



CHANCE ENCOUNTER IN A TAXI HELPS BRING FRINGE FESTIVAL TO DUBBO

Phillip Aughey, writer, actor and producer of Anvil Creek Theatre, a touring theatre company, and founder of the Newcastle Fringe was driving a taxi when by chance, he met Deputy Mayor of the Dubbo Region, Stephen Lawrence. Phillip had been harbouring a desire to bring Fringe festivals to regional areas to give regional artists a chance to perform and give regional audiences something different. He described his idea to Councillor Lawrence, which then set the ball in motion.

“I gave someone a lift in Singleton, and being a cabbie I like talking politics, so it came up in conversation that he was the deputy mayor of the Dubbo region. I told Councillor Lawrence that I was keen to bring the Fringe Festival to Dubbo, because I believe Dubbo people like to be entertained, and having satellite shows has always appealed to me,” said Phillip.

Councillor Lawrence put Phillip in touch with Dubbo Regional Council’s (DRC’s) Regional Events Team, who told Phillip about the funding

opportunities available for events in the Dubbo Region, and in particular, the Event Assistance Program. Phillip applied for funding, and was successful in receiving \$7,500 under the Community Events Fund. DRC was also able to help by facilitating meetings and putting Phillip in contact with local venues and the arts community.

“Fringe Festival brings a different form of entertainment, in that there is no censorship and the artist can perform what they like. When you see a show at the theatre, it’s usually choreographed to suit a certain audience; however, with Fringe, it’s more like art. It’s art for art’s sake and the artist can do what they like,” said Phillip.

With the \$7,500 from DRC behind the Dubbo Fringe Festival, it will bring significant cultural benefits to the region, supporting the development and aspirational needs of local artists. While there are some Newcastle Fringe Festival performers coming to Dubbo for the satellite show, more than 30% of the performers are locals.

“What I really like about organising this Fringe Festival is that it gives local people a professional platform to perform. We’re giving a young performer a chance to go out onto a professional stage. It could be a stepping stone for further career opportunities, so not only are they learning their craft, but it’s also teaching them how to market and produce their show. It’s a wonderful learning curve,” he said.

Phillip says Dubbo should be prepared for some out-of-the-box performances that push the boundaries. “Some of these shows might be a little bit out there, but I say ‘give it a go’ because this is what Fringe is about. If you give it a go, you will be entertained.”

Acting Mayor of the Dubbo Region, Councillor Stephen Lawrence said he's glad his chance encounter with Phillip in a taxi has turned a man's dream into reality, while helping aspiring, up-and-coming artists find a platform for their craft.

“Bringing the Newcastle Fringe Festival to Dubbo is a great step in the right direction for cultural and artistic diversity in our region.

Economically, it brings people to the region and supports local businesses, like 123Tix which is the chosen booking agency for Fringe. It also enhances the Dubbo Region's reputation as a cultural hub. I look forward to seeing this show open up more cultural opportunities,” said Councillor Lawrence.

The Dubbo Fringe Festival runs from Thursday 6 May – Sunday 9 May across various venues. Tickets can be purchased via 123Tix.com.au.

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