

# Case study

## Team effort brings distinctive story to stage in *The Longest Minute*

### A collaborative theatre work about the showdown of the all-Queensland 2015 footy final scored points with audiences

#### What

*The Longest Minute*, a distinctive Queensland theatre work, written by Robert Kronk and Nadine McDonald-Dowd, showcased Queensland talent on stage and behind the scenes.

Based on stories of football, fandom and life in Far North Queensland, the work is centred on the all-Queensland NRL Grand Final in 2015 and the North Queensland Cowboys' heroic win against the Brisbane Broncos. *The Longest Minute* uses football as a vehicle to explore complex themes of family, community, reconciliation and identity.

Created when three leading arts companies ([Queensland Theatre](#), [JUTE Theatre Company](#) and [debase productions](#)) joined forces, the development of *The Longest Minute* provides a model for arts companies looking to build further capacity, increase programming and leverage funding opportunities.

A major part of debase's mission is to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists working together to create a shared story and a key feature of this work was the company's collaboration with First Nations' artist Nadine McDonald-Dowd.

*The Longest Minute* had its world premiere at the Centre of Contemporary Arts Cairns in May 2018, was featured in Queensland Theatre's 2018 season in Brisbane, and toured the same year to Townsville and Rockhampton, selling out shows and garnering positive reviews.

#### Outcomes

- Creative collaboration produced a distinctive Queensland story, which has been well received across the state, attracting new audiences and strong demand as a touring production.
- The production tied for the Best Mainstage Production at the 2018 Matilda Awards. Nominations were also received for Best Female Actor in a Leading Role (Chenoa Deemal), Best Male Actor in a Supporting Role (Jeremy Ambrum), Best Director (Bridget Boyle) and Best Lighting Design (Jason Glenwright).
- Queensland Theatre presented pre- and post-performance workshops to regional schools, including Innisfail State College, Mossman State High School, Rockhampton Girls School and Rockhampton State High School. Schools reported that more than 125 of the students had never seen a live theatrical production in a professional venue prior to this experience.
- The Young Company, Write Sparks and Arts Central Queensland Inc had the opportunity to attend a workshop with playwrights Robert Kronk and Nadine McDonald-Dowd as part of *The Longest Minute* 2018 regional Queensland tour.

#### Where and when

##### Creative Development

- JUTE Theatre Company: February 2017 in Cairns
- Debase: March to May 2017 in Brisbane, Cloncurry and Townsville
- Queensland Theatre: October 2017 in Brisbane

##### Performances

- May to June 2018 – Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane and Rockhampton

#### Investment

- **\$15,000** investment through Queensland Arts Showcase Program (QASP) – Arts Ignite to debase productions for creative development. QASP supports vibrant and accessible arts and cultural experiences.
- **\$102,217** investment through Playing Queensland Fund (PQF) to Queensland Theatre for 2018 regional tour. PQF supports the delivery of performing and visual arts projects that are ready to tour and have demonstrated community interest and confirmed demand.

Two of the production partners also receive the following funding support:

- Queensland Theatre is an arts statutory body. The company receives funding through a tripartite agreement between the Queensland Government through AQ and the Australia Council for the Arts.
- JUTE Theatre Company receives multi-year funding to contribute to its core operations through Arts Queensland's Organisations Fund 2017-2020.

## Reflections and learnings



*Communication is key when attempting to reach a wider audience than traditional theatregoers.*



*A promotional television commercial played at Broncos and Cowboys games in Brisbane and Townsville and information was disseminated through club channels but it is difficult to describe the experience of theatre to people who may be unfamiliar with it.*



*Inviting key club representatives into the rehearsal process may have helped show how the play was coming together and open up a wider audience for the work.*

– Bridget Boyle, director

## Feedback and reviews



*Thanks for a fun afternoon. I really enjoyed contributing to the workshop, and as a writer it was such a great learning experience for me.*

– creative development workshop attendee, Townsville



*There are few plays where you could say honestly that anyone, theatre lover or not, rugby league fanatic or not, will enjoy it, but this refreshing and authentic homegrown story is one of those rare examples.*

– The Australian



*The Longest Minute will not only break your heart, but fill it with soul (and side-splitting laughs).*

– Blue Curtains Brisbane

## What happened next?

*The Longest Minute* went on to receive further investment through Arts Queensland's Playing Queensland Fund in 2018/19 to support 2019 regional tours:

- **\$140,300** to ArTour to tour a revised production to 10 First Nations' and remote communities through JUTE Theatre Company's Dare to Dream program, which involves the creation, development, production and touring of inspirational new stories to regional and remote communities of North Queensland. Performances and a four-day residency program in each community were presented from July to September 2019 in Innisfail, Bamaga, Mapoon, Weipa, Mossman, Ravensoe, Yarrabah, Mount Isa, Doomadgee and Cloncurry.
- **\$105,284** to Queensland Theatre to tour the full production to Ipswich, Logan, Gladstone, Toowoomba and Cairns in October 2019. Feedback from this tour included comments from a Gladstone high school teacher: "We saw *The Longest Minute* last night in Gladstone and just loved it. I've just spent ages talking with some Year 11s about the themes, set, acting, everything. Actually I think it should be prescribed viewing for all Queensland high school students. What a clever, soulful play. One Aboriginal man in the audience told me it brought him to tears."



The Longest Minute - Debase - (left), Jeremy Ambrum, Chenoa Deemal.  
Photos: Blue Clicks Photography.



The Longest Minute - JUTE Dare to Dream cast (revised production) - late 2019 regional and remote tour - (from left) Mark Sheppard, Kaleenah Edwards, Nazaree Dickerson and Leonard Donahue.  
Photo credit: Frontrow Foto.



Queensland Theatre director Bridget Boyle. Photo: Stephen Henry

## Key stats



1 new work created



35 Queensland artists

## Production

Cairns	11 performances, 1094 attendees
Townsville	4 performances, 388 attendees
Brisbane	32 performances, 6827 attendees
Rockhampton	1 performance; 142 attendees

## Find out more

[Debase - The Longest Minute](#)

[Queensland Theatre - The Longest Minute](#)

[JUTE](#)

[The Longest Minute is in a league of its own – video of the production](#)