



Media Release
Byron Community Centre

For immediate release

Major Australian Classic ‘Tirra Lirra by the River’ comes to Byron Theatre this June

A new stage adaptation of Jessica Anderson’s Miles Franklin Award-winning novel, exploring memory, identity and belonging.

Don’t miss this powerful new work from Fairbairn + Wild Productions and Byron Theatre Company. Running from 5-13 June. Limited season.

Byron Bay: This June, *Tirra Lirra by the River* arrives at Byron Theatre in a virtuosic and kaleidoscopic new production using cutting-edge audio-visual effects.

At its centre is an exceptional cast of locally-based talent - **Toni Scanlan** (*Water Rats, The Newsreader, Packed to the Rafters*), a long-standing figure of Australian stage and screen, bringing a depth of experience and a finely judged performance style; **Waangenga Blanco**, a Helpmann Award-winning former principal artist with Bangarra Dance Theatre, whose work is grounded in Country and story; and **Pirie Outridge**, a Murwillumbah-based QUT graduate with a fresh, instinctive presence. Together, they bring a world to life that deftly spans the twentieth century, from jazz-age Sydney to post-war London.

Drawing on Jessica Anderson’s Miles Franklin Award-winning novel, *Tirra Lirra by the River* follows the story of Nora (Toni Scanlan). When Nora reluctantly returns to the Australian house where she grew up, she finds the past lying in wait. Forced to an urgent reckoning with the choices she has made, Nora – exile, artist, lover and wife – sifts through the lives she has led to discover the woman she has become.

The production is led by writers and co-directors **Heather Fairbairn** and **Kate Wild** of **Fairbairn + Wild Productions**. Byron Bay based Heather Fairbairn has been described as a "rising star" of the Australian stage for her award-winning, innovative and interdisciplinary stagings. Recent work includes NORPA’s acclaimed *Prima Facie*, alongside productions with Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, Bell Shakespeare, La Boite and Queensland Theatre. Kate Wild is the award-winning writer and director of *The Sound of a Finished Kiss*. Working across Australia and the UK – including a tenure as Associate Director at the Gate Theatre in London – her directing credits include *The Cherry Orchard* (fortyfive downstairs and Southwark Playhouse) and *Simply Heavenly* (Young Vic).



The creative team includes production designer **Savanna Wegman** (Victorian Opera's *Katya Kabanova*; Sydney Festival's *Converted!*), lighting and video designer **Aron Murray** (Sport for Jove & Seymour Centre's *The Player Kings*), and composer and sound designer **Julian Starr** (NORPA's *Prima Facie*; Queensland Theatre Company's *Return To The Dirt*; Belvoir's *Miss Peony*). Together, the team creates a vivid environment using live-cinema and projection mapping, designed specifically for the Byron Theatre space — an evocative world where time fluidly shifts across seventy years.

“It’s rare to be able to make work at this level in your own community,” says Heather Fairbairn. “I spend much of the year working away from home, so to return to Byron and make a second work here this year feels significant. After directing NORPA’s *Prima Facie*, which opened at Byron Theatre earlier this year before touring throughout the Northern Rivers, it’s a privilege to continue the conversation with local audiences here.”

Tirra Lirra by the River marks the second major production by **Byron Theatre Company**, following the acclaimed debut *Displace I Call Home* in 2025. Still in its early years, the company is growing with intention - listening closely to artists and community to shape a model that is responsive, ambitious and grounded in place. “We’re at a really exciting point,” says **Bianca Sirianni**, Creative Producer of Byron Theatre Company. “We’re listening - to artists, to audiences, to what’s needed here - and creating space for meaningful work.”

This production reflects that approach - championing the development of new work while expanding opportunities for local artists - something to support, and to experience while it is here. It also highlights how fortunate we are to encounter performances of this scale and calibre in a regional venue. In an increasingly digital world, *Tirra Lirra by the River* offers a shared live experience - immediate and human, shaped in the connection between performers and audience.

PERFORMANCES:

5–13 June 2026 | Byron Theatre, 69 Jonson Street, Byron Bay

Performance times: 7pm | Saturday Matinees 2pm

Running times: 1 hr 40 minutes (approx)

Tickets: \$59.40 / \$49.40 concession

Book now: <https://www.byroncentre.com.au/theatre-events/tirra-lirra-by-the-river>

Media passes are available for reviewers, journalists and content creators. