

PERSEVERANCE STREET
THEATRE COMPANY

PIRATES, COWBOYS AND ALIENS

Written by
Sofia Abbey

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ABOUT PERSEVERANCE STREET

Who Are Perseverance Street Theatre Company?

Perseverance Street Theatre Company (PSTC) is Gympie's independent, not-for-profit professional theatre company, established in February 2022 by a collective of theatre makers, arts educators, and community leaders. Deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of the Wide Bay–Burnett region, the company's mission is to celebrate place, perseverance, and human connection through transformative theatre that empowers individuals and strengthens communities.

Vision and Purpose

PSTC envisions theatre as a catalyst for empathy, resilience, and connection. Guided by the values of Connect, Activate, and Sustain, the company is dedicated to producing bold, original, and socially relevant performances that foster well-being and inclusion. Their work integrates professional practice with community engagement—transforming both traditional and unconventional spaces into vibrant creative hubs.

Programs and Impact

Since inception, PSTC has presented work to over 12,000 audience members, while providing pathways for young and emerging creatives

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens" is an ode to childhood, imagination and play. It celebrates how children move seamlessly from play to reality in seconds. It is also a story about finding joy through shared purpose, social connection and friendship. The play appeals to families, adults and children aged 10 and older. The dramatic action takes place over one week. Each scene is a new day and depicts how the relationship between Kieran and Jude changes. Interludes between scenes include voice over, narration and multi-media animation with hand drawn illustrations. This contrast between the intensity of the dramatic action and reflective interludes assisted in providing a contrast in style, medium and a balance to the overall production. The play sequences are underscored by music. This poetic, playful and visually stunning work entertains, intrigues and ultimately reminds us to stay young at heart.

SYNOPSIS

Save the playground!

When fifteen-year-old Kieran begrudgingly begins a school assignment on childhood memories, he doesn't expect to find himself tangled in the imagination of Jude—a nine-year-old whirlwind armed with a rake and a fierce love for a forgotten playground. Set in a small regional town, Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens is a heartwarming and hilarious play about unlikely friendship, the strange magic of old playgrounds, and the stubborn brilliance of children who refuse to grow up.

As demolition day looms, Kieran and Jude must battle bureaucracy, bullies, and their own grief to save the only place where anything still feels possible. Full of pirate fights, alien attacks, and cowboy showdowns, this is a tale for anyone who has ever built a cubby, launched a pretend spaceship, or needed a friend and didn't know it yet. It's a celebration of imagination and resilience, told through regional voices who still believe in play.

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CREATIVE BIOS

Sharon Hogan

Director



From industry, universities, classrooms to community stages and now the helm of a regional theatre, Sharon Hogan—Director of *Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens*—is known for bridging theatre practice with drama pedagogy. As Artistic Director and CEO of Perseverance Street Theatre Company, Sharon's unconventional pathway has fostered a holistic approach to directing

where artist development is a key focus. A proponent of immersive theatre techniques, Sharon frequently incorporates Process Drama—a rehearsal methodology that deepens actors' connection to character and theme. Her academic credentials include lecturing in acting, directing, and drama education at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), and she leads numerous community-based theatre initiatives across the Gympie Region, working with both young people and mature women. Over the years, Sharon has worked at QPAC and for Queensland Theatre and on major performance projects for Drama Queensland, giving her strong industry connections.

Her ethos is reflected in *Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens*—a story where playfulness, learning, and ageless joy converge on stage.

Sofia Abbey

Writer



Early Career Playwright and Dramaturg Sofia Abbey's theatre journey began in high school. At just 15, she was acknowledged in the Queensland Young Playwrights Award, launching a dynamic writing career. She is the principal writer and a core creative producer at Perseverance Street Theatre Company, where her sharp storytelling and passionate commitment continue to shape regional

theatre. Sofia's work has earned her coveted placements in leading national development initiatives including the La Boite Theatre Company Assembly Program and the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) National Writers Program. In 2025, her significant impact on the regional arts scene was recognised through her nomination for the ABC Trailblazers Program, which saw her attend the national leadership summit in Canberra.

