

Talking Theatre: An audience development programme for regional Qld and NT (2004-2006)

TALKING THEATRE

**An Audience Development Programme for
Regional Queensland and the Northern Territory
(2004-2006)**

NEW AUDIENCES, NEW RELATIONSHIPS

...THREE YEARS IN REVIEW

A FINAL REPORT TO

**Australian Research Council, NARPACA, Arts Queensland,
Arts Northern Territory, and Queensland University of Technology**

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Special thanks go to:

- Araluen Centre in Alice Springs
- Burdekin Theatre in Ayr
- Cairns Civic Theatre
- Caloundra Cultural Centre
- Darwin Entertainment Centre
- Empire Theatre in Toowoomba
- Ipswich Civic Hall
- Logan Entertainment Centre
- Mackay Entertainment Centre
- Mount Isa Civic Centre
- Nambour Civic Centre
- Pilbeam Theatre in Rockhampton
- Townsville Civic Theatre
- World Theatre in Charters Towers

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“I would like to say the way it was run, the way we were looked after was great. It felt like you were wanted.” (*Talking Theatre* participant)



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1. Executive Summary

The following recommendations are the result of three years of research with two hundred and thirty-seven non-theatre-goers and fourteen performing arts centres (PACs) across regional Queensland and the Northern Territory.

1. Install *Talking Theatre* as a permanent audience development system to regularly inform all aspects of PAC business and growth.
2. Utilize past *Talking Theatre* participants in Ambassador programmes, marketing and promotion, and Friends of the Theatre. Notify them of changes made based on their input, offer them incentives if they bring paying customers with them to the theatre, and include them in future research.
3. Document repeat attendance and increased ticket sales from *Talking Theatre* participants and their guests.
4. Invest in developing the knowledge and skills of current staff to foster audience development, recognising that audience development is central to the organisation and that time skilling staff in this matter is valuable and affordable.
5. Encourage ongoing information sharing and benchmarking as undertaken in *Talking Theatre*.
6. Apply a wider range of promotional tools to increase participation in future *Talking Theatre* research.
7. Continue current programming of performances as the repertoire is appealing to non-theatre-goers. Begin further efforts to reduce the barriers to their attendance which are fostered by unfamiliarity of PAC and of theatre-going.
8. Provide the public with more information about upcoming performances, including reasons why they will relate to the content.
9. Brand the PAC strongly and consistently to inform non-theatre-goers (and new residents) about its purpose, vision and relevance to the local community. Promote the features of the PAC (including staff and patrons) and the pleasurable aspects of theatre-going to remind the public that going to the theatre is a social activity for everyone.
10. Act on the findings and recommendations generated by the *Talking Theatre* project, and these actions will impact positively on those in the non-theatre-going community who were not directly included in the research.

2. The *Talking Theatre* project

“Before Talking Theatre, Caloundra Cultural Centre was just another building, now it's some place with which I am familiar and have fond memories.”

(Talking Theatre participant)

Talking Theatre: An audience development programme for regional Queensland and the Northern Territory (2004-2006) was a three year research project funded by the Australian Research Council, NARPACA, Arts Queensland, Arts Northern Territory, and the Queensland University of Technology.

Talking Theatre sought to build new audiences both in the short and long term for the fourteen regional PACs associated with the project. The research endeavoured to develop a profile of non-theatre-goers in regional areas, to understand their reasons for non-attendance, and to discover their reactions to live performances, and to the PACs who presented them.

The goal of *Talking Theatre* was to make contact with regional non-theatre-goers and to uncover their attitudes to the performing arts industry and in particular to the fourteen participating PACs; including their programming, pricing, promotion, and facilities. By listening to the views of the selected participants in each of the regions, the PACs were placed in a stronger position to make effective decisions to positively impact on this significant segment of the community – interested non-theatre-goers.

For participants in *Talking Theatre*, the research provided them with the opportunity to directly experience live performances in a theatre setting. This introduction worked to break down some of the barriers that have prevented their attendance in the past. The post-performance group data-gathering sessions provided a safe and friendly discussion environment which assisted the participants, via self-reflection and engagement with others' ideas, to learn about theatre and theatre-going.

Quality feedback from interested non-theatre-goers to the PACs, combined with participants' direct engagement with a range of performances, the PACs, and the perspectives of other non-theatre-goers, created a meaningful two-way dialogue that helped each party to learn from the other and to feel valued by the other. This sharing of information led to increased understanding of non-theatre-goers and their needs by the PACs, as well as an increased interest by the participants in live performances and a greater confidence to attend outside of research conditions. Furthermore, the research findings and recommendations guided the State and Federal Government funding agencies' future interaction with the PACs and with diverse regional communities to continue to improve participation levels of Australians in the arts.

A professional development component of *Talking Theatre* sought to provide PAC staff and volunteers with the capacity to successfully undertake research of this nature in the future as part of an ongoing commitment to audience development and relationship building.

This report outlines *Talking Theatre's* aims, methodology, findings, recommendations and strategies for the future. The appendices display data gathering tools and research results in more detail.

3. Aims

“I had absolutely no idea of the amazing depth and variety of culture that makes its way up the Queensland coast. I had thought I might have been moving to the "deep north" but am pleasantly surprised. I have been able to encourage southern friends that a move to Mackay doesn't mean a move to a cultural wasteland.”

(Talking Theatre participant)

The central aims of the *Talking Theatre* project were:

- 1) to apply the Scollen Post Performance Audience Reception (SPPAR) method to build new audiences in the short and long term for regional Queensland and the Northern Territory;
- 2) to chart a highly significant yet often overlooked section of Australia by mapping audience reception and theatrical repertoire in regional areas;
- 3) to further research into a new substantive field of non-theatre-goers' reception of live performance;
- 4) to ascertain the entertainment and cultural needs of non-theatre-goers living in regional areas;
- 5) to provide selected theatre staff and volunteers in regional centres with the knowledge required to apply the SPPAR method and to understand its place within the field of audience reception and arts marketing;
- 6) to revitalise the international field of audience reception, and to integrate audience reception and arts marketing theories and practices;
- 7) to contribute new knowledge to the field of arts education by providing an environment that empowers and educates non-theatre-goers about theatre and theatre-going, via introduction to live performances and participation in self-directed and peer learning.

Townsville Civic Theatre



4. Methodology

“I totally enjoyed the project. The performances, social interaction and the hospitality of the Centre added up to a lovely experience...Everyone was able to speak freely and have their two cents worth.”

(Talking Theatre participant)

Talking Theatre invited non-theatre-goers to directly experience three live performances at their local PAC free of charge. In return the participants agreed to complete a series of questionnaires and to take part in post-performance group discussions to share their reactions to the performances, to the PACs, and to the act of theatre-going.

4.1. Sample - recruitment, selection and participation

“I always thought theatre was for cigar-smoking old people.”

(Talking Theatre participant)

Local media and corporate email informed the fourteen regional communities of the research and the need for participants. Twenty-four people from each region were sought to take part in the study. Members of the public interested in participating contacted the PACs directly to register their details. The potential participants were screened to check that they fitted the sample requirements, that is, they were aged between eighteen and fifty-five years, lived in the local area, identified themselves as non-theatre-goers, and had not attended their local PAC before (if they had it was understood to be a rare ‘one-off’ occasion).

Although the sample requirements were clear and agreed upon by all PACs, some members of the public included in *Talking Theatre* did not fully satisfy this profile. Nine percent of the participants in the sample were aged over 55 years.¹ Seventy-nine percent of the sample had attended a live performance within the last five years, so were not first-time attenders. However, for most of these participants past attendance was a ‘one-off’ and also occurred outside the region they now resided in.

Unfortunately, Townsville Civic Theatre, Mackay Entertainment Centre, Mount Isa Civic Centre, and the Burdekin Theatre in Ayr had significant difficulty gathering the required number of participants for the research. The World Theatre in Charters Towers was unable to secure a single participant to be involved in *Talking Theatre*. Each of these PACs spent considerable time and money promoting *Talking Theatre* in their communities in an attempt to attract participants. There was no clear indicator of why participant numbers were fewer in these regions. The PACs’ locations in Queensland did point to a possible geographic idiosyncrasy as those PACs located north of Townsville and south of Mackay had considerably less trouble attracting interest for the research from their communities.

Most PACs created a database of potential participants that surpassed twenty-four people, however, the actual number of participants in *Talking Theatre* from each region was fewer than twenty-four.

¹ Some of the PACs had difficulty attracting 24 suitable participants and so opted to include those who registered their interest to participate but were older than 55 years.

The total sample numbers for each PAC:

- Araluen Centre in Alice Springs 23 participants
- Burdekin Theatre in Ayr 15 participants
- Cairns Civic Theatre 22 participants
- Caloundra Cultural Centre 18 participants
- Darwin Entertainment Centre 23 participants
- Empire Theatre in Toowoomba 22 participants
- Ipswich Civic Hall 18 participants
- Logan Entertainment Centre 21 participants
- Mackay Entertainment Centre 13 participants
- Mount Isa Civic Centre 12 participants
- Nambour Civic Centre 22 participants
- Pilbeam Theatre in Rockhampton 20 participants
- Townsville Civic Theatre 8 participants
- World Theatre in Charters Towers 0 participants

Total sample for 2004/05 237 participants

Those PACs which were most successful in gathering participants for *Talking Theatre* appeared to have:

1. either excellent widespread media coverage (eg. Toowoomba and Nambour) or large populations (eg. Cairns, Logan, Ipswich)
2. gained local television news coverage which dramatically increased the number of participant registrations (eg. Nambour Civic Centre)
3. transient populations and newcomers to the areas were keen to participate (eg. Mackay and Cairns)
4. relatively new PACs (eg. Logan Entertainment Centre) or restored PACs (eg. Empire Theatre) or rebranded/repurposed PACs (eg. Ipswich Civic Hall).

Participants were required to attend three live performances and three post-performance group discussions at their local PAC. However, not all participants were able to do this. Non-attendance was mostly due to illness, work commitments, or pre-organised holidays outside the region.

Location/ (Participant numbers registered)	Show 1	Show 2	Show 3
Alice Springs (24)	19	21	19
Caloundra (18)	18	13	11
Darwin (24)	23	21	15 (no reminder, long duration btwn shows)
Mount Isa (12)	9	10	8
Nambour (22)	18	21	13 (illness)
Townsville (9)	8	5	4
Ayr (15)	12	11	11
Cairns (22)	16 (late intro packages)	18	19
Toowoomba (24)	17	18	11
Ipswich (24)	16	6 (very late reminder notice)	13
Logan (24)	14	19	10 (midweek matinee)
Mackay (13)	12	9	7
Rockhampton (20)	20	8 (long duration btwn shows)	9

4.2. Data-Gathering Tools – questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews

“I really enjoyed the group's feedback, it gave more insight into the whole thing.”
(*Talking Theatre* participant)

The *Talking Theatre* project incorporated the Scollen Post Performance Audience Reception (SPPAR) method for gathering and analysing non-theatre-goers' reception of live performance and of all other elements associated with theatre attendance. The SPPAR method was to become known to the PACs as the *Talking Theatre* strategy. It consists of a series of data-gathering tools which are applied at specific times during the research project.

Before the Show

In order to build a profile of regional non-theatre-goers participating in the research, participants were asked to complete at home an *About You* questionnaire prior to attending the first performance in *Talking Theatre*. This questionnaire included a combination of open and closed questions to derive demographic and psychographic information. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the *About You* questionnaire.²

After the Show

Directly after experiencing each of the three performances on offer, the participants individually completed the *Tonight's Performance* questionnaire, which asked them to rate their experiences of the performance. The questionnaire consisted of mostly closed questions which were broad to enable the same questionnaire to be completed by participants regardless of the genres of performance they attended. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the *Tonight's Performance* questionnaire.

After the participants completed the questionnaire they talked together in groups of twelve about their reception of the performance. The one-hour post-performance group discussions were audio-recorded and facilitated. After establishing the purpose of the group discussions, the facilitator played a passive role to encourage the participants to direct the topics of conversation and to interact with each other rather than answer a series of facilitator-posed questions. The unstructured, free-flowing discussions generated substantial qualitative data that provided insight into the elements of performance and of theatre-going that were important to new audiences. Full transcripts of the discussions were included in the reports provided to the PACs in *Talking Theatre*.

After the Final Visit

A few weeks following the final *Talking Theatre* performance in each region another questionnaire was sent home to participants to complete. This *Feedback* questionnaire sought the participants' attitudes to the research, to their local PAC, and to the possibility of their future live performance attendance. Fifty-seven percent of the total sample sent back their completed questionnaire. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the *Feedback* questionnaire.

PAC Staff Interviews

General Managers and Marketing Managers were also interviewed at each PAC to provide a picture of the current practices and issues that surround audience development in regional Queensland and the Northern Territory. This data would assist to contextualise the responses of the non-theatre-goers who were living in diverse regions. Chiefly, the interview questions concerned:

² Based on the findings of *Talking Theatre* 2004 and on the suggestions from participating PAC staff, some additional questions were added to the *About You* questionnaire and to the *Tonight's Performance* questionnaire for 2005. The 2005 versions of these questionnaires feature in the Appendices.

