

Embargoed 9th November

Queensland Ballet Launches Van Norton Li Community Health Institute

Queensland Ballet has today launched the **Van Norton Li Community Health Institute** which is set to strengthen and sustain the company's commitment to health and wellbeing through dance and enable ongoing positive outcomes for years to come.

The Institute has been made possible thanks to the generous donation from Kay Van Norton AO and \$750,000 in funding from the State Government to deliver several programs including clinically designed dance rehabilitation, mobility, and strength classes for key groups throughout the state.

Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women, Shannon Fentiman shared with pride the support that Queensland Health has offered to enable innovative and research-driven healthcare to all Queenslanders.

"Its partnership with Queensland Ballet, we will support the delivery of dance and rehabilitation programs that offer a range of health benefits, including improved strength, mobility, and balance, as well as opportunities for social connection", she said.

"Dance is an evidence-based intervention for a range of health conditions, and it is imperative that these programs are accessible."

The establishment of the Institute was also supported by visionary donor, Kay Van Norton Poche AO, whose generous donation has formed part of our QB Forever Fund.

Mrs Van Norton Poche firmly believes in the value of the health programs being delivered by Queensland Ballet and was happy to offer her financial support to ensure sustainability for years to come.

"My father had a spirit of generosity that equalled none. So, I, with my siblings, were raised to believe in humanitarian causes, to do what we could and always put others needs ahead of our own," she said.

"Greg, my husband, took me along on this magical ride because it was all his hard work, it's his achievement, it's his business acumen that gave us the wealth that we have and enjoy today and give us the ability to give. Most of our projects have been in the medical field.

"We have to foster kindness, humanitarianism. We have to live it and prove that it works. Li and I sat and talked for a while and his dreams and wishes for legacy are exactly like ours.

"What we've done and what we are hoping to achieve with the help and with the support of those who can and should and will, is to leave a legacy of absolute kindness, understanding," she concluded.

The naming of the new Institute recognises this generous donation, whilst also acknowledging outgoing Artistic Director, Li Cunxin's significant contribution to the community.

Speaking at the launch, Li Cunxin AO said he was humbled by the honour.

"Dance has changed my life in so many positive ways. I am so pleased that this funding will help us to improve our community's health and wellbeing, using dance as a tool."

“I applaud Queensland Government and Queensland Health, for their innovation and vision to support our Dance Health programs, as part of the Van Norton Li Community Health Institute. We will reach people in metropolitan, remote and regional areas, to assist their physical, mental and social health through the joy of dance and music.”

“Dance brings a range of health and wellbeing benefits, in a proactive and enjoyable way – you just get immersed in it! Everyone, of all ages and abilities, can participate. We can’t wait to expand our programs to impact more peoples’ lives across Queensland.”

Queensland Ballet (QB) has been actively engaging with our community since its founding in 1960, as part of the three strategic pillars include *Artistic* endeavours, *Academy* pathways and commitment to **Health and Community**.

Current community programs include community dance classes, school education programs and Dance Health classes including **Dance for Parkinson’s**, **Ballet for Brain Injury**, **Dance Moves** (online classes across Queensland, in partnership with Arthritis Queensland), **Ballet for Seniors** and **Jazz for Seniors**.

QB’s goal is to sustain and expand its Dance Health programs, to magnify the impact possible for participants’ physical and mental health, across socioeconomic, age and geographic boundaries and all abilities.

Over time, it is envisaged that the Van Norton Li Community Health Institute will reach over **58,000 people** every year, and pave new ways to address society’s health and wellness needs.

Future planned expansion of the QB Van Norton Li Community Health Institute will include:

- Continuation of the Dance Moves program (in partnership with Arthritis Queensland)
- Dance Rehab – in-hospital modified dance classes, designed to assist physical rehabilitation and wellbeing
- Ballet Serene – aged-care based dance programs, catering for varied abilities and mobilities, with a focus on joy and connection
- Dance Health Regional – expanding QB Dance Health offerings across regional and remote communities
- Dance Health Research – growing partnerships with research bodies to expand the evidence base for dance-led positive health outcomes
- Ballet for Veterans – a proposed program for veterans to use ballet/dance to assist mental health and trauma therapy

Dance Health is an area of significant growth and research interest currently worldwide, and QB is leading the way in Australia to develop this innovative pathway for change.

Resources

Images available.

Video link below.

 [Community Health Institute_Media Video.mp4](#)

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