Her latest production, *Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens*, began as a collaboration with co-founder Jonas White and has undergone substantial dramaturgical development through her selection for the GATHER Program at Playlab Theatre. Focused on creating innovative work for young audiences, Sofia previously toured her acclaimed play *Lizard* across Queensland secondary schools in 2022 and 2023. Her most recent piece, *Boys at the Back of the Bus*, premiered to acclaim at the Perseverance Street Studio in Gympie.

Alex Harvey

Sound Designer



International jazz artist and composer Alex Harvey joins Perseverance Street Theatre Company to create an immersive soundscape for *Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens*. With a background that includes lecturing in music in New Caledonia, international touring, and studying composition at the acclaimed Berklee College of Music in California, Alex brings world-class expertise to this regional project.

Now based in Gunalda, just north of Gympie, Alex continues to push creative boundaries. He recently composed the music for the popular regional production *GRIT: The Stories, The Town, The Music*. For *Pirates*, his sonic imagination helps shape the magical world of Jude and the journey that unfolds.

Jonas White

Stage Manager/Lighting Designer



Jonas White is a regional theatre technician and emerging theatre maker based in Queensland. A self-taught lighting and sound designer, he is a co-founder of Perseverance Street Theatre Company, where he has contributed to numerous productions across technical design, production, and touring. Jonas was the Regional Tour Manager for Perseverance Street Theatre Company's *Build Back Better* tour of *GRIT* in 2023, and later served as Tour Manager for the 2025 regional tour of *Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens*, delivered through JUTE Theatre Company's DARTS program. As part of his DARTS internship, he was mentored in stage management on JUTE's production of *From Campfire to Stagelight*, gaining valuable experience in professional stage management and regional touring.

His technical design portfolio includes multiple lighting and sound designs for Perseverance Street Theatre Company, alongside work for school productions and community venues across the Gympie region.

In 2026, Jonas will complete a Diploma of Music Production with TAFE Queensland and begin working with QPAC as a lighting technician, continuing to grow his practice and contribute to Queensland's vibrant performing arts sector.

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CREATIVE BIOS

Craig Wilkinson

Multi-Media Designer Mentor



Craig Wilkinson APDG is an award-winning video designer for live performance and the creative director of optical bloc.

His video design work has toured extensively across Australia and internationally to Hong Kong, UK, North America, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. Craig's recent live performance video design works include: DRACULA (Sydney Theatre Company) which is soon to be remounted

on the West End; the stage adaptation of the award winning novel GRIEF IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS (Belvoir St. Theatre); the record-breaking stage adaptation of Trent Dalton's novel BOY SWALLOWS UNIVERSE, and the follow-up adaptation of LOVE STORIES (Queensland Theatre / Brisbane Festival / QPAC); LET'S BE FRIENDS FUREVER (The Good Room / Brisbane Festival / HOTA); SHAUN THE SHEEP'S CIRCUS SHOW (CIRCA / Aardman Animation / QPAC); FRANKENSTEIN, the critically acclaimed ROALD DAHL'S FANTASTIC MR FOX (shake & stir theatre co / QPAC); Australia's most successful theatrical exports DEIN PERRY'S TAP DOGS (Broadway Entertainment Group); and the Australian and New Zealand tour of JIM STEINMAN'S BAT OF HELL: THE MUSICAL (TEG DAINTY) as Australian Associate Video Designer.

Craig is an accredited member of the Australian Production Design Guild, a seasonal lecturer in Live Performance Video Design at the Queensland University of Technology since 2015 and was a recipient of a Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor's Creative Fellowship in 2022.

Fletcher Colfs

Kieran



Fletcher is a regionally based actor, writer, director and creative producer living in Gympie, Queensland. A key founder of Perseverance Street, Fletcher has worked as a producer, director, lighting designer and actor. He has performed in multiple productions from the company including the original production of this show initially titled 'Grow Up', originating the role of Kieran.

He has performed in 'Grit', 'A Monster Calls', 'Lizard' and more. Fletcher also runs Perseverance Street's youth cabaret program, LEAP, directing and starring in both 'House of Desire' and 'House of Fortune'. Fletcher is a skilled teaching artist and an artist in resident working with a range of community groups to build new contemporary performance. Fletcher recently studied with Zen Zen Zo for their annual Stomping Ground Intensive.