1. profile of the region where PACs were situated
2. positive and negative aspects of PAC placement in the regions
3. profile of current audiences at each PAC
4. past and current audience research in each PAC
5. marketing and promotion practice in each PAC

4.3. Data Analysis and Reporting

“I think the project is producing very useful information - even if some of the information from the study group is only reinforcing things that we have assumed or perceived to be. It's helpful for us in our negotiations up the line.”

(PAC staff member)

The extensive data gathering led to a large amount of information about the participants and their perspectives, as well as about the PACs themselves. The quantitative data was entered into a database and analysed using SPSS software. The qualitative information was interpreted by applying content and thematic analysis.

Each of the PACs received a report of the findings pertaining to their region, which also included practical recommendations, as well as full transcripts of the post-performance group discussions. Executive reports provided an overview of the key findings of 2004 and of 2005, and these were distributed to all industry partners involved in *Talking Theatre*. *Talking Theatre* progress reports were also presented annually at NARPACA conferences.

Empire Theatre, Toowoomba



4.4. Performances

“Before the Talking Theatre program I thought that theatre was boring, even though I had never been before. I guess it was a preconceived thought.”

(Talking Theatre participant)

Each of the PACs selected three live performances for the participants to attend free of charge. They presented a mix of genres to provide the participants with variety, such as plays, opera, contemporary dance, stand-up comedy, musicals, ballet, and orchestras. The season of 2004/05 had a diverse selection of mostly toured, and some local, live performances.

2004

Araluen Centre in Alice Springs

1. *Nutcracker* by The Dancers Company, Australian Ballet
2. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Bell Shakespeare Company
3. *La Boheme* by Oz Opera

Caloundra Cultural Centre

1. *Zigzag Street* by Laboite Theatre Company
2. *Sydney International Piano Competition Winner Recital* by Federation of International Music Competitions, University of Sydney and Australian Broadcasting Corporation
3. *Titanic – the musical* by Caloundra Chorale

Darwin Entertainment Centre

1. *Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow*
2. *Pot Pourri*
3. *Last Cab to Darwin* by Pork Chop Productions

Mount Isa Civic Centre

1. *Virtually Richard 3* by Expressions Dance Company
2. *My Brilliant Divorce* by Hit Productions
3. *Stick It!* by Tetrafide Percussion

Nambour Civic Centre

1. *Late Nite Catechism* by Donovan and Quade
2. *Dad's Army* by Twelfth Night Theatre
3. *Swoon* by Queensland Orchestra

Townsville Civic Theatre

1. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Bell Shakespeare Company
2. *Second Childhood* by HotHouse Theatre
3. *Nostalgica* by Saffire

2005

Burdekin Theatre in Ayr

1. *The Shneedles* by Queensland Arts Council and Energex Brisbane Festival
2. *Chit Chat Club* by Dance North (with local Ayr community involvement)
3. *The Fiddlers Festival* by Queensland Arts Council

Cairns Civic Theatre

1. *Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow*
2. *Sleeping Beauty* by Queensland Ballet
3. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* by Bell Shakespeare Company

Empire Theatre in Toowoomba

1. *Grease – the musical* by Empire Theatre Pty Ltd.
2. *The Ten Top Classics* by Queensland Orchestra
3. *Skin Tight* by Perth Theatre Company

Ipswich Civic Hall

1. *Barmaids* by Hit Productions
2. *The Kransky Sisters* by Queensland Arts Council
3. *Jesus Christ Superstar – the musical* by Ipswich Orpheus Chorale

Logan Entertainment Centre

1. *The Fiddlers Festival* by Queensland Arts Council and Energex Brisbane Festival
2. *The Acrobatic Troupe of Imperial China*
3. *Stepping out with Fred and Ginger* by Kate Peters

Mackay Entertainment Centre

1. *Die Fledermaus* by Co-Opera Inc.
2. *Tangled Whispers* and *Chit Chat Club* by Dance North
3. *President Wilson in Paris* by Hit Productions

Pilbeam Theatre in Rockhampton

1. *Jekyll and Hyde – the musical* by Rockhampton Venues and Events
2. *Carmen* by Oz Opera
3. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* by Bell Shakespeare Company

5. Professional Development and Capacity Building

“I’m keen to put these skills into practice.” (PAC staff member)

An essential component of *Talking Theatre* was the training of industry professionals and volunteers to ensure increased awareness of audience development issues, including the barriers to attendance, as well as build capacity to employ the *Talking Theatre* strategy simply and affordably in-house as part of an ongoing audience development system. This continuing education in the profession is vital as indicated by the Regional Audience Development Specialists (RADS) National Overview Report³ which stated that the common challenges faced in achieving audience development outcomes in regional areas were:

- low awareness of the importance of marketing and of arts marketing techniques, particularly among small to medium organisations, and volunteer-based groups
- the nature of audience development approaches, for example networking, requires time in order to build up relationships and develop appropriate programmes
- the need for assistance to teach basic research skills and data collection, evaluation of current marketing activities, and strategies for community consultation to those working within regional arts.

Workshops

Three-hour workshops were offered to each of the fourteen PACs participating in the research. These capacity building sessions informed staff and volunteers of the *Talking Theatre* strategy to enable them to run it in-house as part of their ongoing commitment to regional audience development. The sessions were instructional and interactive, combining seminars with practical workshops.

They consisted of four stages:

1. Audience development (outlining issues and barriers to attendance)
2. The *Talking Theatre* strategy (how it works and why it works)
3. Professional development (industry members learn how to run *Talking Theatre*)
4. *Talking Theatre* for the future (decisions to ensure ongoing audience development)

Additional professional development tools: Manual, DVD, CD, Observation, Hands-on Application, and Feedback

Manual

Each PAC received a manual, *Audience Development for Live Performance: Implementing the Talking Theatre strategy*. The publication was about audience development issues and barriers to attendance, as well as providing step-by-step instructions and practical examples of how to effectively run the *Talking Theatre* strategy in-house.

DVD

A twelve minute DVD, *An Unfocused Focus Group*, was included with the manual and also utilised during the workshops to assist professionals and volunteers to understand how best to facilitate focus groups as a central part of the *Talking Theatre* strategy.

³ Regional Arts Australia (2002) *Regional Audience Development Specialists Program: Report to the Australia Council for the Arts*, Port Adelaide: Regional Arts Australia, pp. 29-33.

CD

Also included with the manual was a CD containing all of the questionnaires, forms, and letters utilised in the research. This addition was a time-saving device to enable professionals and volunteers to download the files, adapt them if they wished, and then print them out ready for use.

Observation, hands-on application and feedback

PAC staff and volunteers were encouraged to observe the researcher's actions and/or to undertake the data-gathering to gain direct experience with this aspect of the *Talking Theatre* strategy. Interacting with participants prior to performances, administering questionnaires after performances, and running post-performance group discussions were the chief activities offered to staff and volunteers to be involved in. The researcher provided feedback and answered any questions that arose from the observation and practical application.

Araluen Centre, Alice Springs



6. Findings

Two years of data-gathering (2004-05) produced much information about the participants, the performances, and the PACs. Early in the year following their participation, each of the PACs received a report with the results from their region. Summaries of those findings were presented in the executive reports made available to all industry partners in early 2005 and again in early 2006.

This report aims to move beyond those particulars to point to significant findings that have emerged across the participating PACs and their regions. The results are separated under the two categories of Audience Development and Capacity Building. For further specific details (including statistics and graphical depictions) please look to the Appendices.

6.1. Audience Development

Talking Theatre encouraged greater access to and participation in, the performing arts with a view to assist in long-term new audience growth. The project opened new entryways to theatre for Australians who had previously not engaged in the performing arts.

“Thank-you for giving me the opportunity to appreciate live theatre. It will now play an important choice in my entertainment spending.” (*Talking Theatre* participant)

6.1.1. *Talking Theatre* Works

A range of outcomes from the project indicated its success as an audience development initiative. PAC box office data, participant commentary in post-performance discussions and in questionnaires, PAC staff feedback, and media coverage all pointed to the positive impact of the research. The following results serve to illustrate that *Talking Theatre* works.

1. Taps into new markets
2. Increases box office returns from those who would not normally attend
3. Begins relationships with non-theatre-goers and PACs
4. Values relationship building and the positive impacts that new partnerships bring
5. Raises the profile of PACs within the local community
6. Creates positive word-of-mouth recommendations from non-theatre-goers about PACs and their product
7. Profiles non-theatre-goers and their needs and perspectives to enable ‘insider’ knowledge of the target market
8. Spells out what is required to increase audience numbers, range and satisfaction
9. Informs non-theatre-goers about theatre and theatre-going via direct experience, self-reflection, and peer discussion
10. Builds non-theatre-goers’ capacity for future attendance by increasing their interest and confidence in theatre-going
11. Initiates non-theatre-goer trust in PACs
12. Engages the local community on a ‘grassroots’ personal level which creates a sense of ownership amongst the target market

13. Demonstrates to the community the publicly-owned PACs' commitment to delivering relevant and satisfying cultural experiences to all
14. Furthers PAC commitment to audiences and reaffirms the important role that they play in the performing arts industry
15. Demonstrates that audience research is a good investment to effectively evaluate PAC vision, operation, and engagement
16. Impacts on all aspects of PAC business as the research informs policy and strategy
17. Indicates how PAC relationships with performing arts companies, promoters, media, business and government can be enhanced to assist long-term audience growth

Mount Isa Civic Centre



6.1.2. Profile of PACs, Participants and Performances

There was a wide range of PACs, participants and performances included in the *Talking Theatre* project. By condensing the data about each of these the significant aspects of their profiles emerged.

PAC Profiles

The fourteen participating PACs were situated in towns or cities that ranged in population size from 9,000 to 200,000 people. The locales varied from tropical, sub-tropical, hinterland, grassland, and desert, with a plethora of industries (eg. rural, mining, manufacturing, education, health, and tourism) employing the residents. Each PAC differed in size (venue, seating capacity, staffing, and funding), which directly affected theatre programming, promotion and marketing, and audience research and development.

Although each PAC was different, there were some similarities across all fourteen participating in *Talking Theatre*. Each PAC was publicly-owned and aimed to present a wide variety of product to the local community in an attempt to cater to everyone's needs and preferences. Each of the PACs were interested in targeting specific groups for future audience growth. Mostly these groups consisted of skilled professionals, young people, early retirees, and tourists. Questionnaires and box office ticketing systems were the most common tools used by the PACs to gather information about audiences. Yet, past audience research undertaken by the PACs was limited in size and duration. However, each PAC in *Talking Theatre* desired increased investment for arts marketing and audience development for the future.

In over half of the PACs, General Managers were responsible for the marketing and promotion of performances. Four of these General Managers had marketing backgrounds. Six of the PACs actively branded their organisation with the community. Interestingly, most of the PACs with dedicated marketing staff did not prioritise PAC branding. Eight of the PACs had Friends of the Theatre who volunteered and who raised funds for the organisation. A third of the PACs stated that their venue required urgent refurbishment and upgrades.

The regions in which the PACs were situated were as diverse as the PACs themselves. Over half of the participating PACs in *Talking Theatre* were situated in regions currently experiencing rapid population growth. Half of the PACs in the research were located in regions with residents earning high-disposable incomes. Over a third of the PACs were positioned in regions with transient populations and/or with heavy reliance upon the rural and industrial employment sectors. Over a quarter of the PACs were servicing regions with a high proportion of residents aged below 30 years. A quarter of the PACs were placed in regions with a high proportion of multi-cultural residents and/or Indigenous residents.

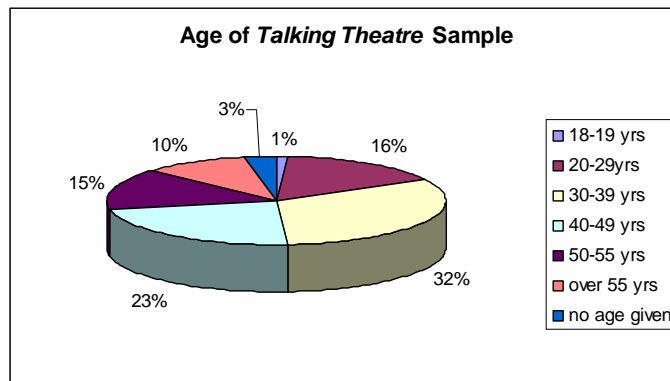
Logan Entertainment Centre



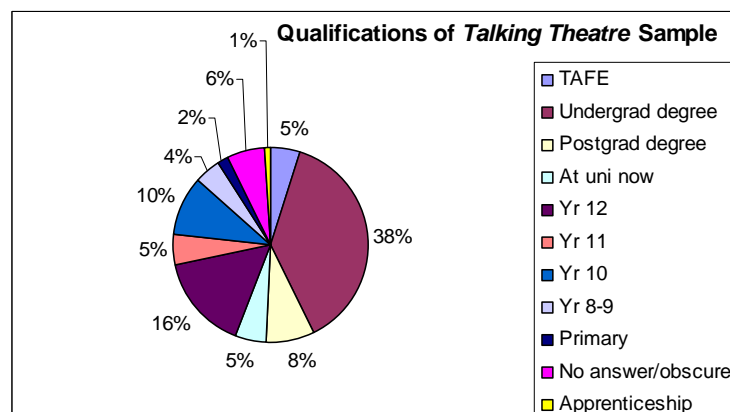
Participant Profiles

Two hundred and thirty-seven non-theatre-goers from thirteen regions across Queensland and the Northern Territory participated in the *Talking Theatre* project. The following statistics paint a picture of the dominant demographic and psychographic composition of the total participant sample.

