

CONVENOR'S CORNER

Welcome to 2026



We ended 2025 with a bang, with a great **Presentation Night** at Dracula's, with young **DAKOTA CHANEL** part of the night's entertainment before she returned to the lead role in the professional season of ANNIE in Brisbane.

We were thrilled also to have as part of the entertainment **BROCK DRINKWATER** who left soon after to enter WAAPA (he performed The Proposal from GCLT's TITANIC), and Bangalow's **LULU MISKIN** (performing On the Steps of the Palace from Bangalow Theatre Company's INTO THE WOODS. Lulu will enter WAAPA in 2026.

We were delighted to welcome the **Friends of the Arts Foundation** as a Major Sponsor for 2025, and they awarded the Jock and Bev McIlwain Bursary to two outstanding under-18 theatre practitioners - **JAKE STUBBS** for his performance in NAPA's Sweeney Todd, and **TESS BURGESS** for Bangalow Theatre Company's Into the Woods. We know they will put the funds to good use!

FRIENDS
OF THE
Arts
FOUNDATION

The **Award judges** are already hard at work attending lots of shows up and down the Coast, and we are about to launch a brand new website.

I would like here to acknowledge and thank **MICHAEL THOMAS**, who for the past 17 years, since we began, has alone and unaided administered the website and attended to the myriad of tasks associated with publishing at midnight the Finalists and Winners (and, in recent years, the complete list of all nominations) each year.

It has been a huge, and sometimes difficult job, and we are very grateful for his assistance and support for the awards.

Continued Page 2



Convenor's Corner Continues.

Checkout the new website!

goldpalmtheatreawards.com

The sheer amount of paperwork involved will be made more accessible on the new website, with documents like **The Fine Print**, **Categories for Awards**, **Judges' Information Sheet** etc. being available online rather than sent out to participants.

A revamped **Company Show List** has been designed to let participants give us forewarning of any alternate casts or swings for shows (judges must all see the same cast members), professional fees being paid etc.

The **fee structure** has also changed, with participants only doing one show a year paying much less.

As always, the Awards are a work in progress, and we are always happy to hear from you all about ways to streamline and make easier/better any aspect of the running of the organisation.



We have two remote judges this year, both living in Harvey Bay. While they will be covering most of the catchment area shows, they will be giving us a regular look at theatre on the Sunshine Coast. Check out Gai and Chris' *Happenings in Hervey Bay* on page 4.

Until next time, knock 'em dead! Cheers Kate
Kate Peters, Founder and Convenor

GPTA PRESENTATION AWARDS NIGHT

The Awards night is a glittering, glamorous celebration of the very best of live theatre produced each year in South East Queensland and Northern NSW. The awards acknowledge the contribution to the community's cultural and entertainment life, by awarding participants in shows staged by community theatre groups, high schools and colleges throughout the year.

Awards are made in 32 categories covering every aspect of live theatre, including acting, music, dance and technical production.

DATE CLAIMER!

AWARDS NIGHT: Monday 7 December 2026

Dracula's Theatre Restaurant from 5.45pm. Show begins at 6.45pm.

BOOKINGS OPEN: Monday 2 November 2026 at 8.00 am (Qld time)

BOOKINGS CLOSE: Friday 4 December 2026 11.59 pm sharp.

Tickets will be sold through TRYBOOKING



Happenings in Hervey Bay.

In mid-2025, judges Gai Byrne and Chris Hawkins said good-bye to the GC and relocated to Hervey Bay on Queensland's Fraser Coast to start a transition to retirement. One of the first tasks on their list of things to do was to find a local theatre company to visit, and they weren't disappointed. **Z-Pac Theatre**, which started in 1964 and was known as the Hervey Bay Little Theatre for some time, welcomed them with open arms. It was a case of "a small world" as on one of the first visits to the theatre they ran into Dawn Warrington, past Gold Palm Awards judge and GCLT costuming legend. The irony is that Chris replaced Dawn when she retired from the Awards in 2019.

The Fraser Coast has a very healthy community theatre vibe. **The Accent Theatre Co.** and **Flame Studios** both focus on theatre classes and programs for juniors to late teens in Maryborough and Hervey Bay.

The **Macabre Theatre Company** is renowned for being the "big musical" theatre company, producing two musicals per year at the impressive Brolga Theatre in Maryborough.

