

# Case study

Townsville's TheatreiNQ's new production of *Alice in Wonderland* puts a new spin on a classic favourite

**A new production of *Alice in Wonderland* captivated audiences in Townsville's Queen's Gardens as part of Festival 2018, the Commonwealth Games' arts and cultural festival.**

## What

TheatreiNQ created an updated version of *Alice in Wonderland* featuring an original script and music, with free performances in April 2018 as part of Festival 2018.

Arts Queensland supported the development of this work with funding for an earlier version, *Alice (in the Park)*, in 2017. Performed in Townsville's Anderson Park, *Alice (in the Park)* was designed so that audiences moved from set to set to follow the action. After the one-hour show, audiences could stay for a tea party with the cast.

The production was hugely successful, resulting in extra performances in response to popular demand, and ultimately leading to TheatreiNQ further developing the production for Festival 2018.

TheatreiNQ is an independent professional theatre collective offering a full season's programming and presenting a mix of contemporary drama, classics, Australian work and new writing.

## When and where

*Alice in Wonderland*: April 2018, Townsville

*Alice (in the Park)*: 2017, Townsville



*Alice (in the Park)*, 2017, Photo: Chrissy Maguire.

## Key stats

- 1655 people attended *Alice (in the Park)* in 2017 over 14 performances
- *Alice (in the Park)* led to the production of *Alice in Wonderland* in 2018 as part of Festival 2018.
- Festival 2018 took place across Townsville, Cairns, Gold Coast and Brisbane as part of the 2018 Commonwealth Games and was a celebration of arts and culture on a local level, featuring more than 3500 performers participating in more than 500 events

## Arts Queensland investment

\$15,000 in 2017 through [Queensland Arts Showcase Program](#) (QASP) Arts Ignite for *Alice (in the Park)*. QASP supports vibrant and accessible arts and cultural experiences.

## Find out more

TheatreiNQ: <http://www.theatreinq.com/>

## Outcomes

- *Alice (in the Park)* gave TheatreiNQ an opportunity to engage with an audience of young children in what is a new demographic for the company, and to create new partnerships with vacation care organisations. TheatreiNQ now has the potential to develop further productions and expand their programming.
- Cast interactions with audience members after the show were popular with parents and children. Photos with actors dominated the company's social media, providing a wealth of positive free publicity.
- The success of *Alice (in the Park)* led to extra performances in response to popular demand, and to TheatreiNQ further developing the production for Festival 2018.
- Due to its minimal set and technical requirements, *Alice (in the Park)* has the potential to be re-staged, giving TheatreiNQ flexibility to present the popular production again.



*Alice (in the Park)*, 2017, Photo: Chrissy Maguire

## Feedback

"It was a new experience to move from set to set. Loved it and loved the use of the natural surroundings. It was great fun for kids and so much easier than trying to get them to sit still during a regular performance. Thank you too for the photos afterwards – my 3 year old is still talking about it." *Audience member*

"Fantastic production! So proud to have such talent in Townsville. Congratulations on having the drive to do something different and create out of the box. Loved the original music as well." *Audience member*

"Costumes, music and humor of the production made it excellent fun for all of our family. Very impressive to have a production of this calibre in Townsville." *Audience member*



*Alice in Wonderland*, 2018 Photo: Terri Brabon.

## Artist comments

Presenting quality children's theatre is so important for the industry as a whole; children who enjoy live theatre become regular audience members in adulthood.

Live theatre (more so than electronic entertainment) stimulates imagination, teaches empathy, lengthens attention spans and promotes face-to-face communication. If we invest in quality children's theatre we will be rewarded with engaged adults in the future.

## Reflections and learnings

TheatreiNQ was already familiar with the challenges in presenting outdoor theatre based on their experience presenting the annual Shakespeare under the Stars. However, the company was not completely prepared for the show's enormous popularity.

## Tips for others

With outdoor events, be prepared for all weather possibilities, have the flexibility to alter plans quickly and the option to cancel if required. Have an area like a campervan where you can store and lock things up if you need to go off site for any length of time.

## What next?

TheatreiNQ was approached to adapt the script into a multi-arts production for the 2018 Mulkadee Youth Arts Festival, performing for more than 3000 people from around north Queensland. The festival has invited TheatreiNQ to return in 2019.

In 2019, TheatreiNQ will create and stage *Alice Through the Looking Glass* in a Townsville park for the June/July school holidays with the potential to run another season in 2020 if it is as successful as its predecessor.