

# Case study

## Queensland Ballet – Cinderella

### Details

**What:**

Queensland Ballet's tour of *Cinderella* built on the Company's record of bringing large scale, full length story ballets to regional centres. The choice of production was made in close consultation with regional venues and was intended to attract a broad audience, including children and newcomers, to ballet.

As well as staging performances of *Cinderella*, dance workshops were offered in primary and secondary schools and private dance studios. These workshops were held prior to the tour's commencement, to align with the school term as well as to build anticipation for the upcoming performances.

This strategy proved effective, with audience and participant numbers at both the workshops and later performances exceeding expectations. Three additional performances and 31 additional workshops were scheduled to meet community demand.

**When:**

September – October 2014

**Where:**

Cairns, Gladstone, Gold Coast, Mackay, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Townsville



Queensland Ballet Principal Dancers Meng Ningning and Hao Bin in Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*. Photo David Kelly.

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$150,000 – Playing Queensland Fund

**Key stats:**

- 8 communities
- 14 performances
- 71 workshops
- 13,532 attendees and participants

**Contact for further information:**

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Website: [www.queenslandballet.com.au](http://www.queenslandballet.com.au)

**Links:**

Tour webpage: [www.queenslandballet.com.au/on-stage/2014/cinderella](http://www.queenslandballet.com.au/on-stage/2014/cinderella)

## Outcomes

- *Cinderella* was Queensland Ballet's most successful regional tour to date in terms of community demand and ticket sales, with attendee targets exceeded by close to 20%, and workshops reaching three times the number of participants anticipated.
- Positive feedback was received from communities, with 95% of workshop participants and 100% of venue presenters who were surveyed rating the tour as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- A number of venues booked multiple performances for Queensland Ballet's 2015 regional tour, based on the success of *Cinderella*.
- The Queensland Ballet strengthened its relationship with regional venues through the close working partnerships established in planning and delivering the tour.



Queensland Ballet's *Cinderella* – Principal Dancer Matthew Lawrence as the Ugly Sister. Photo David Kelly.

## Learnings and reflections

Queensland Ballet reflects on the value of a demand-driven approach to touring:

*We worked with the venues to select a 'commercially viable' ballet production. This resulted in a sell-out season. We attribute the success of the tour to the broad appeal of the Cinderella tale, something we will consider when programming future tours.*

This close working relationship with venues is now considered a core part of the touring model:

*A most pleasing outcome of this tour is the stronger relationship between the venues and Queensland Ballet. Since our reshaped touring program, inspired by the Playing Queensland touring model, we have been able to work more closely with venues – they have helped select suitable product, and provided input into timing of performances and public programs offered.*

The need to rearrange different components of the tour to align with school terms also resulted in some useful learnings about the touring model:

*As the tour coincided with school holidays we made the decision to schedule workshops a month earlier. This meant schools could participate in the workshops and it also boosted ticket sales. We will continue this model in 2015 because of its effectiveness.*

Another learning was about the challenge of striking a balance between ambition and realistic planning:

*Cinderella was a very large tour, considering both the scale of the show and the number of venues and performances. While the attendances are wonderful to see, the size of this tour had an impact on the budget and on fatigue within the touring company of dancers and crew. Our lesson from this, and one that we have adopted for the 2015 tour, is to limit the tour to four weeks and to six venues. This will reduce the overheads considerably and will mean that the tour has a lesser impact on dancer health.*