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MEDIA RELEASE

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The healing power of music: Queensland Music Festival stages mass community production uniting hundreds of locals from the Isaac region

Queensland Music Festival (QMF) will celebrate the talent, diversity and resilience of Central Queensland's agricultural and coal mining Isaac region by uniting hundreds of local community members to star in a world premiere musical spectacular on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 July 2017 in Moranbah.

In the most significant cultural event to be staged in the region, *The Power Within* will reflect on the realities and resources of pop-up mining towns – boom and bust cycles, the vagaries of weather, and subsequent economic and social challenges – and the sheer power and beauty of a united community.

The massive outdoor show will star more than 250 locals including schools, town choirs, instrumentalists, featured vocalists, dance groups and horse riders, all set against an inventive industrial backdrop. *The Power Within* tells the story of discovering an abundant supply of music under the ground, and a town being built to mine the natural resource. A historic flood threatens to destroy everything and the citizens must come together again to recapture their spirit, and reveal the true meaning of cooperation and kinship.

The production is the result of an 18-month-long community engagement project in which QMF, working in close partnership with Isaac Regional Council (IRC), has embedded its team in six of the towns across the Isaac region: Moranbah, Clermont, Dysart, Middlemount, Glenden and Nebo. QMF's creative team has been working with schools and community groups since October 2016 to mine the local creative forces, increase skills to create a show that reflects the stories of the region.

The Power Within follows the huge success of QMF's *Under the Sky* in 2015, an epic project that united 215 cultures and locals from the multicultural city of Logan in South East Queensland onstage.

The award-winning creative team includes Writer and Director David Burton, Creative Producer Marguerite Pepper, Musical Director Stephen Russell, Choir Director Emma Dean, Choreographer and Assistant Director Neridah Waters, Production Designer Josh McIntosh and Lighting Designer Ben Shaw.

QMF Artistic Director Katie Noonan said *The Power Within* demonstrates first-hand the healing power of music.

"*The Power Within* offers the wonderful communities of the Isaac region a chance to observe their own resilience, reflect on the importance of family and their hopes for the future through self empowerment, and to forge new friendships and partnerships across the region," Ms Noonan said.

“At the heart of this project is the youth of the Isaac region and giving them the opportunity to unite and shine. A huge focus is to promote wellbeing by helping young people develop skills, build confidence, and create a better connection to self, peers and the place they call home. The potential outcomes and benefits of this project are inestimable.

“There is an incredible amount of talent waiting to be seen and heard in the Isaac region. In fact, we decided early on in the project to dedicate more resources towards building on the strengths of the community rather than bringing in a headline artist.

“The event addresses important social and economic themes such as mental health, agricultural heartache and the complicated nature of mining, which we cannot turn a blind eye to, but it also highlights innumerable reasons to be hopeful and to celebrate. Taking centre stage are genuine, real and talented Queenslanders who have amazing stories to tell.”

Premier and Minister for the Arts Anastacia Palaszczuk said the Queensland Government was proud to support the Queensland Music Festival and its *The Power Within* project, which uses music and performance to strengthen social cohesion and celebrate local identity.

“*The Power Within* will be a celebration of Central Queensland and an opportunity for locals to tell their own stories in a large-scale outdoor spectacular,” Ms Palaszczuk said.

“The project will inspire many young people in our regions and will have a long-lasting impact for future generations. Congratulations to all those involved.

“I applaud QMF’s vision to create events such as *The Power Within* in such a wide geographical expanse, while at the same time engaging communities on a vast scale and leaving a legacy for future generations.”

QMF has a long history in Moranbah and with IRC, having worked in the region since 2005. The festival’s unique and highly successful engagement model develops extraordinary community events on a scale without parallel in Australia. In collaboration with councils, QMF engages deeply with communities over time, igniting artistic potential and leaving a lasting legacy.

Isaac Regional Council Mayor Anne Baker said Isaac is thrilled to host this spectacular, free community event showcasing a cast of more than 250 talented locals and supported by well-known music industry professionals.

“QMF is about transforming lives and communities through music and this year the event will tell a story that is unique to Isaac,” Ms Baker said.

The Power Within is presented by Queensland Music Festival, Isaac Regional Council and the Queensland Government through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and has been supported by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, Australia Council for the Arts, QUT Creative Industries, BHP Billiton, Anglo American, Moranbah Community Workers Club, Pembroke Resources, Glencore and ABC Tropical North.

For more information visit qmf.org.au.

EVENT DETAILS

EVENT: The Power Within

DATE: Friday 28 and Saturday 29 July 2017

TIME: 6.30pm

VENUE: Ted Rolfe Oval, Moranbah

TICKETS: Free

ENDS

Queensland Music Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, part of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

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