



# Draft Strategic Plan 2025-2029

## Summary

The Brolga Theatre 5-year strategic plan outlines the aspiration of Council staff, community and industry stakeholders for the future of the Brolga Theatre and its role in our regional community.

This plan is underpinned by our vision to be at the heart of the performing arts for the Fraser Coast, enriching the lives of our community.

The plan reflects our aspirations for: offering an exceptional regional theatre facility; delivering a diverse and inspiring program that enriches the cultural life of our residents; remaining at the heart of the community where people feel a sense of belonging; and fostering community arts development through our service delivery.

### Strategic framework:

This proposed strategic framework will anchor the expectations and desired outcomes of our service delivery over the next 5 years.

#### **OUR VISION:**

*We are the heart of performing arts for the Fraser Coast, enriching the lives of our community.*

#### **OUR FOCUS AREAS:**

The following four areas of focus describe our aspirations for the Brolga Theatre and indicate what Council will focus on to bring our vision to life. The areas outline our objectives, key priorities and desired outcomes.

1. *We offer an exceptional regional theatre facility*
2. *Our Program is diverse and inspiring, enriching the cultural life of the community.*
3. *We are at the heart of the community – people feel welcome here.*
4. *Our services foster community arts development.*

## Focus Area 1:

### We offer an Exceptional Regional Theatre Facility

The Brolga is an exceptional theatre facility, offering one of the best stages and technical resources in regional Queensland.

The facility has capacity to stage a wide range of performances from spectacle on the main proscenium stage, to intimate theatre in the Federation Room, cabaret in the Foyer and atmospheric outdoor productions.

It's award-winning design, by architects Bligh Voller Nield, and its spectacular placement high on the banks of the Mary River offer a stand-out destination experience in an exceptional environment.

The original vision for the Brolga was to become an expanded performing arts precinct - including theatre, outdoor public art, and a riverside amphitheatre.

By progressing this vision, the facility will remain the focal point for professional presentation of performing arts and events within the Fraser Coast region.

As the Brolga turns 25, we will prioritise our efforts first and foremost to drive high utilisation of our theatre as well as our technical and operational expertise. We will focus our operations to ensure that the Brolga is valued, maintained, and activated.



*"We show people what excellence looks like." Joyce Chorny, Executive Manager Community and Culture, Fraser Coast Regional Council.*

Image: Exterior of Brolga Theatre. Credit - David Pierson 2020

**5-year objective: To focus our service delivery and manage and maintain our assets to make the best use of the Theatre and its setting.**

Objectives	Key deliverables	Measures for success
1.1 Focus on theatre services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise service delivery and use of the facility as a theatre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of performances and public programs.</li> <li>• High level of customer satisfaction.</li> <li>• Maintained or increased range of high-profile artists touring to the region.</li> </ul>
1.2 Provide a vibrant, performing arts precinct including optimised use of riverside setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2026, complete a preliminary design and cost estimate for riverside amphitheatre.</li> <li>• Activate alternative and outdoor spaces for program presentation.</li> <li>• Facilitate alternative configuration and use of spaces to support a diverse range of performance styles. <i>E.g. Black box theatre, cabaret</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of out-door performances and public programs held outdoors.</li> <li>• Range of alternative uses of theatre spaces.</li> </ul>
1.3 Enhance our spaces to provide a destination theatre experience in an exceptional environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2026 complete auditorium and foyer renewal works.</li> <li>• Instate an in-house restaurant and catering partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works completed.</li> <li>• Improved customer experience.</li> </ul>
1.4 Effectively maintain and enhance our theatre assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise ongoing inspection and maintenance program to maintain and develop the theatre facility and its assets.</li> <li>• Maintain and invest in stage technology and theatre innovation that meets evolving industry expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility and assets retain value and relevance.</li> <li>• Reactive maintenance costs are reduced.</li> <li>• High level of industry hirer satisfaction.</li> <li>• High standard of technical services.</li> </ul>
1.5 Manage our facility in a way that reduces our environmental footprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement initiatives that further reduce reliance on single-use materials.</li> <li>• Encourage our hirers to stage sustainable productions and events.</li> <li>• By 2028, investigate solar energy options.</li> <li>• By 2027, replace HVAC and Building Management system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient and effective use of resources.</li> <li>• Reduction in waste to landfill.</li> <li>• Increased efficiency and reliability of building management system.</li> </ul>

## Focus area 2:

# Our program is diverse and inspiring, enriching the cultural life of our community

The Brolga Theatre currently serves a dedicated audience with an average of over 34,000 ticket holders, attending more than 100 performances per year.

Our audience values the diversity and quality of the performances offered locally which are often at the same level of production as in major centres. Our program brings national and international stars to the Fraser Coast allowing our regional talent to perform and be inspired.

The Brolga Theatre serves diverse rural townships and communities across a large geographic region. Our audience and volunteers can travel up to 45 minutes to the Theatre. Understanding our audience and their interests is key to maintaining loyal, engaged patrons.