1. Sixty-seven percent of the sample was female and the remaining 33 percent was male.
2. Fifty-five percent of the sample was 30-49 years old. The largest proportion of women in the sample was aged 30-39 years (34.5%). The largest proportion of men in the sample was aged 40-49 years (29%). Please look to Appendix D for significant age breakdown in the regional PACs.

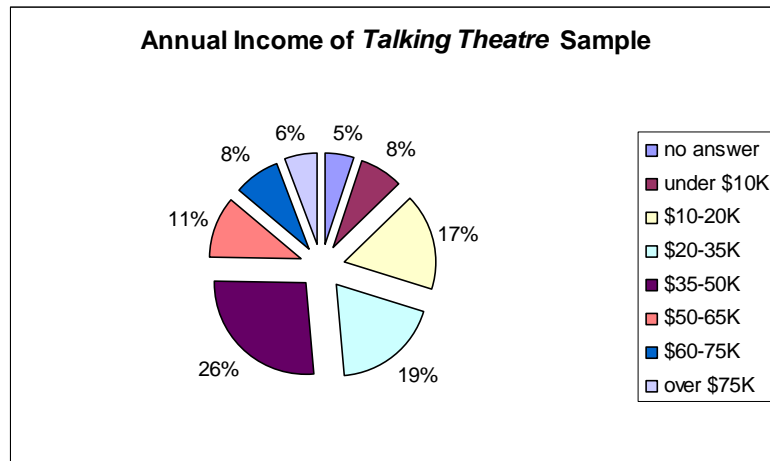


3. Eighty-two and a half percent of the sample identified themselves as Australian. Please look to Appendix E for further detail.
4. Fifty-six percent of the sample had undertaken further study since leaving high school. Almost three quarters of the Alice Springs (71%) and Caloundra (70%) samples had tertiary qualifications or were in the process of obtaining them. In comparison, almost half of the Nambour (45%) and Ayr (40%) samples did not complete their high schooling. Please see Appendix F for further detail.

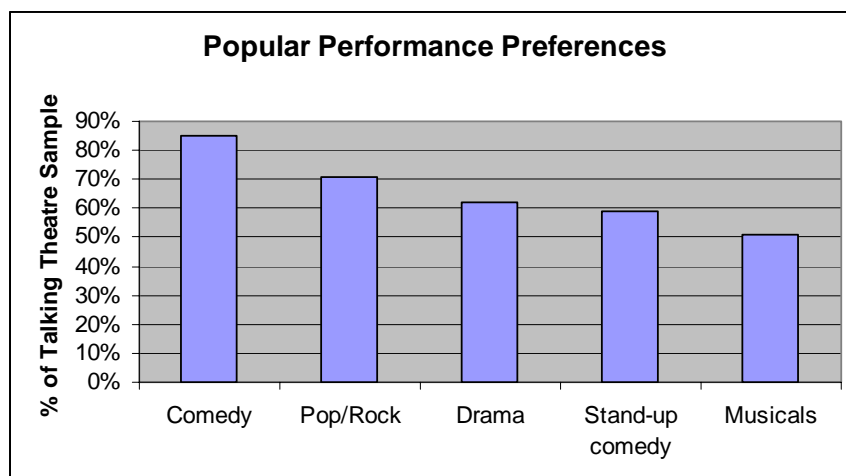


5. There was a diverse range of occupations represented in the *Talking Theatre* sample. The most common employment sector was home duties/carer. Two-thirds of the sample were categorised as 'white-collar' workers. Please see Appendix G for further detail.

6. Sixty-three percent of the sample earned between \$10 000 - \$50 000 per annum. Almost half (45%) of the Ipswich and Logan samples earned below \$20 000 per year. Almost all of the Ipswich (88%) and Cairns (84%) samples' annual incomes were below \$50 000. Over half (53%) of the Alice Springs sample earned over \$50 000 per year. See Appendix H for further detail.



7. The most popular leisure activities outside the home were dining out (76% of the sample) and going to the movies (68%). Please look to Appendix I for further detail.
8. The most popular leisure activities around the home were reading (82% of the sample) and watching television (80%). Please look to Appendix J for further detail.
9. Prior to attending the performances in *Talking Theatre*, participants were asked to state the types of performance they thought they would prefer.
- Comedy was the most popular theatrical genre.
 - Popular/Rock was the most preferred style of music. Pop/rock concerts were particularly popular in Nambour, Darwin, Rockhampton, and Townsville.
 - Modern/contemporary and ballet were the most popular dance styles. Contemporary dance was mostly appealing to tertiary-educated women aged 20-39 years. A third of the *Talking Theatre* sample had no preferences for dance of any kind.
 - Stand-up comedy was also an appealing live performance genre, particularly to those participants aged 20-39 years.



10. The most common factors that made live performance appealing to the participants were to have a good night out and to attend a quality show. Please see Appendix K for further detail.
11. If participants attended a performance in the past, 55 percent chose to see the show with a partner and 49 percent elected to go with friends.
12. Ticket price was cited as the most popular reason for non-attendance (50% of the *Talking Theatre* sample). The largest proportion of participants (66%) who gave this response resided in Ipswich and Rockhampton. 60 percent of the participants (regardless of region) who stated ticket prices were prohibitive earned annual incomes of below \$10 000 - \$35 000 per annum.
13. Children, quality of shows, and work commitments were the next most popular reasons for not going to the theatre.
 - a. Children: 30-49 year olds (63% of this grouping) and those earning over \$60 000 per annum (63% of this grouping) were the most likely to give this response.
 - b. Work commitments: 40-55 year olds (51% of this grouping), and those earning over \$60 000 per annum (71%) were the most likely to give this response.
 - c. Quality of shows: Most (78%) of those who provided this response also stated that show quality made live performance appealing.
14. Sixty-one percent of participants knew someone who had attended the local PAC in the past. Participants who resided in Ayr, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Alice Springs, and Cairns were most likely to know of someone. Those who were tertiary-educated, aged 30-49 years and earning \$35 000-\$50 000 per annum were also more likely to know someone who had attended the PAC.
15. Fifty percent of the sample had read reviews or heard comments about performances at their PAC. Of those who had, participants from Rockhampton, Cairns and Ayr were the most likely to have done so. Ninety-one percent of those who had read reviews or heard comments became interested in the performances.
16. Eighty-two percent of the sample had noticed local PAC advertising in the past.
17. Fifty-four percent of the sample had expectations of their local PAC. The most common expectations were that it would be (in order of most popular response):
 - a. informal
 - b. formal
 - c. small
 - d. large
 - e. busy
 - f. semi-formal.
18. Forty-nine percent of the sample had expectations of the theatre inside their local PAC. Most common expectations were (in order of most popular response):
 - a. comfortable
 - b. good view of the stage
 - c. good facilities
 - d. appropriate for the shows and performers who present there
 - e. amphitheatre style stage/seating arrangement.

19. Forty-nine percent of the sample had expectations about the performances. Most common expectations were (in order of most popular response):
 - a. entertaining or enjoyable/interesting
 - b. good quality
 - c. professional.

20. Seventy-two percent of the sample was attracted to *Talking Theatre* because they saw it as an opportunity to attend performances that they would not normally see. Sixty-seven percent saw the study as a chance to obtain free tickets and to take part in an interesting project.
 - a. Of note: The free tickets were most appealing to those who earned less than \$20 000 per annum or between \$60 000-\$75 000 per annum. The younger the participant the more likely free tickets would appeal. Toowoomba, Mackay and Ayr attracted significantly fewer participants who stated they were persuaded to participate due to the free tickets on offer.

21. The most popular expectation of participant role in the study was to provide feedback about the performances and the PACs.

22. The most common anticipated gains for participants in *Talking Theatre* were:
 - a. enjoyment
 - b. a better appreciation and understanding of live performance and of the PAC
 - c. exposure to shows that they normally would not attend.

Nambour Civic Centre

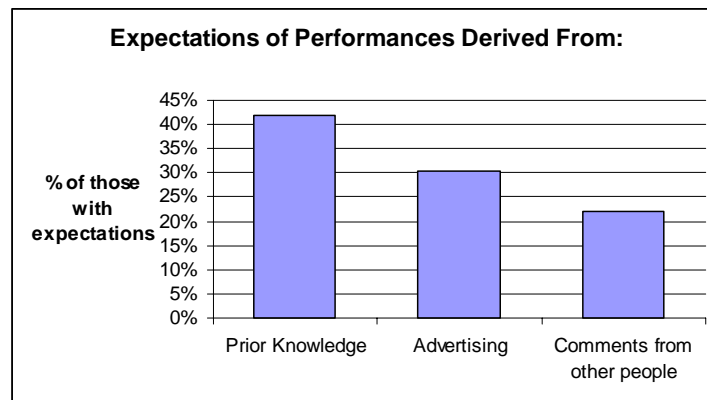


Performance Profiles

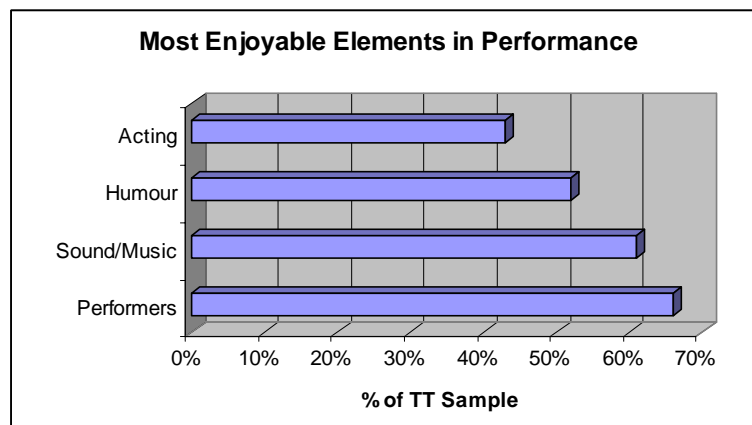
Each PAC presented three live performances to the *Talking Theatre* participants to experience. Although a wide range of performance genres were showcased in the project, overall trends in reception across the performances and across the regions became evident.

Averaged responses from the *Talking Theatre* sample to all performances included in the study

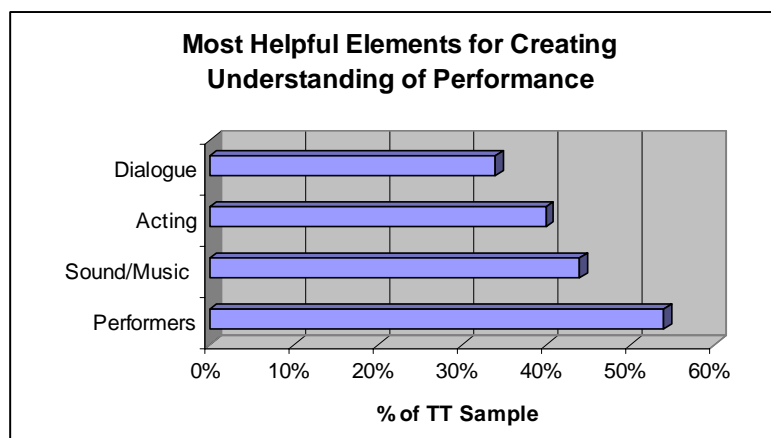
1. Fifty-seven percent of the sample had expectations of the performances prior to attendance. Expectations were mostly derived from prior knowledge, advertising, or comments from other people.



2. Average level of enjoyment across all shows was 7 out of 10.
3. The most commonly referred to elements in performance that created enjoyment for the participants were: the performers, the sound/music, the humour, and then the acting.



4. Average level of comprehension of all shows was 7.5 out of 10.
5. The most commonly referred to elements in performance that created understanding in the participants were: the performers, the sound/music, the acting, and then the dialogue.



6. Fifty-four percent of the *Talking Theatre* sample was able to identify a message in the performances.
7. Fifty-four percent of the *Talking Theatre* sample was able to relate to something or someone in the performances.

These findings demonstrated that it was possible for the participants to engage with a range of performance styles, and for many of them to be able to relate to the content in the performances. This was an important result for the non-theatre-goers in the study as well as to the PACs themselves.

According to participant responses in the early post-performance discussions and in some casual conversations with the researcher, one of the reasons many of the non-theatre-goers avoided the PACs was because they thought they would not enjoy or understand the performances. Part of their reasoning for this was that they assumed they would not be able to relate to anything in the performances nor be able to relate to the other theatre patrons. This concern stemmed from their belief that theatre was elitist and catered for a certain type of person whose interests were different to theirs. For instance, one young well-educated and high-income earning male participant stated "I always thought theatre was for cigar smoking old people."

Yet, as indicated above enjoyment and comprehension levels were high and 54 percent of the entire sample could relate to someone or something in the performances. Interestingly, according to the responses to the *Tonight's Performance* questionnaire, in most cases it was the characters and the relationships between the characters in the performances that were the key elements participants could relate to. This helped to indicate to them that the cultures re-presented on stage were not that different to their own cultures.

