

## **QUE Theatre Inc information**

### **short description of projects**

QUE Theatre Inc. Was created through a partnership between Queensland Theatre Company, The Empire Theatre and USQ to establish a dynamic and contemporary theatre for young people, by young people. It was launched in 2001 and ran until 2006 offering a wide variety of programs for young people: QUE Fest, QUE Reach, QUE Able, QUE Fiish were the key business of this incorporated organisation that was guided by a Management Committee made up of stakeholders from the partners and USQ Theatre students. QUE Fest was the largest of the projects with annual training days, rehearsals and performance outcome at The Empire Theatre (rehearsals took place across USQ and Empire).

QUE's mission was to equip, education and empower regional youth with genuine development opportunities through participation in all facets of theatre production.

#### *Teamwork*

We work together to learn and grow the organization  
Members drive the aesthetic and educational aims of the company

#### *Audience Development*

QUE encourages theatre going as an important part of theatre making and will attract and nurture audiences aged 13-30.

QUE provides a major cultural outlet for rural/regional young people

#### *Dynamic, flexible approach to theatre*

Creates dynamic, original and contemporary new performance work that excites the imagination

Provides workshops where theatre is devised, practiced and critically observed

#### *Investing in our participants*

We develop the next generation providing development opportunities for young artists to work alongside professional artists.

All members are encouraged to provide mentorship and be mentored in order to develop and nurture industry standard theatre practices and new theatre works.

### **where they occurred**

QUE Able took place over two 10 week "units" of weekly drama workshops at Spiritus (was Anglicare) at St Luke's church Toowoomba, with intellectually disabled participants. An annual performance outcome was developed and enjoyed by families. This project closed in 2008 and was reincarnated as Butterflies by graduates of USQ Theatre – these graduates continue to work in disability services in Queensland.

QUE Fiish was a program for Indigenous youth which aimed to provide indigenous youth from high schools in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs with a range of theatrical skills as well as an opportunity for creative expression in a supportive environment.

In 2005, the QUE Fiish program commenced with an intensive series of workshops led by indigenous theatre/performance professionals over six weeks in April and May. The workshops focussed on dance, hip-hop and storytelling offering both traditional and contemporary perspectives in the expression and representation of Murri culture and identity.

QUE Reach visited schools in Nanango, Kingaroy and Chinchilla to develop intensive workshops for Drama teachers – upon request. USQ students were given a pool car, training and mentoring from USQ staff in order to do specific outreach with high schools in the regions.

### **dates of outcomes, any sensitivities (eg commercially sensitive), creators**

There were two published outcomes (see below), but the QUE experience gave all participants vital hands-on training in developing and maintaining a youth theatre company. It also provided hands-on experience for students to work with disabled, Indigenous, emerging theatre performers and teachers needing content support in regional schools.

McDonald, J. **"Balancing the Town and Gown: The Risky Business of Creating a Youth Theatre in Regional Queensland."** International Journal of Pedagogy and Learning. July 2006. 6-13. <<http://ijpl.usq.edu.au>>

McDonald, J. **"QUE-rious Impositions: Reflections on the Pedagogy at the Core of a Regional Youth Theatre in Queensland."** Drama Australia Journal (Nadie). The National Association for Drama Education. Vol 29, No.2, 2005.

### **research statement**

The research question from the start was to interrogate the processes and production possibilities of a regional youth theatre organisation. Each of the partners invested time and mentorship of QUE in order to increase youth participation in theatre in Toowoomba. The research was highly visceral, with the involvement of the entire Theatre staff and Theatre Studies cohort. Data was gathered from participants at the completion of each project, and this feedback was applied to the following year's projects. This living-data approach is an example of the living knowledge created in this project – it was constantly and consistently

developed, tested, evaluated with creative and performance outcomes becoming a visible and collaborative manifestation of the key research question.

The USQ graduates of this QUEexperience have all gone on to work in a similar capacity for local governments, disability services, teaching in high schools and contributing to other arts organisations in the state. This project was also unique in that USQ students were afforded specific networking opportunities with staff and professional artists from Queensland Theatre Company and The Empire Theatre; many students have continued their professional relationship with these organisations and are hired on contracts to provide guidance and performance outcomes. This was a highly visible and successful program for USQ students as it gave them specific direction in their Bachelor of Theatre Arts and provided a blueprint of many other large outreach projects in the School of Creative Arts (specifically the Cultural Catchments project).