We will continue to review, adapt and develop our programming to respond to the diverse artistic needs of our community – maintaining our core audience and growing new audiences to better cater for the whole of our region.

By delivering inspiring experiences, both onstage and across all audience touchpoints, we enrich the cultural life of our community.

Our presence is a big part of what makes the Fraser Coast a great place to live and share with our visitors.



*“The Brolga offers a wide range of capacity to present performances from spectacle to intimate theatre and more” Matthew King, Company Director, Macabre Theatre Company*

Image: Brolga audience member meeting former Artistic Director of Queensland Ballet, Li Cunxin, at performance of Giselle. Credit -Cody Fox 2022

5-year objective: To positively impact the life of our residents by producing and presenting an inspiring program which considers our diverse audience needs and shares our community stories.

Objectives	Key deliverables	Measures for success
2.1 Understand and grow our audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement annual audience engagement surveys to better understand expectations and inform program decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core audience maintained.</li> <li>Increase in new and diverse audiences.</li> </ul>
2.2 Present an improved, creative and engaging program that considers diverse community expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply a curatorial framework to our programming to balance touring hire performances with performances that are purchased or produced specifically for our audience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of in-house productions presented.</li> <li>High audience satisfaction.</li> <li>Increased ticket sales.</li> </ul>
2.3 Balance commercial with community-focused activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an allocation plan for programmed space to support community use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio of commercial and community focused activities.</li> </ul>
2.4 Deliver accessible, affordable cultural experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review production and programming plan to ensure offering provides for diverse audience needs -considering price points, styles of production and themes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved accessibility.</li> <li>Growth in diversity of audience.</li> </ul>
2.5 Increase outreach capabilities of our theatre services and grow audience reach.	<p>Establish key partnerships to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise mobile technical services and assets to deliver out-reach programming to small communities.</li> <li>Co-produce program highlights for regional festivals.</li> <li>Establish partnerships to co-present performances in alternative spaces in Hervey Bay and small communities.</li> <li>Introduce transport solutions for non-Maryborough audience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services extended further within the regional community.</li> <li>Number of community/Brolga presenter partnerships.</li> <li>Growth in regional audience share.</li> </ul>
2.6 Offer pre-show experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with restaurant/catering supplier to package pre-show offering.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase visitor satisfaction.</li> <li>Number of pre-show bookings.</li> <li>Catering meets needs of theatre and patrons.</li> </ul>
2.7 Strengthen alignment with regional tourism and economic objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders to profile the Brolga Theatre as a key component of regional tourism, lifestyle and investment marketing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledged as key regional asset that strengthens the region's economic and tourism offering.</li> </ul>

## Focus area 3: We are at the heart of the community - people feel welcome here.

The Brolga Theatre was born through the collective vision and contributions of the community. More than 25 years ago, it was recognised that this facility would bring a wealth of engaging, meaningful and captivating experiences.

The Brolga has become a place of social interaction; not only enhancing creativity, but also fostering a sense of belonging and contributing to the wellbeing, inclusiveness and strength of our community. Our Theatre is a place of community pride; a place for gathering and celebration; a place where memories are made, and stories are shared. We aspire to be more inclusive and accessible – to truly be a place where people feel they belong.

We are focused on customer centricity. Overwhelmingly we have heard that our team of volunteers and staff offer exceptional service and extend a feeling of ‘family’. Our core Council TRAITS values of *trust, respect, initiative, teamwork and service* drive the way we work. An engaged, motivated team ultimately translates to a better experience for everyone, especially our patrons.

We are supported by our Friends - *The Friends of the Brolga* have played a valued role supporting the ongoing success of the Theatre. We will foster and nurture this, and other key community relationships and partnerships. In doing this we aim to weave ourselves deeper into the fabric of our community and become an essential part of the lives of our residents.

That same community spirit that founded the Brolga is the community spirit that will guide us through the next five years as we continue to serve at the heart of our community.



*“It will always be the people in the building who bring the place to life and welcome our patrons.” - Rollo Nicholson, Chair, original Maryborough and District Entertainment and Cultural Association*  
Image: Warm welcome by Brolga volunteer usher. Credit: Cody Fox 2022

5-year objective: To be a place of community belonging by providing welcoming and inclusive services supported by our community partners.

