



Impact Report

HOODS by Angela Betzien
2025

**BARKING
GECKO**  **ARTS**

HOODS

by Angela Betzien

Director Andrea Gibbs

Set & Costume Design Sam Knox

Lighting Designer Peter Young

Composer & Sound Designer Tim Collins

Cast

Joshua Everett as Kyle

Natasha Pearson as Jessie



Introduction

In 2025, Barking Gecko returned to creating theatre for teen audiences for the first time in nearly a decade with a powerful remount of HOODS by Angela Betzien. Originally staged in 2009 with performers Sam Longley and Andrea Gibbs, this acclaimed Australian work was reimagined 16 years later — now under the artistic direction of Sam Longley and with Andrea Gibbs stepping into the director's chair. This bold revival brought HOODS to a new generation of young people, offering a compelling and thought-provoking theatrical experience that continues to resonate across time.

Our 2025 school season of HOODS by Angela Betzien reached thousands of students across Perth and Karratha, sparking meaningful conversations and leaving a lasting impression.

This season was made possible with the generous support of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Woodside Energy, Wright Burt Foundation, Quercus Group, Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, Keystart, City of Subiaco, Horizon Power, Telethon, Peter & Elizabeth Moore Family Foundation, Minderoo Foundation, No Place for Poverty, and Youth Focus.

Synopsis:

Each night, two hoods ride a train to a wrecking yard on the outskirts of the city. Here, in this cemetery of stories, they are storytellers with the power to fast forward, pause and rewind. Tonight they. Tell the story of three kids left in a car.

REWIND. Its Friday, KFC night and the last day of school before Christmas. Kyle, Jessie and baby brother Troy are waiting in the car for their mum. As night approaches, the car park takes on a dark and sinister aspect filled with strange and familiar characters. The shopping centre closes, mum still hasn't returned, and the baby won't stop crying.

Reach and Attendance



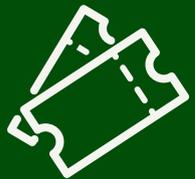
2,286

Total Attendees



5

venues



22

Total Performances



62

Schools



48%

Paid Tickets



52%

Access Tickets



6,937

Contact hours

(Including performance and education resources)

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

3 OF 5 VENUES



In outer metro areas

(Koorliny Arts Centre, Kalamunda Performing Arts Centre, Don Russell Performing Arts Centre)



1

Regional Venue

(Red Earth Arts Precinct)



3,270 KM

Kilometres travelled



49%

Perth Metro Attendance



51%

Outer Metro and
Regional Attendance

More than half of the audience were offered free tickets as part of the Access Program for schools with an ICSEA lower than 1065 who would not otherwise be able to attend, supporting the goal of equitable access.

"Watching live is a whole new experience, and being able to watch live actors is such a privilege."

Girrawheen SHS attendee, age 15



"It was the first piece of live theatre I've ever seen & it makes me want to see more. It was fantastic to see in person.

AMAZING job!!! "

North Shore Christian Grammar School attendee, age 14

"I thought the experience was pretty cool because it was good to be in a room with other schools and see the performance live"

Rockingham Montessori attendee, age 15



Feedback

Here are the **key statistical trends** found in the audience feedback data (**373 responses**) that relate to **wellbeing**, and **performance quality** for HOODS:

To evaluate the impact of HOODS, we distributed printed feedback forms to all participating schools. Students completed these forms by hand after the performance. Returned forms were scanned and manually transcribed to ensure accessibility and consistency in analysis. While not all schools returned feedback, the responses we received offer rich qualitative insights into the emotional, artistic, and educational impact of the program.



Performance Quality

Students frequently mentioned specific elements of stagecraft, demonstrating attention to artistic detail and theatrical literacy:

PERFORMANCE ELEMENT	MENTIONS
Set	136
Characters	90
Performance	51
Plot	30
Staging	14
Character Switches	2

Takeaway:
The set and characters were most commonly praised, showing that students were highly engaged by the production's design and storytelling choices. This reinforces the quality and clarity of the artistic delivery.

Well-being and Emotional Impact

Many students expressed strong emotional responses, indicating meaningful psychological engagement:

EMOTION KEYWORD	MENTIONS
Sad	70
Empathetic	26
Happy	21
Shocked	19
Connected	9
Moved	2

Takeaway:
The performance often elicited sadness and empathy, consistent with the play's themes of hardship and resilience. This suggests strong emotional literacy development and social-emotional impact.

cool intense suspenseful fun mysterious thrilling crazy deep loud
emotional incredible funny impactful dark
intriguing sad enjoyable amazing captivating breathtaking immersive jaw-dropping
eye-opening confounding exciting good dramatic thought-provoking
energetic realistic meaningful emotive dynamic awesome fast
different engaging entertaining confronting unique complex
creative chaotic powerful scary



Feedback

The emotional response was overwhelmingly empathetic, with over 25% of students describing feelings such as sadness, empathy, or shock. These reflections suggest strong well-being benefits and social awareness development. Feedback also revealed high artistic engagement; students frequently praised the set, characters, and storytelling. Importantly, at least 6 students referenced this being their first time experiencing live theatre, affirming the program's role in breaking access barriers

Use 3 words to best describe the show.