In June, Gai appeared in "Queenie" a comedy drama penned by renowned Melbourne comedienne and now Hervey Bay resident Tracy Harvey and directed by her film producer husband Greg Dee, after literally bumping into Tracy while returning from a beach swim. Gai and Chris are currently performing at Z-Pac Theatre in "Inspector Drake's Final Case", a British farce in the vein of bumbling Inspector Clouseau crossed with the annoying persona of Colombo.



Chris has just commenced rehearsals as The Narrator in "The Rocky Horror Show" for Macabre Theatre Co. It will run at the Brolga Theatre from 8th-10th May.

They intend to stay as judges for the foreseeable future, traveling to Brisbane, the Gold Coast & Northern NSW to judge shows because they believe in what the Gold Palm Awards are about and its objectives, the variety of talent and skills that the community theatre world offers, and of course, the opportunity to visit family.

Chris Hawkins and Gai Byrne

OUR SPONSORS

HOTA HOME OF THE ARTS

FRIENDS OF THE Arts FOUNDATION


MAGNUS
Freedom Through Support


Audio Professionals



WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE A NEW PATRON!

To add to their already prestigious list of Patrons Ms Sheila Bradley and Mr Tony Sheldon, legendary songstress and music theatre star RHONDA BURCHMORE will join the Gold Palm Theatre Awards as Patron.

She has said "I am honoured and thrilled to be patron of the Gold Palm Theatre Awards and certainly hope I can be there in person to celebrate with you all in the near future."

Rhonda Burchmore OAM



From Sydney to London's West End to the depths of the South African jungle, Rhonda Burchmore has endeared herself into the hearts of all Australians.

With a smile that could light up the Sydney Opera House and a career spanning over 35 years, this vivacious, flame-haired beauty continues to turn heads wherever she goes and draw thunderous applause wherever she performs. has forged a lengthy career in one of the toughest and most unforgiving industries, show business, yet as critics attest, she just keeps going from strength to strength. Few Australian entertainers have shared her status and immense popularity amongst her peers, who admire Rhonda for her big personality, big heart and enormous capacity to give back to the industry that has shaped her career.ights of Rhonda Burchmore's illustrious career include performing on London's West End in Sugar Babies featuring Mickey Rooney and Ann Miller, Stop The World I Want To Get Off with Anthony Newley, starring opposite David Atkins in the original Hot Shoe Shuffle and opening Crown Casino with her cabaret spectacular Red, Hot & Rhonda - playing to over 60,000 people.

Other productions include lead roles in Into the Woods, Mame, Easter Parade, Annie Get Your Gun, The Boyfriend, Urinetown, They're Playing

Our Song, Song & Dance, Guys & Dolls, Respect- A Musical Journey of Women, Little Orphan Trashley, Eurobeat, Calendar Girls, La Cage Aux Folles, Jerry's Girls, The Drowsy Chaperone co-starring Geoffrey Rush and as Tanya in the original Australian production of Mamma Mia! 2016 Rhonda co-produced and starred in the outrageous TWINS with Trevor Ashley; which after a sell-out premiere season at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, headlined the Adelaide Cabaret Festival the same year.

In 2017 Rhonda produced, co-wrote and starred in ABBA-solutely Fabulous with best friend Lara Mulcahy, which continues to play sell out engagements across the country. The two dynamos returned in 2019 with a new Rhonda Burchmore Production Partners in Crime. In 2020, Rhonda appeared on I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here, winning the hearts of Australians and placing third. Later in the year, Rhonda will debut a lead recurring role in Channel Seven's sitcom Fam Time. Rhonda's other television credits include regular performances on long running variety shows Hey Hey It's Saturday, The Don Lane Show, The Mike Walsh Show, The Midday Show, Good Morning Australia with Bert Newton, Spicks and Specks and Carols by Candlelight.

