

# Case study

## Bleach\* Festival

### Details

#### What:

The Bleach\* Festival is a 16-day community arts festival presenting art and culture that celebrates the Gold Coast beach and surf lifestyle, through a number of free and ticketed programs.

Arts Queensland's investment particularly supported the curation and coordination of major music events across the Gold Coast including a festival-wide program of contemporary Indigenous music; schools visits and mentoring by Indigenous artists through an Artist in Residence program; Welcome to Country and ceremonial performances; and the world premiere event, *Opera on the Beach*, in partnership with Opera Australia.

*Opera on the Beach* was the largest cultural event ever to be staged on the Gold Coast and as such it received significant national media attention.

The Artist in Residence program was a great success with Jeremy Marou and Tom Busby (both from the band, Busby Marou) and Dave Dow visiting three schools to lead songwriting workshops and discussions about working in the music industry. Participating schools were Currumbin Valley State Primary School, Upper Coomera State College and Helensvale State Primary School.

#### When:

7 – 23 March 2014

#### Where:

Gold Coast



Bleach\* Festival Official Opening Night.  
Image supplied by Bleach\* Festival.

#### Arts Queensland contribution:

\$56,091 – Projects and Programs Fund

#### Key stats:

- 362 students across three participating schools.
- 61,110 total attendees at the festival, with 34% of attendees new to the festival.
- 3,433 bed nights were generated in Coolangatta
- Estimated tourism value of \$6.9 million for the festival (calculated through a formal evaluation of tourism value by AEC Group)

#### Contact for further information:

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#### Links:

Facebook – Bleach festival:

<https://www.facebook.com/BleachFestival>

Soundcloud – song written by Helensvale School Group:

<https://soundcloud.com/bleach-festival/la-la-song>

## Outcomes

- *Opera on the Beach* doubled its targets for attracting interstate and international visitors to the Gold Coast.
- New relationships were formed with schools and community groups which extended the reach of the festival to the northern Gold Coast. Each school participating in the Artist in Residence program provided feedback on how inspiring it was for students and has indicated a desire to participate again in 2015.
- As a result of his involvement in the contemporary music program at the festival, a young Gold Coast musician, Karl S. Williams, has been signed and will be managed by Footstomp Music.
- The festival was successful in leveraging funding to attract additional investment, with a 50% increase in cash and in-kind sponsorship in 2014.
- 'Stay and play' packages resulted in booked out rooms at many venues months before the festival commenced



Opera on the Beach. Image supplied by Bleach\* Festival.

## Learnings and reflections

Bleach Festival plays an important role in building the Gold Coast's profile as a cultural tourism destination. The festival is held in conjunction with other events such as the *Quicksilver and Roxy Pro* providing tourists with a number of opportunities to enjoy and experience the Gold Coast.

*Opera on the Beach* was the largest arts event ever to be staged on the Gold Coast. Festival organisers reflected on the importance of promoting unique events to a large potential audience

*'The challenge was to promote the event, with limited resources, to a potentially massive audience, and to give those prospects confidence that the event would be worth seeing, given that it had not be presented in the past. A dedicated Client Services Manager was engaged to work with accommodation providers to develop 'stay and play' packages that were then promoted to the venues database of customers. The communications included the venues' endorsement of the event and the ability for customers to book Opera tickets directly with the venue'*

The investment in this one dedicated resource had multiple positive outcomes.

*'As a result, many of the venues booked out of rooms a few months prior to the event and a total of 3,433 bed nights were generated in Coolangatta. Importantly, this activity generated many thousands of ticket sales and assisted the Festival with meeting its box office quota. Bleach\* Festival had worked with venue partners in the past, but not to this extent.'*