Jaw-dropping, Captivating, engaging

How did the show make you feel?

The show gave me goose bumps & kept me on the edge of my seat.

Write a 1-2 sentence review of the performance of HOODS. (Was there anything in particular that you liked or disliked in the show? E.g. themes, plot, set, staging, performance, etc.)

The performers used the @ space so well, they moved around & even broke the 4th wall, including the audience. I also loved the set & use of props...

Did you enjoy the experience of live theatre? And why?

Yes, it feels more real than just watching something online & it helps me improve as a drama student. (Thank You So Much)!!

Use 3 words to best describe the show.

breath taking, entertaining, eye opening

How did the show make you feel?

Jumpy and intrigued

Write a 1-2 sentence review of the performance of HOODS. (Was there anything in particular that you liked or disliked in the show? E.g. themes, plot, set, staging, performance, etc.)

The set was amazing and I liked how the actors entertained and made eye contact with the audience.

Did you enjoy the experience of live theatre? And why?

It was nice to sit and watch a live theater performance and to see the real emotions.

Use 3 words to best describe the show.

- Emotional - Powerful
- Creative

How did the show make you feel?

connected with the scenes

Write a 1-2 sentence review of the performance of HOODS. (Was there anything in particular that you liked or disliked in the show? E.g. themes, plot, set, staging, performance, etc.)

I loved the way they really put realism into the emotions on their face.

Did you enjoy the experience of live theatre? And why?

Yes, because it was a new experience.

Use 3 words to best describe the show.

Harrowing, Electric, Tragic

How did the show make you feel?

Absolutely absorbed and extremely empathetic towards the characters.

Write a 1-2 sentence review of the performance of HOODS. (Was there anything in particular that you liked or disliked in the show? E.g. themes, plot, set, staging, performance, etc.)

The physicality and energy onstage was magnetic. Every character created was believable through the immense talent and commitment of both actors.

Did you enjoy the experience of live theatre? And why?

The intimate size of the venue elevated the performance to an extremely personal level, connecting me to the action onstage.



1

Strong Emotional & Social Impact

Emerging Trends and Insights

2

Access & Equity: More than Half Attended Free

1. Strong Emotional & Social Impact

The most reported feelings were sadness, empathy, and shock, aligning with the play's exploration of childhood adversity and social inequality. Students developed emotional literacy and critical empathy, key outcomes in arts education and wellbeing frameworks.

"It made me feel sad but also accepting that the world is not perfect."
"I felt so much empathy towards the characters."

3

Broad & Inclusive: Geographic Reach

2. Access & Equity: More Than Half Attended for Free

52% of the audience accessed the performance through free tickets, specifically offered to schools with an ICSEA score below 1,065, meaning lower socio-educational advantage. This investment in equitable access successfully connected students from disadvantaged backgrounds to live performance, many for the first time.

- At least 6 students explicitly referenced first-time theatre attendance

"Watching live is a whole new experience... such a privilege."

4

High artistic engagement & theatrical literacy

3. Broad & Inclusive Geographic Reach

51% of audiences were from outer metro and regional WA, including Karratha (Red Earth Arts Precinct), with artists travelling over 3,270 km. Touring to underserved regions effectively reduced geographic barriers, ensuring creative access is not limited to metro areas.

4. High Artistic Engagement and Theatrical Literacy

Students actively engaged with the set, performance, and characters, with 136 mentions of the set alone, indicating strong attention to production design and storytelling. The performance didn't just entertain; it deepened student understanding of theatre as an artform and storytelling tool.

"The acting was top tier and the set was amazing. Every detail was perfectly put in place."

"The emotional range of both actors was amazing... the staging didn't take away from the performance, it highlighted it."

5

Learning Outcomes & Curriculum Connection

5. Learning Outcomes & Curriculum Connection

Feedback showed students made clear connections between the show and classroom learning, especially in Drama and English. HOODS supported both content delivery and critical thinking, offering a springboard for classroom discussions on character, theme, and social issues.

"This helped me get a better understanding of the play for my school performance."

"We talked about the show for the rest of the day in class."

"It gave us a different perspective on childhood and poverty."

**“Amazing,
touching, jaw-
dropping, A
rollercoaster of
emotions. I
loved the use of
set and props.
The actors were
superb”**

Warnbro CHS attendee, age 15



Key Takeaways

HOODS delivered impact across artistic, emotional, and educational dimensions.

Access was broad and equitable, with over half of all students attending for free.

Students left changed, many more emotionally literate, artistically engaged, and socially aware.

The program reached beyond metro Perth, demonstrating real commitment to regional inclusion.

HOOPS

by Angela Betzien

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



Woodside
Energy

WRIGHT BURT
FOUNDATION
~ ALL FOR THE BETTER ~



QUERCUS
GROUP



STAN PERRON
CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION

Keystart.



**HORIZON
POWER**

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POVERTY**



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