Comments about the similarity of the paying audience members to themselves were also consistently made in the post-performance group discussions. Participants noted the 'smart-casual' attire of the theatre patrons as opposed to the formality that they had expected. They noted the variety of age ranges present and saw many audience members who appeared to be a similar age to themselves. The participants were also pleasantly surprised to see children and families at the theatre because many had assumed that children would not be welcome in this perceived formal adult leisure environment. The discovery that many of the participants could relate to aspects in the performances and to the theatre patrons further assisted them to enjoy the experience.

This outcome assisted the non-theatre-goers to feel more confident about the prospect of future theatre attendance because many of their initial concerns were diminished. It also illustrated that the PACs were presenting appropriate live performances for this target market as they were able to readily engage with them. The findings also pointed to the elements in performance that were most engaging for new audiences, as well as indicated the areas of concern that had prevented their attendance in the past.

6.1.3. Economic circumstances and cultural needs of non-theatre-goers

“Thank you for involving us. I finally want to say that I hope they start bringing family tickets in for the shows as I am keen to bring my older kids and show them how good live shows are. With tickets priced the way they are, I can't afford to take them.”
(Talking Theatre participant)

Economic circumstances

Money plays a significant part in determining theatre attendance and below are some of the findings that emerged from the project in this regard.

1. The biggest percentage of participants who stated ticket price as a deterrent to attendance earned below \$20 000 per year.
2. Participants earning over \$60 000 per year consistently attended a wide range of leisure activities (outside and around the home). Likewise, so did the participants who earned less than \$10 000 per year. Both were able to spend *time* on leisure to a larger degree than those earning \$10 000-\$59 000 per annum.
3. Many of the participants (regardless of annual incomes) had families and they expressed their difficulty to afford tickets for the entire family to attend the theatre. Tied in with this expense were the concerns that the children may not enjoy or appreciate the experience, and/or would not be welcome at the PAC. In these instances, the cost of the tickets would be considered high and wasteful. Comparisons were made to other leisure activities the family could participate in that were considered to be more affordable and likely to be enjoyable for all (eg. movies, theme parks, outdoor physical activities, videos/DVDs, and family gatherings).
4. Non-theatre-goers seek special family ticket prices (2 adults, 2 or more children) for all shows. This would encourage them to consider attendance and would also make clear that the PAC welcomed children and families.
5. Tickets priced from \$10-\$45 were considered affordable for many of the non-theatre-goers. However, once they multiplied this price by two (or more) the total cost for partners or families started to become prohibitive for some (particularly those earning below \$20 000 per annum).
6. All stated they would be willing to spend more than \$45 on a performance if they really wanted to see it (mostly concerts, opera, ballet, musicals or comedians). On these occasions they had positive expectations of the experience, had an understanding of what the show would be like, often heard plenty of word-of-mouth recommendations or knew about it from television, were convinced that it would entertain, and so believed that it would be worth spending the money.
7. In many cases, the participants could appreciate the value in the ticket prices after directly experiencing the performances in *Talking Theatre*. The magic of the *live* performances and of the highly-skilled and charismatic performers convinced most of the non-theatre-goers that the ticket prices were appropriate.
8. It was also quite common for the non-theatre-goers to presume ticket prices (in general) were expensive. However, they were pleasantly surprised to discover that some of the performances at the PACs (including those that were not associated in *Talking Theatre*) were less expensive than they had thought.

Cultural needs

The non-theatre-goers in the *Talking Theatre* project were interested in widening their cultural participation and experiencing new forms of entertainment. The following points highlight the stated cultural needs of the participants in the research.

1. Good quality performances that are comparable with capital city productions
2. Professional, highly skilled and engaging performers
3. Comedy (in all its forms), music and musicals, plays
4. Product that is relevant to the lives of those living in regional areas
5. Pleasurable, sociable and affordable entertainment experiences
6. Recreation with friends
7. Family-friendly entertainment and environments
8. Inclusive and relaxed leisure experiences
9. Performances that are stimulating for the intellect, the emotions and the senses

Pilbeam Theatre, Rockhampton



6.1.4. Successful programming and marketing

The *Talking Theatre* participants shared their responses to the live performances they attended, as well as discussed their perspectives about the ways the performances were marketed and publicised in their communities. Their feedback informs the conclusions about programming and marketing as follows.

Programming

“I really admire the performers. They are very clever, especially by the way they keep an audience enthralled. Live performances have atmosphere and are magical. I think they will always put a smile on your face when you think of them.”

(Talking Theatre participant)

1. Current programming in the regional PACs is appropriate. The majority of non-theatre-goers were able to enjoy and understand the range of performances they experienced in *Talking Theatre*.
2. Plays should continue to be presented in the regions as the participants highly enjoyed these performances and indicated willingness to return to attend plays in the future. Of the 57 percent of the entire sample who elected to complete and return the *Feedback* questionnaire, 45 percent indicated they were now interested in attending plays in the future. Of particular note, was the finding that the desire to attend plays now outweighed the other more popular live performance genres, such as musicals and live music concerts (as was previously indicated in the results of the initial *About You* questionnaire and in the early post-performance group discussions).

PAC box office data combined with participant responses to the *Feedback* questionnaire also indicated that participants and their guests purchased tickets to attend plays (at their local PAC or elsewhere) since participating in the research. Ticket purchases equated to 21% of the total *Talking Theatre* sample attending one play outside of study conditions.

3. Live music and musicals follow plays as the most popular entertainment genres for the non-theatre-goers to attend in the future. Therefore, these styles of performance should also continue to be programmed at the PACs.
4. Skilled performers and their actions are key ingredients in a performance to satisfy and enthrall non-theatre-goers.
5. Most non-theatre-goers regularly read for leisure, so performances based on novels and other literature (and promoted as such) will be familiar and appealing.
6. Live music concerts (including orchestral) which feature many musicians and much musical variety will likely appeal to non-theatre-goers.
7. Family-friendly performances are sought by non-theatre-goers. Limited knowledge and expectation of upcoming shows means that it is unclear which performances (with the exception of ‘kiddie’ shows) are suitable for families. Non-theatre-goers would like family ticket prices to all performances (with the exception of those not appropriate for children) to provide financial incentive to attend, as well as to highlight that the theatre welcomes children and families.
8. Comedy and humour are central to enjoyment for non-theatre-goers and their presence in performances will encourage attendance.
9. Well-known performers (particularly musicians, comedians, and to a lesser degree television/film actors) are recognised, and so their inclusion in live performances attracts non-

theatre-goers to consider attendance. Recognition of the 'stars' creates some expectation which assists non-theatre-goers to make purchase decisions.

10. Non-theatre-goers do not necessarily have knowledge and expectations of 'well-known, established, respected' product. It cannot be assumed that everyone in the community has a history of understanding about these 'greats' and so information is needed to inform them.
11. Non-theatre-goers living in the more remote regional centres assumed that performances in the PACs were local, amateur shows rather than professional, high quality productions. They were surprised to realise that major performing arts companies/artists would travel long distances to perform in their region.
12. Ticket prices are not prohibitive if non-theatre-goers *know* the product on sale and have positive expectations of the experience of attendance.

Marketing and promotion

"I see the shows advertised in the newspaper but because I don't know anything about them, I have no idea which one to go to." (Talking Theatre participant)

1. Advertising makes non-theatre-goers aware that product is on sale but does not provide enough information to generate expectation or knowledge of product. Other information and promotional strategies are required to support the advertising to increase desire to purchase tickets.
2. Non-theatre-goers require more information and insight into what upcoming performances are *about* and how they might be able to *relate to them*. They wish to know:
 - storyline
 - central issues
 - aspects the public may relate to/the performances' relevance to everyday life
 - details about the genre (where appropriate)
 - the performances' similarity to other popular art forms
 - how the performances might make them feel
 - performers they may recognise.
3. Non-theatre-goers seek ticket prices in all advertising. This information is vital as part of their decision-making. If prices are not advertised, it is assumed that tickets are expensive.
4. Still photographs in television advertisements are not appealing to non-theatre-goers. They wish to see recorded live action to give them a sense of what to expect from the performance. Audio from the performance (particularly music, singing voices, or funny pieces of dialogue) also gives them an idea of what the performance will be like.
5. Non-theatre-goers were pleasantly surprised with what the PACs had to offer as part of the overall theatre experience (eg. bars, cafes, dining, outdoor areas, wide range of patrons, friendly staff, and social atmosphere). They stated that these aspects need to be actively promoted to inform the community of their existence because they were an important part of the outing.
6. Non-theatre-goers were interested to receive 'what's on' information and updates in the e/mail but did not realise they could be placed on a list to receive the mail if they had not purchased a ticket in the past. Some were unaware that mailed information about upcoming performances was available.

7. Non-theatre-goers need promotional materials about upcoming performances to be in the public arena well in advance of the date of performance. They require time to save money for tickets, to arrange work and family commitments, to obtain information about the performances to make their purchase decision, and to gather others to attend with them. Ideally, performances should be advertised months in advance, with reminders over the period.
8. Non-theatre-goers enjoyed performances which contained characters, relationships, and situations they could relate to. This information is required in pre-show promotion to entice their interest and attendance.
9. Non-theatre-goers were struck by the 'liveness' of performance. They found the experience of live theatre attendance far more engaging, emotional and satisfying than watching television or going to the cinema. This was an aspect of live theatre attendance they did not anticipate.
10. Non-theatre-goers take notice of film reviews and recommendations from others when deciding which movies to attend at the cinema. They wish to read or hear reviews about upcoming live performances to inform their purchasing decisions.
11. Many of the non-theatre-goers regularly access the internet for work and leisure. They desire the PACs to have easy-to-find, easy-to-use, informative websites, which can equip them with the knowledge they need about upcoming shows and about the PAC.
12. Generic promotion from touring companies and promoters provides little insight into the performances and misses opportunities to tailor publicity to very different communities.

Caloundra Cultural Centre



6.1.5. Economic impact of the *Talking Theatre* project

“I bought a ticket to see James Morrison. I took a friend who had never been to the Ipswich Civic Hall before and now she is going to other performances.”
(Talking Theatre participant)

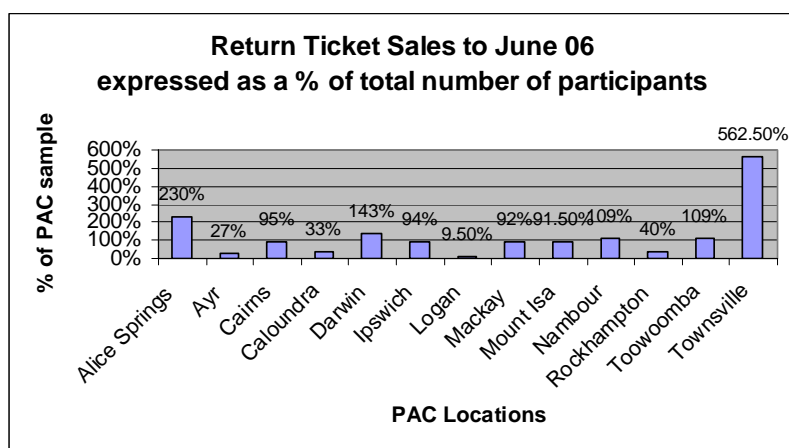
The model:

- *Talking Theatre* enabled the PACs to begin a relationship with local residents who were part of the target market. *Talking Theatre* accessed a selection of these people, provided the conditions for introduction and communication to occur, and showcased what the PACs had to offer. *Talking Theatre* listened to the perspectives, needs and suggestions of the target market representatives, reported these findings to enable the PACs to learn from their comments and implement change where necessary. *Talking Theatre* stressed the importance of continuing the relationship with the target market representatives to ensure ongoing communications and incentives to foster long-term association and to encourage new relationships with others in the target market. Furthermore, *Talking Theatre* pointed out that the results from the project could be utilised to enhance the effectiveness of relationships with government (all levels), promoters, performing arts companies, media, and staff within the organisation.

Economic benefits:

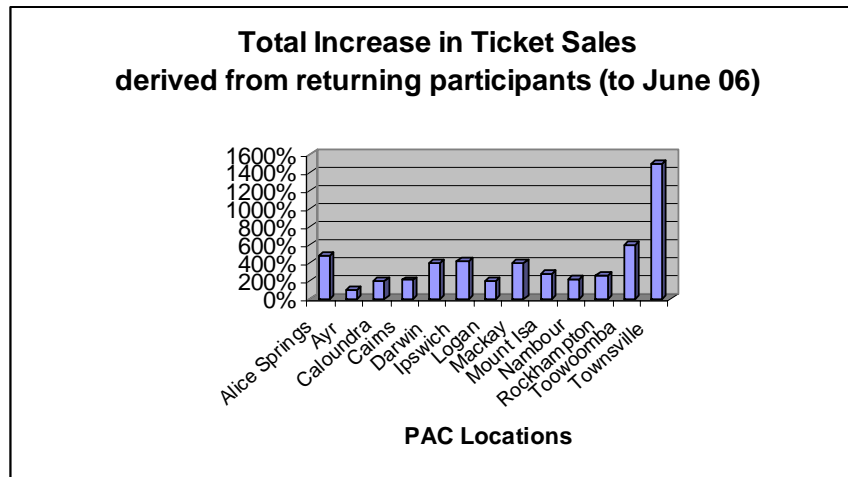
- Increased ticket sales and new markets

Since March 2004, *Talking Theatre* has generated a 110%⁴ increase in ticket purchases by all participants in the project. Twenty-nine percent of all participants returned, on average more than once, which is 177% up on their previous attendance. Factoring in the guests that they brought with them, results in a ticket multiplier of 397% per participant (or a ratio of 3.97 to 1). New family and friends have now been introduced to the PACs, and may return with guests of their own.

