008 World Refugee Day Community Festival**.
- The **Gab Titui Cultural Centre** received \$14 000 to stage Jan Peacock's exhibition, *Cultural Cult Clan*, and for Jan to conduct a week-long workshop with members of the local arts community on Erub (Darnley) Island.
- **Backbone Youth Arts** received a \$30 000 grant from the 2007 Strengthening the Sector Program to develop and stage *Paradise*, a theatre production engaging young people from Pacific Island backgrounds living in South East Queensland. Presented at the Brisbane Powerhouse in September 2007, *Paradise* featured 70 young artists, a young drumming ensemble and band, drew an audience of more than 1000, and was nominated for two 2007 Matilda Awards. Playlab Press has since published the script.
- With \$25 000 funding support, Jugglers Art Space coordinated the first **Brisbane Artist Run Initiatives Festival** in 2008. The festival offered workshops and forums and provided opportunities for emerging artists to develop their profile, for established artists to experiment and develop their practice, and for audiences to access artists and artwork outside the commercial galleries.



Nina Manu-Sione and Jaga Renagi in *Paradise* presented by Backbone Youth Arts and Breakthrough, 2007.
Photo: Dom Costello

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Encouraging active participation in arts and culture is a key focus for Scenic Rim Regional Council (formerly Beaudesert Shire Council). The council supported two innovative projects — *Crash* and the Artist Open Studios Trail – with funding from the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) in 2007.

Emerging playwright and drama teacher Andrew Wright devised and produced the play *Crash* with funding support from RADF and the federal government's Regional Arts Fund. During the script development stage, Andrew worked with young people, emergency service workers, police, lawyers and crash survivors and their families to explore the causes and effects of car crashes.

Crash was performed in August 2008 at Tamborine Mountain State High School and the Centre for Beaudesert Shire Arts and Culture. The production employed a cast of local students and emerging actors and theatre technicians, many of whom have gone on to further theatrical studies. A number of businesses, theatres and festival organisers are interested in touring the work.

In 2007, visual artist and community arts worker Bronwyn Davies convened a series of arts dinners to explore the options and skills necessary for developing arts and cultural trails with the local arts community. This series built on an artists' trails research project undertaken by Bronwyn in 2005 and funded by RADF.

Following the arts dinners, the inaugural Scenic Rim Artist Open Studios Trail was launched in September 2008. Fifteen artists and five galleries, wineries, cooking schools and eco-accommodation houses participated and artists sold over \$6000 worth of artworks.

Building on the success of this trail-blazing initiative, consultation is underway with the local Indigenous community to establish heritage trails, and the arts community is exploring opportunities to set up artist-in-residence and studio swap programs.



Crash, Photo published with the permission of Goat Track Theatre Company. Photo: Annika Salisbury