

Case study

Grey Nomads VS the World

Bundaberg's Creative Regions scores a comedy hit with play aimed at young-at-heart travellers

What

Audiences laughed, gasped and giggled their way through two sold-out performances of comedy play *Grey Nomads VS the World* when it premiered at Bundaberg's Crush Festival in 2017.

Playwright and creative producer Di Wills developed the script from conversations with seniors and engaged a local amateur cast to perform the shows.

The play takes a fun look at the ups and downs of the grey nomad life and relationships that develop at campgrounds on the road. Audience participation is incorporated through a karaoke competition with songs from the 50s to the 70s.

The production targeted visitors to the region attending the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia national rally, held in Bundaberg at the same time as the Crush Festival, with the outdoor performances staged next to the rally campground.

While full of laughs, the play also shines a light on issues of isolation, chronic illness and being devalued by society, with Ms Wills consulting health and social service providers when developing the script.

The production is part of Creative Regions' work to design arts-led responses to issues affecting regional communities.

Ms Wills is making the project the focus of her Graduate Certificate in Creative and Professional Practice through CQUniversity.

Outcomes

- The show has been selected in [ArTour's regional showcase program](#) and a proposed tour is in development for 2019.
- Research during the development process identified key issues for seniors as loneliness, access to health services while travelling and personal meaning.

Where and when



Premiered 10 & 12 October 2017
at Bundaberg's Crush Festival

Key stats



Two outdoor performances at
Bundaberg's Crush Festival



11 participants



240 audience members
(15.8 per cent from interstate)



Seven seniors groups
consulted during
development period

Investment

Creative Regions receives \$100,000 annually through the Organisations Fund 2017-2020, which supports outstanding Queensland arts and cultural organisations.

Grey Nomads VS The World also received \$16,910 from the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund (RAF) for research, development and production. RAF is currently administered in Queensland by Flying Arts Alliance





A local amateur cast performed the show



“A delightful bit of fun. Music, sets and camping situations were just right for the audience of travellers and locals. The actors were a great mix of ages perfectly suited to the audience. The show fit like a glove.”

- Audience member

Photos: Paul Beutel Photography

Outcomes continued

- An evaluation of the production, by CQUniversity’s Dr Wendy Madsen and Cathy O’Mullan, called it a ‘socially relevant piece of theatre that contributes to challenging the narratives around ageing’. The evaluation will form part of research into lifestyle choices in retirement and impacts on health services nationally.
- The production developed a broader audience base for Creative Regions and helped boost cultural tourism in the region as part of the Crush Festival.

Feedback



Great audience response, with 96 per cent of people surveyed post-show rating the production ‘Good–Excellent’.

Survey responses:

I am so happy that I managed to catch this play. The cast were great and the audience loved all the camping references, plus incorporating karaoke with those songs we remember and loved to sing along to. A real pleasure from beginning to end.

Reflections and learnings



Consider what seating best suits your target audience. In this instance, people were initially reluctant to climb to upper levels of grandstand seating.

Wet weather can be disastrous for outdoor shows. While forecast storms didn’t materialise on this occasion, the production will take this into account when booking touring locations in the future.

A sing-along before the show worked well, engaging the audience from the start and ensuring their participation during the show.

Tips for others



Keep surveys short – five questions only.

Interview audience members after the show for post-show video – capture their responses ‘in the moment’.

When performing outdoor shows have a backup plan for wet weather, regardless of the forecast.

What next

The production is exploring touring opportunities in 2019, along with corporate partnerships.

Find out more

Web

www.creativeregions.com.au

Phone

4153 1218

Email

contact@creativeregions.com.au

Watch

www.vimeo.com/242521269

ArTour

www.artour.com.au/artists/grey-nomads-vs-the-world