Rhonda has also appeared as a featured guest on Kath & Kim and more recently on Nine Network's Love Child. Rhonda is also a regular panellist on Studio Ten and is a familiar face across Australian morning television. Rhonda made her film debut in the role of Kate in The Pirate Movie and more recently as Cheryl in The Wedding Party. n 2014 Rhonda was awarded the OAM for her service to the performing arts and community. 2014 Rhonda won the Cabaret Icon Award at the International Adelaide Cabaret Festival. Rhonda's cabaret shows include My Funny Valentine, Fever, Everybody Loves Rhonda, Legs 11, Cry Me A River- The World Of Julie London, Rhonda Burchmore Sings 'n Swings and Vinyl Viagra. In 2002 and 2012 Rhonda won Female Vocal Performer of The Year at the MO Awards and ACE Awards. In 2011, Rhonda released her auto-biography Legs 11: My Life in Front of the Lights and Backstage, with New Holland Publishing. It's substantial success resulted in a 2018 re-release with additional chapters. Rhonda has recorded five albums including Pure Imagination, Midnight Rendezvous, Live At The Melbourne Concert Hall and Cry Me A River - The World of Julie London with ABC Records.

2026 - Shows to See!

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

Included in 2026 judging

Spotlight Theatrical Company

ABIGAIL'S PARTY

JANUARY

Brisbane Musical Theatre

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Ballina Players

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

NAPA Ensemble

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Theatre Redlands

DINKUM ASSORTED

FEBRUARY

Tugun Theatre Company

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

Spotlight Theatrical Company

TARZAN THE STAGE MUSICAL

Gold Coast Little Theatre

SPRING AWAKENING

Sky Production

MATILDA

MARCH

Ballina Players

AFRAID OF THE DARK

Lismore Theatre Company

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST

Spotlight Theatrical Company

RUMORS

NAPA Ensemble

A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM

Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Swich Up Productions

KINKY BOOTS

Redcliffe Musical Theatre

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

Village Hall Players, Kyogle

LOVE, LOSS & WHAT I WORE

Bangalow Theatre Company

VIVID WHITE

APRIL

Lismore Theatre Company

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Gold Coast Little Theatre

THE NARCISSIST

The Southport School

CRAZY FOR YOU

MAY

Saint Stephen's College

FREAKY FRIDAY

Spotlight Theatrical Company

COME FROM AWAY

Tugun Theatre Company

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS



2026 - More Shows to See!

To find out more - Click on the company name to visit their website.

JUNE

[Ballina Players](#)
A CHORUS LINE

[Lismore Theatre Company](#)
FAMILY VALUES

[NAPA YOUTH](#)
ANTIGONE

AUGUST

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
MY SONNY BOY

SEPTEMBER

[NAPA YOUTH](#)
BRING IT ON

[Gold Coast Little Theatre](#)
QUARTET

[Village Hall Players, Kyogle](#)
CAMELOT THE PANTO

JULY

[Gold Coast Little Theatre](#)
LA CAGE AUX FOLLES

[NAPA Ensemble](#)
JAGGED LITTLE PILL

[Lismore Theatre Company](#)
DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

OCTOBER

[Lismore Theatre Company](#)
A DOLLS HOUSE

NOVEMBER

[Tugun Theatre Company](#)
ARSENIC & OLD LACE

[Spotlight Theatrical Company](#)
THE BOY FROM OZ

[Ballina Players](#)
THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW

[Gold Coast Little Theatre](#)
& JULIET

WATCH THIS SPACE!

More Shows are signing up
to the
GOLD PALM THEATRE AWARDS

2026 JUDGING PANEL



Mrs Kate Peters
Convenor and Founder



Ms Kirri Adams
Foundation panel member



Ms Gai Byrne



Mrs Judy Gadaloff



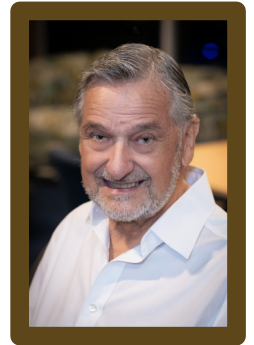
Ms Steffanie Gowland



Ms Del Halpin



Mr Chris Hawkins



Mr David Huddy



Ms Tracey Kriz



Ms Katrina Lardner

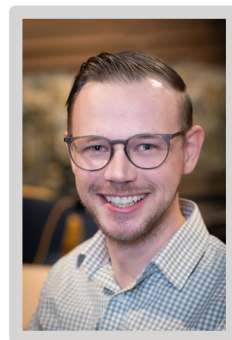


Mr Andrew Ross-Graham



Mr Mark Turpin

2026 Behind the Scenes



Mr Jonathon Graham
Wizard of the Website



Ms Pamela Lowry
Siren of the Spreadsheets

Portraits courtesy of TTL Photography