CAST BIOS

Abby Bowyer

Jude



Abby is a passionate artist whose love for the performing arts has intricately woven a rich tapestry of adventure and exploration throughout her life. She began her journey at the Australian Dance Performance Institute in Brisbane, specializing in Musical Theatre and Commercial Dance. Since then, Abby has broadened her artistic repertoire by delving into various forms such as physical theatre and contact improvisation dance. Her dedication to holistic movement is reflected in her training in yoga, bodywork, and movement therapy across Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia, enriching both her practice and performances. She enjoys working with a collection of theatre companies that span across the Gympie and Sunshine Coast regions.

Ben Adams

Set Designer



Ben Adams is a Sunshine Coast based designer, artist and furniture maker, specialising in custom works for the performing arts industry. Ben began taking commissions predominantly as a wood worker then later moving into metal work, blacksmithing and fabrication. In 2015 Ben worked firstly as an intern and then employee at Showworks Creative Solutions in Melbourne, assisting in the construction of set and scenery for the Australian Ballet, Queensland Ballet, Opera Australia, and the Melbourne Museum. Some recent commissions include design and construction of the set for the Matilda Award-winning Zen Zen Zo's The Tempest in 2019, Lead Set Construction for Poetical Inhabitants by LJ Projects in 2023 and the design and manufacture of ten trophies for the 2024 Queensland Landcare Awards. Ben owns and runs a boutique furniture making business on the Sunshine Coast; Ben Adams Furniture Studio. Some mediums commonly used by Ben include wood, steel, brass, copper, concrete, and leather.



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PERFORMANCE HISTORY

2023 – Initial Creative Development

- Funded through the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) to support creation of the initial script under the working title Grow Up.
- Development included community interviews in the regional area, gathering local voices and stories that shaped the early draft.
- The process established the foundation for the play's themes of childhood, memory, and imagination.
- Public reading of the initial play
- Short performance season of Grow Up in Gympie at Perseverance Street Studio

2024 – Reimagining and Recognition

- A major rewrite and structural redevelopment of the script occurred this year, alongside the renaming of the work to Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens to better reflect its spirit and narrative direction.
- This new work was selected for regional touring through the DARTS (Driving and Activating the Regional Theatre Sector) program by a peer review panel.
- Funding was allocated by DARTS to support a small-scale local tour in 2025.
- Playwright Sofia Abbey writes the draft of new work Pirates, Cowboys and Aliens

2025 – Dramaturgy, Redevelopment, and Regional Presentation

- Further creative development supported through Playlab Press's Gather Program, incorporating dramaturgical input to strengthen story structure and character development.
- Public reading presented at the Empire Theatre (Toowoomba) as part of the Gather showcase.
- Identified by Playlab Press for publication in 2026.
- Composer and sound designer Alex Harvey engaged to develop an original soundscape and musical motifs for the fantasy interludes.
- Animation artist engaged to enhance the visual storytelling and integrate projected imagery into the new staging concept.
- Gympie season of the newly developed work scheduled for July 2025 (two-week presentation).
- Further RAF funding to support tour and employment of young and emerging animation artist, Evie Lanzon
- Regional tour in August 2025 featuring four performances in non-traditional theatre venues, expanding access to regional audiences.
- Community workshops held in conjunction with the tour, engaging intergenerational participants to create artwork and imagery later incorporated into the production's animation sequences.

Future Plans – 2026 and Beyond

- Publication by Playlab Press (2026).
- Official launch of the published play at the Drama Queensland (DQ) Conference and the English Teachers Association of Queensland (ETAQ) Conference.
- Brisbane season through Door Three (2026) to mark the work's metropolitan premiere and third iteration of the work.



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"I LOVED THE...DOUBLE-
LAYERED MESSAGES FOR KIDS
AND GROWN UPS."

"THE ACTING WAS
PHENOMENAL...I WAS HOOKED"

CONTACT US

Perseverance Street Theatre Co: CEO Sharon Hogan

E: info@perseverancestreet.com.au

P: 0407 995 422

"AN ABSOLUTELY
BRILLIANT...THOUGHT
PROVOKING PRODUCTION"

"SLICK AND
POLISHED...QUALITY
THEATRE."