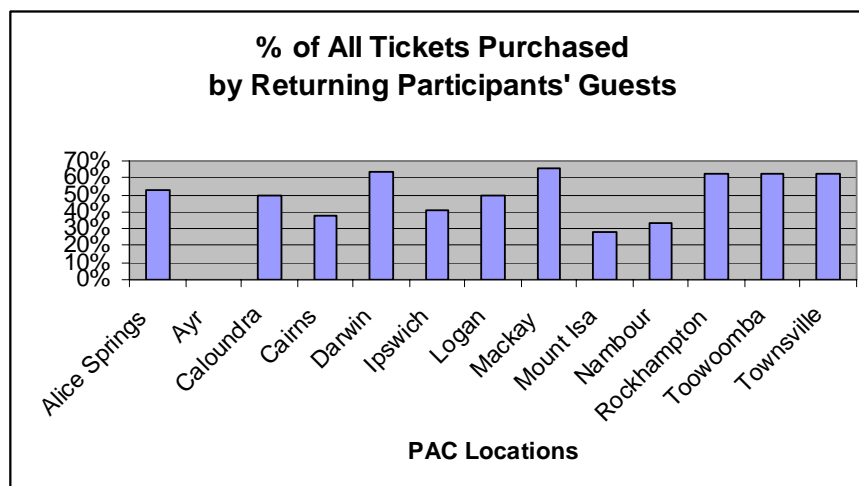


Live music (variety of forms) was the most popular genre in terms of return ticket sales. The other styles of performance participants paid to attend were: musicals, plays, stand-up comedy, dance (ballet and cultural), and children’s shows.

⁴ These statistics are derived from the *Talking Theatre* PACs’ participant box office sales figures from March 2004-June 2006. It should be noted that the participant returns figures are based on box office data records which only highlight the names of those who have purchased the tickets. Therefore, if participants returned but their partners or friends (who were not in *Talking Theatre*) purchased the tickets on their behalf, these paying participants and their guests will not have been included in this statistical analysis.

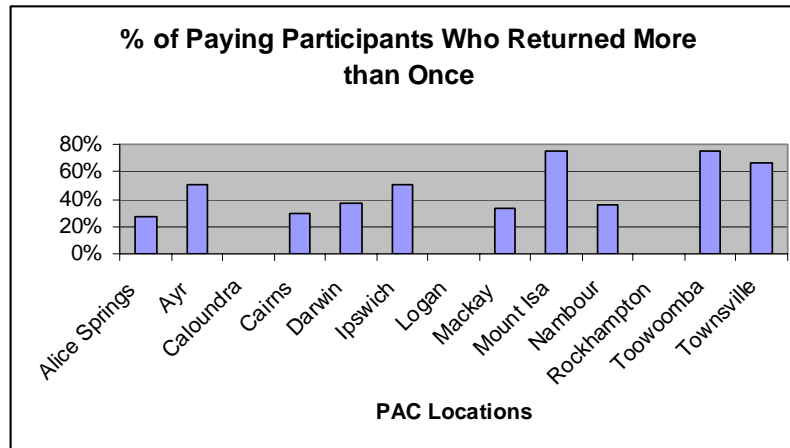


Not all of these tickets were purchased by the participants themselves. Most of the returning participants brought paying guests with them who were not in the *Talking Theatre* project. *Talking Theatre* has assisted the PACs to further tap into new markets as participants persuade peers within their networks to begin purchasing tickets to live performance.



According to the box office returns figures (up to June 2006), many of the participants purchasing tickets chose to return to their PAC more than once. Also important to note was the finding that approximately 9 percent of participants in *Talking Theatre* during 2004 returned to their PAC for the first time in 2006. It is anticipated that this result will also occur in 2007 in relation to 2005 *Talking Theatre* participants.

To assist long-term audience growth it is vital to continue relations with the participants because as individuals they may elect to attend their PAC (and bring guests) at a time that does not immediately follow their participation in *Talking Theatre*.



Knowledge transfer will lead to:

1. efficient spending on effective marketing and promotion
2. better informed programming choices for new audiences and wider choices of product
3. greater potential for sponsorship and increased government funding.

Cairns Civic Theatre



6.1.6. Product relevance and audience growth

“I just liked the whole play. I could relate to just about everything in it. I like watching things and reading things where I know the places that they’re talking about. Like, if it’s in my local area, rather than some American thing, in the States or a town that’s unheard of.” (*Talking Theatre* participant)

According to the participants’ responses, product presented by the PACs is relevant to their communities and this aspect should be publicly emphasized to encourage audience growth.

1. All of the performances in *Talking Theatre* were enjoyed and understood by most of the non-theatre-goers. Therefore, the performances chosen as part of the annual repertoire were appropriate for those communities, and were proven to have direct relevance to over half of the sample. To ensure the PAC product is made more relevant to the community, the performances’ relevance must be central when promoting them.
2. Early on in the study, the non-theatre-goers expressed their concerns that they would not fit in with the theatre-going crowd and that their children would not be welcome. They were worried they would not enjoy or understand the performances because they would not be able to relate to them. Upon taking part in *Talking Theatre* and directly experiencing the performances and the PACs, the non-theatre-goers decided that theatre-going could be an activity for anyone in the community to engage in because they enjoyed their experiences and they noted the range of patrons at the theatre.
3. Non-theatre-goers are usually aware of product shown at the PACs but have little understanding of what the PACs are like. Through direct experience of the PACs, the participants found out that they were well-equipped and comfortable, friendly and social. This insight increased their interest to attend in the future and to encourage their networks to attend also.
4. *Talking Theatre* provided the PACs with direct feedback and suggestions from non-theatre-goers living in their local areas. Participants in the research spoke about their reasons for non-attendance, their expectations, their reception of three live performances, of the PACs and their promotion, pricing, and programming. All of this information was delivered via reports to the PACs to inform them of the interests, attitudes and needs of a selection of non-theatre-goers living in their local communities. The knowledge derived from this reporting assists the PACs to make their product more relevant.
5. *Talking Theatre* has shown that by directly asking people in the local community about their perspectives, opinions and assessments, the PACs are demonstrating an interest in the non-theatre-goers. This helps the non-theatre-goers to feel valued and welcome and thus more likely to take an interest in what the PAC has to offer. *Talking Theatre* has shown that rather than assuming what the public wants or needs, it is best to find this out by consulting people. The next step is to demonstrate that their comments have been considered by acting on the newly acquired knowledge.

6.1.7. Marketing departments are chiefly responsible for audience development, yet are currently under-resourced.

“Frankly, we don’t have the resources, either financially or in terms of staff. I mean, that’s the limiting factor... (Another PAC) has done a study where they got a consultant from outside in recently... but you know, trying to get that sort of money to do that out of this council, forget it. No chance.” (PAC staff member)

Marketing and audience development are highly important to the regional PACs. However, limited resources mean that these areas of business cannot be employed as fully as is required. Interviews with PAC General Managers and Marketing Managers unearthed the following complications.

1. Selling shows and audience growth (or retention) are perceived to be key responsibilities of marketing staff.
2. Over half of the PACs do not have allocated marketing staff.
3. Marketing departments have little or no impact on programming decisions.
4. There are currently few or no resources allocated to PAC staff for audience development purposes (eg. staff, time, money, professional development, experience, and external consultancies).
5. Limited records of demographic and psychographic data of past audiences have been kept.
6. Regular staff turnover depletes marketing departments’ knowledge and skills, and thus undermines capacity to run long-term initiatives and to build on tested strategies.
7. In many instances, tight work deadlines meant that limited time could be provided to marketing staff (and to all other PAC staff) to engage in the *Talking Theatre* professional development workshops and to peruse the accompanying learning materials.

Mackay Entertainment Centre



6.2 Capacity Building

“It was amazing running the focus group after the show. They (participants) reacted in a completely different way to how we expected... It’s making me re-think our next marketing campaign.” (PAC staff member)

Talking Theatre worked to build capacity in regional areas and contributed to the growth of the regional PAC sector. The following detail illustrates the impact of *Talking Theatre* in this regard.

6.2.1. Expert research and professional development opportunities were provided to regional PACs to work to overcome identified needs in knowledge and resources for effective operation.

1. Three hour interactive workshops were offered to staff and volunteers in all participating PACs.
2. A training manual (with DVD and CD) was supplied to every PAC with encouragement for it to be available to all staff and volunteers.
3. A twenty minute DVD concerning effective focus group facilitation as employed in the *Talking Theatre* project accompanied the training manual and was also shown as part of the three-hour interactive workshop.
4. A CD which included all documents utilised in the project (questionnaires, forms, letters) accompanied the training manual so staff or volunteers could quickly and easily download them when undertaking future research utilising the *Talking Theatre* strategy.
5. Staff/volunteers at each PAC were encouraged to observe the researcher working with the participants.
6. Staff/volunteers at each PAC were encouraged to work alongside the researcher to interact with participants, run focus groups, administer questionnaires, keep the database, do follow-ups and keep box office records.
7. Regular emails were sent to each PAC with suggestions, guidance, and feedback stemming from the project.
8. There were offers to assist and consult the PACs in their future attempts to utilise the *Talking Theatre* strategy.
9. Yearly updates of key research findings and project progress were presented to NARPACA at their annual meetings.
10. Reports and recommendations were provided to all PACs (as individual venues and as members of the NARPACA).

6.2.2. *Talking Theatre* contributed to the growth of the regional PAC sector.

1. Increased the number of new audiences to the PACs in 2004-2006.
2. Raised the profile of the PACs through the media (local, national, and international) and through participant recommendations to other locals not participating in the research.
3. Recommended some changes in the PAC and touring companies/promoters relationship (eg. non-theatregoers' reception indicates the need for better quality and more detailed promotional materials, earlier lead times for publicity, price ranges/packages) to ensure that this becomes more efficient and leads to greater ticket sales.
4. Reported the results of *Talking Theatre* to the government partners (AQ and Arts NT) to inform them of the key issues that pertain to the regional PACs and future actions required for ongoing audience development. Such information assists government to make effective resource decisions which will impact on the growth of the regional PAC sector.
5. Built capacity within the PACs to undertake future audience research and development initiatives to continue long term audience growth.

6.2.3. The professional development tools employed in *Talking Theatre* were effective.

1. Thirty-seven NARPACA staff and volunteers participated in the interactive workshops or seminars provided in each of the PACs. Levels of participation in each PAC can be found in Appendix L.
2. An evaluation questionnaire (please see Appendix M) completed by staff and volunteers following their participation in the workshops recorded positive feedback.
3. Twenty NARPACA staff either observed or directly assisted the researcher to undertake the research in their PACs. Levels of participation in each PAC can be found in Appendix N.
4. There was acknowledgement from staff observing or working directly with the researcher that the research was useful and was enjoyable to carry out. Those that engaged in one-on-one instruction and practical application had greater levels of confidence to continue with the research after *Talking Theatre* was completed.
5. It was evident from interaction with staff, that there was great willingness to learn new skills and to increase knowledge about audience development. It was also clear that staff had many strategies they would like to trial to build new audiences and the information provided to them in *Talking Theatre* complemented these.
6. *Talking Theatre* encouraged all staff and volunteers to take up the opportunity to be directly involved in learning about audience development and the methodology utilised in the study. Those who engaged in the professional development and direct research input were chiefly marketing and/or managerial staff.
7. The three-hour interactive workshops were reduced to one, or one and a half, hour seminars in some of the PACs as appropriate time for this professional development had not been allocated to staff and volunteers. This reduction in time meant that the sessions were less interactive and chiefly focused on delivering information about audience development issues and on providing an overview of the *Talking Theatre* strategy.

7. Future Action to maximize long-term impact

7.1 Recommendation One

Talking Theatre as an audience development initiative was successful in regional Queensland and in the Northern Territory. Future implementation will continue the creation of new relationships with targeted markets and will further strengthen the operations of those PACs who undertake the research.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Install *Talking Theatre* as a permanent audience development system to regularly inform all aspects of PAC business and growth.
- b. Allocate resources to operate *Talking Theatre*, and assign staff and/or volunteers to run the programme as part of their regular duties at the PAC.
- c. Develop staff and volunteer capacity to successfully carry out *Talking Theatre* on a regular basis. Enable time for expert instruction to be provided and study of accompanying learning materials to be undertaken. Ensure multiple staff and volunteers are trained in *Talking Theatre* to make the system sustainable amidst staff turnover.
- d. Act upon the findings and recommendations of the current *Talking Theatre* project, and then utilize future *Talking Theatre* research to evaluate the success of actions taken to improve audience attendance and community engagement.
- e. Customise *Talking Theatre* so that the audience development system always remains relevant and viable for the PAC. Different segments of the non-theatre-going community may be targeted, different product may be highlighted from year to year, different audiences could be approached to participate (including regular attenders, subscribers, lapsed attenders, sponsors).
- f. Share *Talking Theatre* research findings and recommendations with NARPACA members. Explain the actions implemented in response to the ongoing research, and identify the impact these actions have had on the PAC. Consider what can be learnt from others' experiences of the research in diverse regional communities.
- g. Demonstrate the value of *Talking Theatre* to business and donor communities to obtain financial investment to ensure its long-term implementation and community support.

