



MEDIA RELEASE
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STRONG GROWTH IN 2019 SETS OPERA QUEENSLAND ON FIRM FOUNDATION TO ENDURE COVID-19 CHALLENGES

A strong foundation of work in 2019 has placed **Opera Queensland** in a strong position to meet the demanding economic and social conditions predicted to follow the COVID-19 pandemic.

Artistic Director & CEO **Patrick Nolan** said Opera Queensland's success in 2019 was built upon a creative program that enabled new possibilities and much needed change.

"Everything we do at Opera Queensland celebrates and interrogates the extraordinary energy that creates opera," Mr Nolan said.

"Last year we pushed the boundaries of performance in a variety of ways, typified by *Project AR-ia*, a ground-breaking partnership with Google's Creative Lab to develop a prototype app using Augmented Reality to present opera in peoples' homes.

"We also explored the future of the art form at the inaugural New Opera Workshop – NOW 2019, which brought together opera changemakers, precipitating rigorous sector-wide discussion about the need for change in the art form.

"In our productions and in our relationships with audiences across the state and artists across the world, in the works we commission and the way we work together as an organisation, we are always seeking to deepen our understanding and facilitate the growth of the art form.

"Opera is a deeply collaborative art form, creating a space where people with many different skills must listen carefully as they work together. In the wake of this pandemic, this sense of shared responsibility and awareness of what is possible when we work together, will be something to nurture and celebrate."

The state opera company enjoyed one of the most exciting periods of growth in its 38-year history, reporting an operating surplus of \$273,331 in its 2019 Annual Report, published on 30 April, 2020.

Opera Queensland's Executive Director **Sandra Willis** attributed the company's strong performance to a combination of inspiring programming, technological innovation, new collaborations and partnerships and a continued commitment to making opera an integral part of Queensland life.

"Opera Queensland's annual report is being released at an incredibly difficult time when a way of life we took for granted — certainly as it applies to cultural and artistic activity — has changed so dramatically," Ms Willis said.

"Yet, out of the trauma and tragedy of this crisis, phenomenal creativity and ingenuity is emerging.



“We see people increasingly turning to the arts, to music and song, to connect and retain a sense of belonging and wellbeing, all the while reminding us of opera’s ability to communicate across borders and reveal our shared humanity.

“There’s no doubt the arts industry will face challenges in 2020 and beyond but Opera Queensland will rise to meet them, spurred on by a year of great success and learning, built upon a program that enabled new possibilities and much-needed change.”

Other 2019 highlights included:

- 254,524 audience reach
- 265 artists and arts workers employed
- 183 total events
- 16 main stage performances
- 13,994 main stage audience

Its main stage season brought to the stage a powerhouse production of *Tosca*, a highly physical adaptation of *Orpheus & Eurydice*, the English-language opera *A Flowering Tree*, and an explosive outdoor performance of Verdi’s *Requiem*.

Opera Queensland’s commitment to introducing new audiences to the diversity and power of opera took the company to 67 per cent of Queensland’s state electorates, performing in 17 regional centres and reaching 18,744 people in regional and remote areas.

It facilitated 77 learning and education performances and workshops, reaching 7606 people and hosted 38 community engagement events for 15,512 people.

View Opera Queensland’s 2019 Annual Report [online](#).

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