

# QUEENSLAND THEATRE

## Queensland Theatre's new play asks the question: does love have a bottom line?

Queensland Theatre will put a twist on one of today's most common phrases, questioning what the real ***Cost of Living*** is for those living with disability, in the Australian premiere of a beautifully rendered story about care, connection and dignity that will take over the Bille Brown Theatre from Saturday 15 June.

The new co-production with Sydney Theatre Company is a 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Drama winner and four-time Tony Award nominee for its smash-hit Broadway run and is penned by former-caregiver turned playwright Martyna Majok to tell a story of two individuals living with disability and their caregivers.

Drawing on her lived experience, Majok introduces four seemingly disconnected characters whose lives are at a crossroads—John is a wealthy successful PhD student with cerebral palsy who hires Jess, a woman juggling multiple jobs just to stay afloat, as his carer; and Eddie is an unemployed truck driver, desperately trying to reconcile with his ex-wife Ani, who has become a wheelchair user after an accident.

The upcoming premiere will add to Queensland Theatre's 2024 Season lineup focused on diverse storytelling, which Queensland Theatre's Associate Artistic Director (First Nations), Isaac Drandic, said is at the very heart of ***Cost of Living***.

"What is so special about ***Cost of Living*** is that it's the type of work that brings together and celebrates our different lived experiences, which is something we're deeply focused on - from our varied artistic practices and to the creative work itself," said Drandic.

"Rarely have I witnessed a piece of theatre that celebrates all abilities, whilst really putting the spotlight on the experiences of those living with disability, and that's really what this does. It creates an incredible, moving piece of theatre that makes for a profound conversation about connection and disconnection, agency, ability and every aspect of the human condition."

Co-directed by **Priscilla Jackman** (*The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* and the most recent, critically acclaimed *RBG: Of Many, One*) and **Dan Daw**, who also stars as John, this Australian-first also features theatre royalty, **Philip Quast AM**—the first actor to win three Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Leading Actor in a Musical, alongside renowned Australian actors **Kate Hood** and **Zoe de Plevitz**.

The four characters are set to come to life on stage with a flare of deft humour and enormous heart to put the struggles of living with disability in an increasingly inaccessible world alongside the nuanced power dynamics in a carer/client relationship at the forefront for Brisbane audiences. The play will draw on real lived experience of disability, with the character of Ani portrayed by Kate, a wheelchair user, and the character of John portrayed by Dan, who lives with cerebral palsy.

# QUEENSLAND THEATRE

“It’s quite a monumental thing, as a disabled artist, to be even working on a play for an Australian state theatre company. It feels like a total gamechanger to be working alongside this extraordinary team of artists to bring a story like this to Australian audiences,” Dan Daw said.

“And at its core, this extraordinary piece of writing highlights the importance of interdependence in the disabled lived experience. The world is as beautiful as it is harsh and the characters are all, in their own ways, doing everything in their power to find shelter in each other.”

The production marks a very monumental shift for co-director Priscilla Jackman, who has spent more than five years lobbying for ***Cost of Living*** to be produced.

“It’s taken us five years to put this story on the Australian stage and it’s really been a labour of love to work on the creative, build it and get this ready for the audience. We knew we had an incredibly powerful script from day one and we’ve left no stone unturned to get it stage ready,” Jackman said.

“As artists, we always talk about how collaborative theatre-making is. Not only will Brisbane be home to the first mainstage production in Australia to have a 50/50 ratio of disabled and non-disabled actors on stage, and almost the same ratio represented amongst our creative team, which is a dream come true.”

The Australian premier of the new play will take place in Brisbane, running from June 15 to July 13 at the Bille Brown Theatre ahead of continuing its upcoming season at Sydney Theatre Company. Tickets are available now at [queenslandtheatre.com.au/plays/cost-of-living](https://queenslandtheatre.com.au/plays/cost-of-living).

**ENDS**

**For all media enquiries or requests please contact:**

**Jessica Murray**

**[jmurray@ivypr.com.au](mailto:jmurray@ivypr.com.au) | 0491 051 542**



Queensland Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## ***Cost of Living***

By Martyna Majok

Directed by Priscilla Jackman and Dan Daw

15 Jun — 13 Jul 2024

Bille Brown Theatre

# QUEENSLAND THEATRE

## **Creatives**

**Writer** Martyna Majok

**Director** Priscilla Jackman

**Director** Dan Daw

**Designer** Michael Scott-Mitchell

**Lighting Designer** John Rayment

**Composer/Sound Designer** Guy Webster

**Stage Manager** Grant Gravener

**Assistant Stage Manager** Yanni Dubler

**Assistant Stage Manager** Sophie Woodcock

**Theatre Access Assistant to Kate Hood** Madeleine Lewis

**Theatre Access Assistant to Kate Hood** Sophie McCrae

**Personal Assistant to Dan Daw** Lauren Smeaton

## **Cast**

**John** Dan Daw

**Jess** Zoe de Plevitz

**Ani** Kate Hood

**Eddie** Philip Quast