World Theatre, Charters Towers



7.2 Recommendation Two

Local residents are more likely to attend the PAC as a result of relationship building which includes introduction to the PAC and ongoing two-way communication.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Provide the conditions for introduction to occur, showcase what the PAC has to offer, listen to the perspectives and needs and suggestions of the target market representatives, learn from their comments and implement change where necessary.
- b. Continue the relationship with the target market representatives by ensuring ongoing communications and incentives to foster long term association and to encourage new relationships with others in the target market.
- c. Utilise past *Talking Theatre* participants in Ambassador programs, marketing and promotion, and Friends of the Theatre. Notify them of changes made based on their input, offer them a free ticket if they bring at least three paying customers with them to the theatre, include them in future research.
- d. Actively seek sponsorship and be strategic about which organisations/businesses would best suit the profile of the product and the PAC.
- e. Offer the staff/families of sponsors discounted tickets and publicly welcome and thank them at the start of the show/s. Remind the sponsor that the success of their sponsorship relies on excellent coverage and attendance. It is in their best interest to actively encourage their staff to attend but it is also a great workplace relations opportunity.
- f. Regularly report to local, state and federal governments to inform them of progress. Indicate key areas that need financial investment and illustrate what has been done (or needs to be done) to obtain it. Outline strategies and outcomes and demonstrate initiative and need, to gain increased (and relevant) resources from government.

Ipswich Civic Hall



7.3 Recommendation Three

Non-theatregoers require information about product and the PAC as well as the usual advertising to build their expectations and motivate ticket purchases.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Provide the public with more information and insight into what upcoming performances are *about* and how they might be able to *relate to them*.
- b. Use recorded live action to give the public a sense of what to expect from the performance. Audio from the show (particularly music, singing voices, or funny pieces of dialogue) also produces an idea of what the performance will be like. Apart from using television advertising and radio to do this, also promote upcoming shows by playing audio or visual recordings in the box office and throughout the PAC (if possible).
- c. Raise new audiences' awareness of well-respected, established, popular, artforms/works that are likely to be presented at the PACs. Provide essential detail, for example: *Nutcracker* is suitable for children/families, even though it is a ballet it is humorous, its storyline is..., a famous piece of music from the ballet that you would likely have heard somewhere sounds like this...
- d. Actively highlight the presence of humour (and the style of humour) in upcoming performances.
- e. Provide clues about upcoming events by linking them to pop cultural references or to life experiences.
- f. Include the price of tickets in all advertising. Promote prices as selling points because tickets are often less expensive than non-theatregoers had imagined.
- g. Spend more time informing the market of the product and of the regular ticket price than attempting to sell or secure discounted tickets.
- h. Actively promote free e/mail subscription and updates.
- i. Provide plenty of lead time for promotion of upcoming events (minimum 6 weeks) and regularly remind the community of the events.
- j. Collectively operate as a strong association to ensure that touring companies provide adequate promotional materials in the contracted time the PACs allocate. Utilise the *Talking Theatre* research findings to demonstrate to promoters and touring companies that they need to be punctual and detailed when it comes to delivering promotional materials to the regions. Generic promotion is not always the most effective way to engage diverse regional communities.
- k. Non-theatregoers regularly take notice of film reviews and wish to read/hear reviews about upcoming live shows. Push for reviews in the local media (even if it is after the event) to educate the public about what is presented at the PACs. Access reviews from other locations about touring shows and place the reviews on local PAC websites for the public to view. Record vox pops of theatre patrons' reviews of the shows they see at the PACs and place these on PAC websites for the public to listen to.
- l. Invest time and expertise in an effective website. Make sure it is easy to access and is regularly updated. Provide links to other websites so that visitors can obtain further information about upcoming performances or performers. Actively promote the website in all PAC advertising and inform the public that the website has a lot of information, visuals and sound bytes to assist them in their purchasing decisions. Make sure the public can purchase

tickets online. Ensure there is clear opportunity for the public to be on an email list to receive PAC updates.

- m. Promote the magic of *live* performance – real people, real close in real time. A really real experience – unlike films or television.
- n. Reassure the community that all productions and touring companies are of the highest quality. Convince the public that they are the ‘real deal’.
- o. Actively promote the PACs and their social atmosphere (bars, cafes, dining, outdoor areas, range of patrons, and friendly staff) to inform non-theatre-goers about what theatre-going as an overall experience is like. Show people having fun at the theatre in promotional photographs and advertising. Include vox pops from patrons on a regularly updated website.

There should be as much promotion about the PACs as there is about upcoming product. The community needs to know about the experience of attendance as much as the product on offer. There is much to sell about the PACs that are currently not actively promoted (eg. atmosphere, family-friendly, cafes/bars, social, stylish, exciting).

Greater emphasis on PAC branding is required. Remind the public where the PAC is, what it stands for, what it has to offer, and why it is worth visiting. Many regional centres have growing populations or transient populations and so it is worth informing newcomers about their PAC (as well as reminding locals that the PAC is there for them to engage with).

- p. Inform the public that all are welcome at the PACs by showing a range of theatre patrons in publicity photographs and television advertising, by posting patron vox pops on the website and playing them on radio, by selling family ticket prices to all shows (that are suitable for children and young people), by holding open days, by being associated with a range of community events/fundraisers/sponsors, and by promoting the friendliness of the PAC and its patrons.

Use past *Talking Theatre* participants in marketing campaigns to speak as the ‘ordinary person’ and the ‘non-theatre-goer turned new audience member’ to convince others that the PACs are for all in the community.

- q. On occasion at staff meetings, time should be taken for all staff to consider activities they do not normally engage in. They should think about what they know about these activities, why they do not engage, who they know who does, where they can find out information about the activity, and who will likely engage in the activity with them? By considering activities that they do not engage in, they are asked to ‘step into the shoes’ of non-theatre-goers. How would staff seek to find out about other activities they know nothing about? What would need to happen to encourage them to engage in the activities? How can they apply this knowledge to entice new audiences to the PACs?

7.4 Recommendation Four

The economic benefits from *Talking Theatre* are increased ticket sales, access to new markets, efficient spending on marketing and promotion, informed programming choices, potential sponsorship and increased government funding.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Document repeat attendance and increased ticket sales from *Talking Theatre* participants and their guests.
- b. Invest in ongoing relations with *Talking Theatre* participants to encourage regular attendance, to further reach into the target market, and to gain feedback that evaluates PAC implementation of research recommendations.
- c. Develop a comparative analysis of costs of this method of audience development against other marketing and promotion activities.
- d. Analyse data on programming preferences at NARPACA meetings and align this with producer/promoter available content.
- e. Seek contact with government industry partners (AQ and Arts NT) in *Talking Theatre* on implications for funding and future collaboration to collectively act upon the results of the research.

7.5 Recommendation Five

Audience research and development is most effective when it is recognised as a whole-of-organisation responsibility.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Increase resources to allow audience development initiatives to occur and to continue over time.
- b. Invest in developing the knowledge and skills of staff and volunteers to foster audience development. Direct instruction and supervised practical application will generate greater levels of interest and confidence to undertake research in the future.
- c. Investigate past audience records to gain a clearer understanding of past/current patronage before launching into further audience research initiatives (that may replicate the same data).
- d. Actively utilise online box office ticketing databases and invest in further professional development to enable staff to effectively use the technology/systems already provided.
- e. Revise and re-evaluate any past audience research that has been undertaken by consultants, and act upon the recommendations should they still remain relevant.
- f. Continue to engage Heads of Departments in regular meetings to share knowledge to assist in selling performances to the public and retaining and growing audiences.
- g. Encourage General Managers to reflect on their training needs, costs and opportunities for skills development. Further discussion of this process at the NARPACA level will determine any barriers, as well as outline commitment and understanding of the benefits.

7.6 Recommendation Six

The collaborative approach across PACs in *Talking Theatre* has resulted in collective investment in research, shared information and benchmarking, and high levels of communication and problem solving.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Encourage ongoing information sharing and benchmarking as undertaken in *Talking Theatre*.
- b. Document benefits of a collaborative approach to problem solving and upload data on to the NARPACA/APACA website.
- c. Dedicate time during annual NARPACA meetings for professional development opportunities for staff to be trained in audience research and development techniques (including the methodology employed in *Talking Theatre*).
- d. NARPACA as a lobbying group could encourage audience development representatives from each PAC to converse regularly. This communication will help to inform the association of key issues, strategies, and outcomes to assist best practice programming and product sales across Queensland and the Northern Territory. Sharing the results and evaluations of audience development activities and research from each PAC increases NARPACA's understanding of the issue as it pertains to its membership. Such knowledge can inform policy and investment at local, state, and national government level.
- e. Increase resources for marketing staff to better enable the generation of comprehensive, engaging, and diverse promotional materials. To assist local staff, NARPACA could collectively ensure that high quality and timely marketing materials are provided to all PACs from touring companies and promoters.
- f. Make reviews (before and/or after) of the product available for the public to access – television, radio, newspaper, website. NARPACA could lobby media outlets to provide space for reviews and other promotional materials to inform local communities of product and reception of product.
- g. Support NARPACA to collectively address the issues derived from the research and to share the rewards that will be gained. Although the regions represented in NARPACA are diverse, the *Talking Theatre* research has shown that non-theatre-goers' barriers to attendance and their reactions to pricing, promotion and to the PACs are similar regardless of where they live.

Burdekin Theatre, Ayr



7.7 Recommendation Seven

An homogeneous group of regional community members mostly participated in *Talking Theatre*. This similarity in non-theatre-goer profile is a clear indicator of a specific segment of the public ripe for theatre attendance. It also offers a challenge to find more effective methods to engage a wider range of people in the audience development initiative.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Actively seek to engage and build further relationships with women who are aged 30-49 years, educated, and working in white collar professions or as stay-at-home mothers.

It may be that these women already appear to reflect current audiences at the PACs. Yet clearly, there are many in the community who fit this profile but are not attending the performing arts. They are likely to be most willing to engage in theatre-going.

- b. Consider making greater efforts to attract non-theatre-goers aged over 55 years to the PACs.

There were many people interested in participating in *Talking Theatre* who were aged over 55 years but could not be involved as the sample restrictions prevented this. However, it is evident that the early-retiree and retiree market contains many non-theatre-goers who are in the position to spend time and money on leisure, and who are now looking around for new entertainment options.

- c. Attempt to attract other non-theatre-goers to future *Talking Theatre* research projects who were not represented by the mostly homogeneous group in the current *Talking Theatre* project. Although some of the findings from *Talking Theatre* are likely to transfer to other non-theatre-going communities, their thoughts and feelings cannot be assumed. It is vital to begin relationships with these residents and to access their unique perspectives by using the *Talking Theatre* strategy.
- d. The current *Talking Theatre* project chiefly utilised free mainstream local press, ABC radio, and corporate email (and to a lesser degree, some local television and commercial radio).

Try other ways of promoting *Talking Theatre* to entice other sections of the community to participate.

- i. For example, to attract those aged 18-30 years, other forms of promotion will be required such as posters; flyers; articles and advertisements in street magazines; direct contact with universities, TAFEs, and key advocates within the market; youth-oriented networks and events; PAC website and others' websites; youth radio; and mobile telephone texting.
- e. Experiment running *Talking Theatre* with specific groups within the non-theatre-going sector. This way all participants in a particular round of research will be united by a common variable, such as age, cultural background, workplace, length of time lived in the area, and so on. Knowing that they will be attending performances and sharing their experiences of them with others that they can relate to may make them more willing to participate.
- f. Alter the types of performances chosen to include in future *Talking Theatre* research to entice a wider range of non-theatre-goers to participate.

7.8 Recommendation Eight

Positive steps can be taken to increase the range of non-theatre-goers attracted to future *Talking Theatre* research in the regions, and to retain the participants throughout the study period.

Suggested Strategies

- a. Greater investment is required to publicise the research and to gain widespread media coverage.
- b. Longer lead time between promotion of *Talking Theatre* and its commencement is needed.
- c. A wider range of promotional tools could be applied to reach into sought-after markets such as young people, Indigenous, multicultural, and tourists.
- d. A clear public statement is needed that explains that members of the community who have never (or rarely) *paid* to see a *professional* performance at their local PAC can participate in *Talking Theatre*. This will enable people, who have attended school or community events at their PAC, to participate in the research.
- e. Invitations to participate should be issued to local government staff/representatives, esteemed community leaders/celebrities, and sponsors' staff.
- f. Include a larger number of participants at the start of the research which will allow for some absences.
- g. Strongly stress in promotion for *Talking Theatre* participation the need for participants to attend all three performances.
- h. Choose three performances that are only one month apart.
- i. Consistently remind participants of upcoming performances that they are to attend.
- j. Do not schedule midweek matinee performances for participants to attend.