Objectives	Key deliverables	Measures for success
3.1 Value Butchulla and other Indigenous cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support programming and development of new creative work by Butchulla and Indigenous artists and creatives.</li> <li>Promote visibility through opportunities and partnerships with Butchulla and Indigenous artists. showcasing stories and culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased visibility of Butchulla and other Indigenous artists and arts initiatives.</li> </ul>
3.2 Provide welcoming, inclusive customer-centric service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a customer experience plan that acknowledges key touchpoints and defines opportunities to improve upon our service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High levels of customer satisfaction.</li> </ul>
3.3 Embed TRAITS values-based culture to enable our team to work to the peak of their ability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage our team in the action planning and support for shared objectives.</li> <li>Deliver improved volunteer training, engagement and recognition programs.</li> <li>Implement an annual volunteer engagement survey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased employee and volunteer engagement.</li> <li>High levels of attraction and retention.</li> </ul>
3.4 Undertake an accessibility review of our facility and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct accessibility review and develop an action plan, informed by customers with lived experience and their carers or support services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved accessibility for our customers.</li> </ul>
3.5 Foster and nurture strong, productive partnerships with community stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage community partners and stakeholders in the action planning and support for shared objectives.</li> <li>Identify new outcome-focused partnership opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of focussed partnership activities and quality of shared outcomes for, with and by the community.</li> </ul>
3.6 Update brand awareness and extend communication and marketing activities to grow digital engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement revised branding that communicates the vision and focus of this plan.</li> <li>Develop a digital marketing plan that addresses the digital footprint of the Brolga and identifies opportunities to grow awareness and engagement.</li> <li>Develop and share engaging content including behind the scenes stories and profiles of local and touring artists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of the theatre, its purpose and services.</li> <li>Increased digital engagement.</li> <li>High levels of loyal brand advocates.</li> </ul>
3.7 Provide affordable options for community celebrations and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Brolga services to provide affordable and alternative hire space for community events including City Hall and Pialba Hall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hire options.</li> <li>Number of community events.</li> </ul>

## Focus Area 4: Our services foster community arts development.

The Brolga Theatre provides a collaborative, enabling environment for our community of artists, creatives, producers and industry professionals to collaborate, develop and succeed.

We aim to maximise our impact by delivering initiatives that allow people to connect and grow through creativity. We will demonstrate leadership in the Fraser Coast performing arts community by partnering with community and industry stakeholders to develop talent and build capability.

The Theatre enjoys collaborative partnerships with state arts entities such as Queensland Ballet, Opera Queensland and Shake and Stir Theatre Company to present educational programming for our audience and community. We will further leverage industry networks and arts funding opportunities to increase our offering of support, platforms and spaces to practice and learn, and to create and perform artistic work.

We are invested in fostering a life-long love for the performing arts and celebrating our regional talent and their professional achievements.

Every year more than 5,000 young residents attend the Brolga Theatre and a further 5,000 benefit from the opportunity to step onto the Brolga stage, through participation in the Maryborough Eisteddfod or performances by regional schools, dance schools and theatre organisations.

The Brolga has played a part in nurturing creative talent and professional achievement through initiatives such as community musicals, traineeships and hosting school-based training for attainment of Certificate II in Creative Industries. By expanding opportunities for young people's involvement at the Theatre, we aim to support personal and career pathways for the development of our young talent and support their progression beyond their time as participants.



*“Performance Magic: that feeling of pride and excitement on children’s faces as they first step on to that big stage – we share it too as we cheer them on from side of stage.” Nick Harry, President, Maryborough Eisteddfod* Image Credit - David Pierson 2020



**5-year objective: To maximise our impact by demonstrating leadership and fostering regional arts development.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Key deliverables</b>	<b>Measures for success</b>
4.1 Champion the professional and personal growth of our employees and volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support mentorships within Stage Queensland and Australian Performing Arts Centre networks.</li> <li>• Conduct training needs analysis to identify skills gap and develop individual training and development plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased skills and leadership capability within the team.</li> <li>• Increased attraction and retention of skilled, engaged team members.</li> </ul>
4.2 Partner with community and industry stakeholders to provide opportunities for our community to create and perform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a residency program for performing artists and theatre companies at the Brolga Theatre.</li> <li>• Present a biennial community production supported by professional Director and/or technical professionals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and outcomes of residencies.</li> <li>• Number of community participants and their personal experience and development outcomes.</li> </ul>
4.3 Partner with community and industry stakeholders to increase participatory and education program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop program initiatives that offer professional and community performing arts appreciation and development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of educational programs.</li> <li>• Number of participants and their learning outcomes.</li> </ul>
4.4 Maximise opportunities presented by national and state industry network and arts funding bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and share relevant opportunities with our community.</li> <li>• Profile our regional talent and their pathways to success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of opportunities and pathways.</li> </ul>
4.5 Cultivate connections with schools and education providers to encourage youth participation in performing arts and support career pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen education network to align programming and services.</li> <li>• Facilitate opportunities for student placements, traineeships and work experience.</li> <li>• Host training for certificate qualifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased participation by young people.</li> <li>• Increased training and education pathways.</li> </ul>
4.6 Better provide for the growing needs of the Hervey Bay performing arts community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend services to provide alternative options for performance and rehearsal space in Hervey Bay including Pialba Hall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased performing arts activity at Pialba Hall and other community spaces.</li> </ul>