Darwin Entertainment Centre



8. Conclusion

The *Talking Theatre* project (2004-2006) was successful because it involved positive collaboration between government, the regional performing arts sector, a tertiary institution, and the general public. All parties were genuine in their desire to work collectively and to learn more from each other.

At the heart of the *Talking Theatre* strategy is consultation, relationship building, knowledge transfer, and trust. These elements not only assist new audience growth, but also create the conditions for stronger collaboration within the industry and across all tiers of government.

The research has found that many non-theatre-goers in regional areas are potential new audiences. They are interested in attending live performances and when introduced to the activity they enjoy the experience. However, non-theatre-goers are often unsure of what to expect from theatre-going and do not have respected peers to encourage them to attend. *Talking Theatre* provides the opportunity to introduce people to their local PAC, to make them feel valued and welcome, and to assist them to learn about theatre-going through direct experience, self-reflection and peer review.

In turn, *Talking Theatre* provides the chance for PACs to showcase their organisations and product to potential new audiences, to learn from their unique perspectives, and to foster ongoing relationships with them and their social networks. The *Talking Theatre* project also informs government of the needs of the regional performing arts sector and of non-theatre-goers living in regional areas to guide their policies and investments to create greater participation in the arts.

The consistency of results across the PACs in *Talking Theatre* indicates that the perspectives, needs and barriers for the participating non-theatre-goers are likely to resonate within other segments of the community. It is now time to act on the findings of the *Talking Theatre* research, to document and evaluate the actions taken, and to share the outcomes with each other as part of an ongoing commitment to collaboration.

“Taking part in this study has given me a better understanding of the types of theatre I truly enjoy. I had fun and appreciated the opportunity to be involved.”
(*Talking Theatre* participant)

APPENDIX A – ABOUT YOU QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire 1: About You

Please complete the following questionnaire to provide us with information about you, your leisure activities, your expected preferences for live performance, your expectations of the Empire Theatre, and your expectations of *Talking Theatre*. Your responses to this questionnaire will remain confidential.

1. Name: _____
2. Sex: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Marital Status: _____
5. Nationality: _____
6. Highest education level attained: _____
7. Occupation: _____
8. How long have you resided in Toowoomba?: _____

9. Which economic group do you belong to?
(please tick the appropriate answer)

- under \$10 000 (per annum)
- \$10-\$20 000
- \$20-35 000
- \$35-50 000
- \$50 000-\$60 000
- \$60 000-\$75 000
- over \$75 000 (per annum)

10. Which activities to you regularly attend? (please tick one or more) Please indicate how often you would engage in your chosen activities.

- Sporting events ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Church ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Family gatherings ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Dining out ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Club meeting ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Movies ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- School related activities ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Concerts ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Exhibitions ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Dances ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Arts and Crafts Markets ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Pubs/Night clubs ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly
- Others: _____
 ___ weekly ___ fortnightly ___ monthly ___ half yearly

11. What other leisure activities do you regularly engage in? (please tick one or more) Please indicate how often you would engage in your chosen activities.

- Gardening ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Internet or playstation ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Photography ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Exercise ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Talking on the phone ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Spending time with friends ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Reading ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Watching TV ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Craft ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Playing with children or pets ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly
- Others: _____
 ___daily___ weekly___ fortnightly ___monthly

12. What sorts of live performances do you think you might prefer? (please circle one or more)

Theatre	Music	Dance	Other
Drama	Popular/Rock	Ballet	Stand-up comedy
Comedy	Classical	Tap	Puppetry
Shakespeare	Big band/Orchestra	Ballroom	Performance Poetry
Community	Opera	Modern/Contemporary	Multimedia
Children's	Country	Folk	Storytelling
Australian	Musicals	Breakdance	Circus
Physical	Choral	Other:	Eisteddfod
Other:	Other:		Other:

13. Why would you consider attending a live performance? (please circle one or more)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good night out • Social Gathering • Ticket Price • Chance to 'dress up' • Fun entertainment • Famous artists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great atmosphere • Quality Show • Special Event • Know somebody in the show • Cultural experience • Other: |
|---|---|

14. Have you attended any live performances in the last five years? Y N

a) If yes, what shows did you see? _____

b) Where were these performances presented? _____

15. If you see a live performance, do you usually attend: (please tick)

___ alone ___ with a partner ___ with family ___ with friends ___ with social/ workclub

16. What prevents you from attending the Empire Theatre? (please circle one or more)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ticket Prices • Work commitments • Lack of interest • Children • No one to go with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of shows • Previous experiences dissatisfying • Difficulties when booking tickets • Venue facilities (including carpark) • Other: |
|--|---|

Talking Theatre: An audience development programme for regional Qld and NT (2004-2006)

17. Do you know any other person who has attended the Empire Theatre? Y N
18. Have you read any reviews or heard any comments about performances at the Empire Theatre? Y N
- a) If so, did these interest you? Y N
- b) Did this encourage you to consider attending the Empire Theatre? Y N
19. Have you noticed advertisements for shows at the Empire Theatre? Y N
- a) If so, where did you notice the advertisements?
- _____
- _____
20. Do you have any expectations of what the Empire Theatre will be like? Y N
- (For eg., formal/informal, large/small, busy/quiet, etc)
- a) If so, what are your expectations?
- _____
21. Do you have any expectations of what the theatre (stage, foyer, seating etc) will be like? Y N
- a) If so, what are your expectations?
- _____
22. Do you have any expectations of what the performances will be like? Y N
- a) If so, what are your expectations?
- _____
23. What made you decide to take part in this study? (please circle one or more)
- Free tickets
 - Empire Theatre
 - Meet new people
 - Have a good night out
 - Discuss my views
 - Something to do/something different
 - Sounded interesting
 - Exposure to shows I would not normally attend
 - Others: _____

24. What are your expectations of your role in this study?

25. What do you hope to gain from this experience? (performances/discussions)

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please bring it with you on the night of the first show we see together. Kind regards, Rebecca Scollen.

APPENDIX B – TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire 2: Tonight's Performance

Please complete this questionnaire and hand it to the facilitator of tonight's focus group discussion. This questionnaire seeks to find out your immediate reactions to tonight's performance. The information you provide will be utilised in the final report to the theatre. Your responses will remain confidential.

Your Name: _____
Show: _____

1. Did you have any expectations of what the performance would be like tonight?

Y N If so, what were they?

2. What gave you these expectations? (please circle)

- Newspaper reviews
- Advertising
- Location of theatre
- Prior knowledge (play, performers, etc)
- Seating/stage relationship
- Comments from people you know
- Theatre building/foyer
- Other:

3. Did you notice any advertising about tonight's performance?

Y N

a) If yes, what kinds of advertising did you notice?

b) Did the advertising make the performance seem appealing to you?

Y N

4. Please indicate on the scale below your level of enjoyment of the performance just seen.
(1 - lowest to 10 - highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Which aspects of the performance best helped you to enjoy the show? (please circle)

- Sound/Music
- Sets
- Dancing
- Acting
- Lighting
- Dialogue
- Costume/Makeup
- Direction
- Humour
- Performers
- Story
- Other:

5. Please indicate on the scale below your level of understanding of the performance just seen.
(1 - lowest to 10 - highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Which aspects of the performance best helped you to understand the show?
(please circle)

- Sound/Music
- Sets
- Dancing
- Acting
- Lighting
- Dialogue
- Costume/Makeup
- Direction
- Humour
- Performers
- Story
- Other:

7. Was there an underlying message in this performance?

Y N

a) If yes, what was it?

8. Could you relate to anything or to anyone in this show?

Y N

a) If yes, what or who was it?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Kind regards, Dr Rebecca Scollen.

APPENDIX C - FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you once again for taking part in *Talking Theatre*. We really enjoyed meeting you and are grateful for the fantastic feedback you provided at the post performance sessions. We are asking for your feedback one more time as we are keen to find out what you thought about the programme, the Logan Entertainment Centre, and your attitudes to theatregoing in the future. **Please complete this questionnaire and return it to me by 2nd December.** Please send the questionnaire to Dr Rebecca Scollen, c/o Performance Studies, QUT, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 4059 or you can email it back to me at r.scollen@qut.edu.au

Your Name: _____

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Did you enjoy taking part in the <i>Talking Theatre</i> programme? | Y | N |
| 2. Were there any aspects of the programme you did not enjoy?
If so, what were they? | Y | N |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3. Would you encourage others to take part in future <i>Talking Theatre</i> programmes? | Y | N |
| 4. Would you be more likely to attend live performances if you knew you could meet other people afterwards and discuss them? | Y | N |
| 5. What was it about the group discussions that you liked? (please circle) | | |
| Getting to know other people | Listening to other ideas | Something different to do |
| Learning about theatre | Better value for money (if you were paying) | Giving your opinions |
| Knowing your thoughts and feelings are valued by
the
researcher and the theatre venue | Thinking more about the performance
Other: | |
| 6. Was there anything you did not like about the group discussions?
(If yes, please circle) | | |
| Too long | Didn't speak as much as I would have
liked to | Didn't like people in the
group |
| Too short | Made to speak when I didn't want to | Too much analysis of the
performance |
| Not enough analysis of the
performance | Didn't feel comfortable speaking in
front of strangers | Other: |
| 7. Did you find the questionnaire (<i>Tonight's Performance</i>) helped you prepare for the group discussions? [This was the questionnaire you filled in straight after you saw the show and before you spoke together as a group] | Y | N |
| 8. Do you feel you had a greater understanding of the shows after taking part in the group discussions? | Y | N |
| 9. Since taking part in the <i>Talking Theatre</i> programme have you become more aware of Logan Entertainment Centre advertising and/or theatre reviews? | Y | N |
| 10. Do you think this theatre provides the kinds of shows you would like to see? | Y | N |
| 11. Have you attended any productions at the Logan Entertainment Centre this year (not counting the three we saw in the <i>Talking Theatre</i> programme)? | Y | N |
| a) If yes, what did you see and who did you attend with? (if anyone) | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 12. Have you encouraged others to attend the Logan Entertainment Centre since taking part in the study? | Y | N |
| 13. Have your attitudes about the Logan Entertainment Centre changed since taking part in the <i>Talking Theatre</i> programme? | Y | N |
| a) If yes, what is your attitude now? | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| b) If no, why is your attitude the same? (please explain in relation to your experience at the theatre) | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 14. Have you attended live performances at any other venues this year? | Y | N |

a) If yes, What did you see? _____

b) Where did you see it? _____

c) Who did you attend with? _____

15. Are you more interested in live performances now you have taken part in this programme? Y N

a) If yes, are there particular styles of performance you are most interested in? Y N

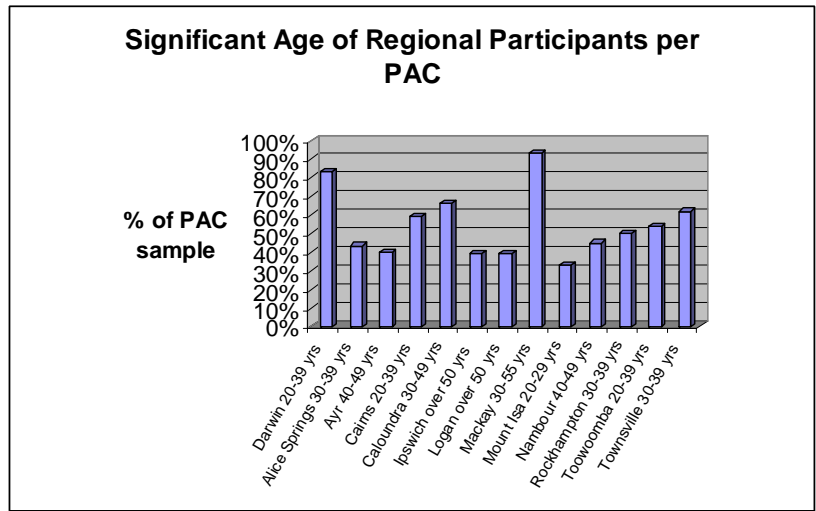
b) If yes, what sorts of shows would you like to see? _____

c) If you are not interested in live performances now, please explain why this is so? _____

Any further comments you would like to make? _____

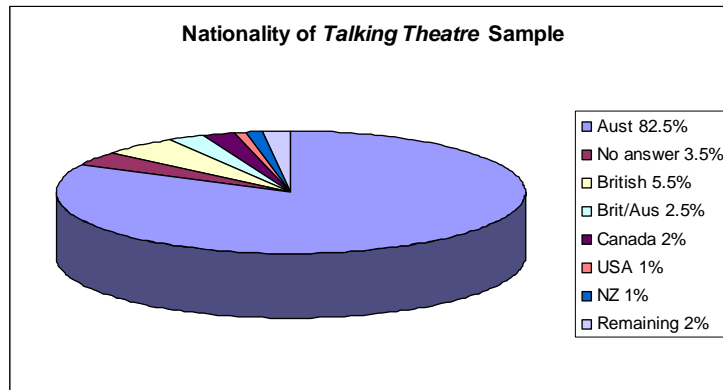
Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Kind regards, Rebecca Scollen.

APPENDIX D – Significant Age Representation in PACs



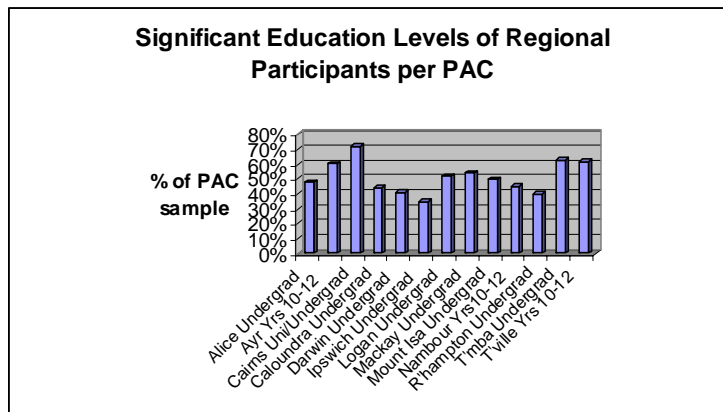
This graph illustrates which age grouping was most represented by participants in each of the PACs.

APPENDIX E – Nationality of *Talking Theatre* Participants



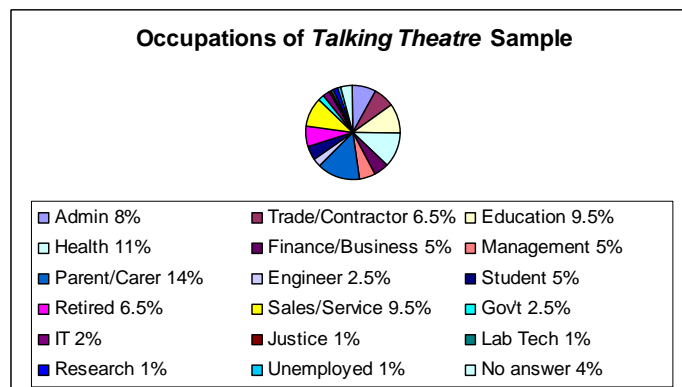
Remaining: Finland, Tonga, South Africa, India, Ireland, Germany, China/Malaysia, Greece/Aust, Malta/Aust, Croatia/Aust, Asia/Aust.

APPENDIX F – Significant Qualifications Representation in PACs



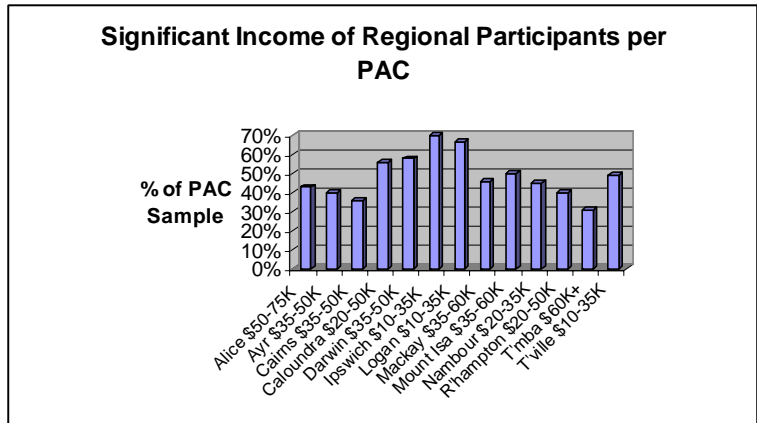
This graph illustrates which educational qualification was most represented by the participants in each of the PACs.

APPENDIX G – *Talking Theatre* Participant Occupations Breakdown



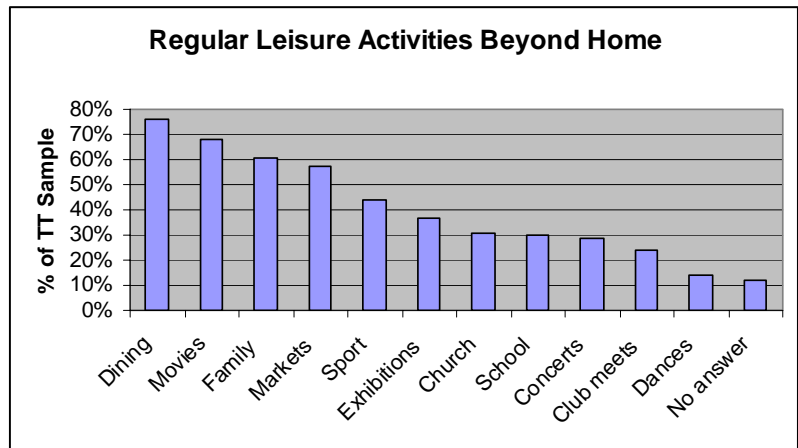
This graph illustrates the percentage of participants in the *Talking Theatre* project who were employed in the above sectors.

APPENDIX H – Significant Annual Income Representation in PACs



This graph illustrates which annual incomes were most represented by participants in each of the PACs.

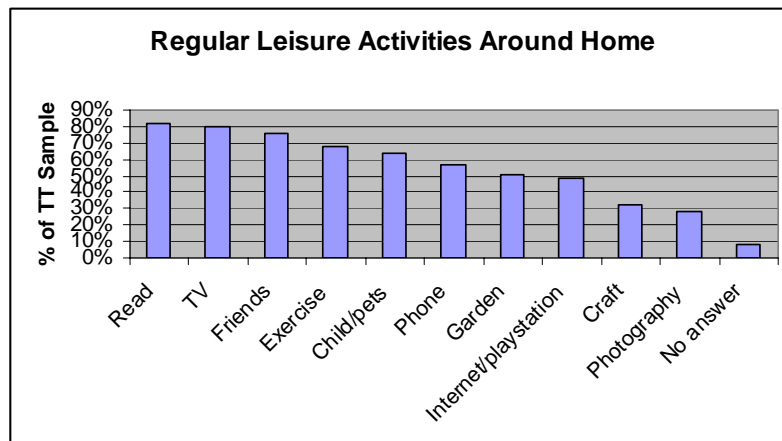
APPENDIX I – Regular Leisure Activities Beyond the Home



Participants who earned over \$60 000 per year or under \$10 000 per year were more likely to participate in most of the leisure activities (above) than those earning other annual incomes. However, those who earned between \$35-50 000 per year were more likely than other income earners to attend school-related activities, live music concerts and the movies.

Tertiary educated participants (or those currently at uni) were more likely to participate in most of the leisure activities (above) than others who did not hold tertiary qualifications. Those who held qualifications derived from apprenticeships or TAFE were most likely to attend Arts and Crafts Markets over any other leisure activity beyond the home. Those who left school before Year 12 were highly represented at family gatherings and restaurants.

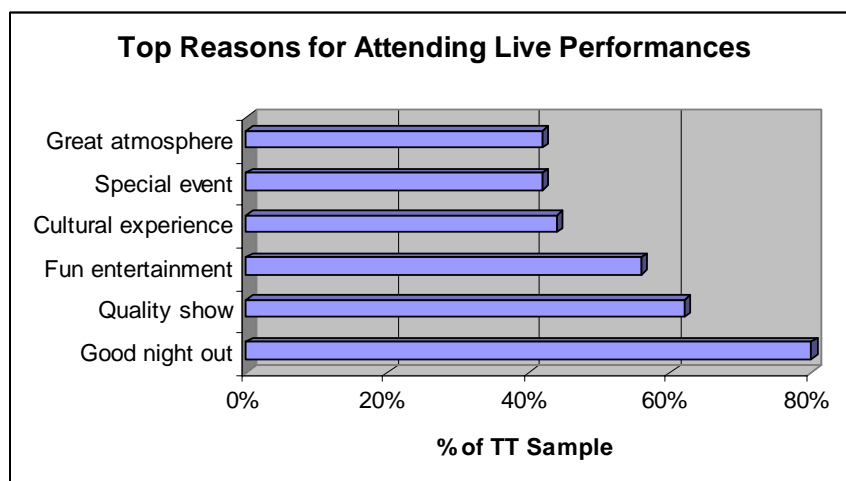
APPENDIX J – Regular Leisure Activities Around the Home



Participants who earned over \$60 000 per year or under \$10 000 per year were more likely to participate in most of the leisure activities (above) than those earning other annual incomes. However, those who earned between \$35-50 000 per year were more likely than other income earners to watch television.

Tertiary educated participants (or those currently at uni) were more likely to participate in most of the leisure activities (above) than others who did not hold tertiary qualifications. However, those who left school before Yr 10 were more likely to regularly garden for leisure than any other. Yet, there was a high percentage of participants from each educational category represented for most activities. Those with qualifications derived from TAFE or apprenticeships were consistently less represented for most activities.

APPENDIX K – Aspects of Live Performance Attractive to Participants



- Of those who stated they sought fun entertainment: there was a higher representation of women, 20-29 year olds, and participants from Logan and Ipswich.
- Of those who stated they sought a quality show: there was a higher representation of tertiary-educated women.
- Of those who stated they sought a cultural experience: there was a higher representation of participants aged over 40 years, educated past Year 12, and earning below \$10 000/yr or over \$60 000/yr.

- Ayr primarily sought quality shows with much less emphasis on cultural experiences and fun entertainment.
- Rockhampton primarily sought quality shows and cultural experiences
- Townsville primarily sought fun entertainment and quality shows

APPENDIX L - PAC Staff Workshop Attendance

2004

Caloundra: GM + 7 marketing/box office staff/volunteers at 3 hour interactive training workshop
 Alice Springs: Marketing Manager + 2 marketing/box office staff + 2 outside venue arts reps at 3 hour interactive workshop
 Darwin: GM + Marketing Manager + Box office Manager + 1 Arts NT rep + 2 outside venue arts reps at 3 hour interactive workshop
 Mount Isa: GM + 1 box office staff at 2 hour workshop (all interactive activities)
 Townsville: 2 box office staff at 2 hour workshop (reduced interactive activities)
 Nambour: GM + Marketing Manager at 1.5 hour seminar (no interactive activities)

2005

Toowoomba: 2 marketing staff at 2 hour workshop (reduced interactive activities)
 Cairns: GM + Marketing Manager + Technical Manager + Box office Manager + FOH Manager at 2 hour workshop (reduced interactive activities)
 Rockhampton: Marketing Manager + 1 events management staff at 2 hour workshop (reduced interactive activities)
 Logan: GM + Technical Manager + Box office Manager + 2 box office staff at 1 hour seminar (no interactive activities)
 Ayr: GM at 1 hour seminar (no interactive activities)
 Mackay: GM + 1 box office staff at 1 hour seminar (no interactive activities)
 Ipswich: GM + 2 FOH/box office staff at 1 hour seminar (no interactive activities)

APPENDIX M – PAC Staff *Evaluation of Workshop* Questionnaire

Industry Feedback

Name: _____

Venue: _____

(Please circle the appropriate responses)

Did you find this training session helped you to understand how the <i>Talking Theatre</i> strategy works?	Yes	No
Did the session provide the information you need to apply the <i>Talking Theatre</i> strategy yourself?	Yes	No
Do you feel you have enough information now to enable you to train other staff or volunteers to apply the <i>Talking Theatre</i> strategy at your venue?	Yes	No
Did you enjoy the training methods employed in this session?	Yes	No
Did you find the combination of seminar, workshop, video, and discussion assisted you to learn?	Yes	No
Did you find the information in this session relevant to you and your venue?	Yes	No

Talking Theatre: An audience development programme for regional Qld and NT (2004-2006)

Were you satisfied with Rebecca Scollen's ability to train? Yes No

Would you encourage other industry members (at other venues or theatre companies) to take part in a *Talking Theatre* training session? Yes No

Do you have any comments you would like to make about the training session?
If yes, please provide them here:

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Kind regards, Rebecca Scollen

APPENDIX N – PAC Staff Observation and/or Application of Research

2004

Caloundra: 1 box office staff observed 1 focus group session + ADMIN
Alice Springs: 1 marketing staff ran FGs on each occasion + ADMIN
Darwin: Marketing Manager ran FGs on each occasion + ADMIN
Mount Isa: GM ran final FG, 1 box office staff - ADMIN
Townsville: 1 box office staff observed 2 FG sessions + ADMIN, + 1 other box office staff observed 1 FG
Nambour: 1 marketing staff - ADMIN

2005

Toowoomba: 1 staff (acting Marketing Manager) ran FGs on each occasion + ADMIN
Cairns: GM observed 1 FG + Marketing Manager observed 1 FG, 1 marketing staff – ADMIN
Rockhampton: Marketing Manager observed 2 FGs and ran final FG + ADMIN
Logan: GM ran 2 FGs + observed 1 FG, 1 FOH staff observed 1 FG, 1 staff – ADMIN
Ayr: 1 box office staff - ADMIN
Mackay: 1 box office staff observed all FGs + ADMIN
Ipswich: GM ran 1 FG + 1 box office staff - ADMIN

*ADMIN applies to participant registrations, mailouts and reminder notices, meeting the participants, handing out tickets to participants (and generally assisting the researcher in an administrative capacity).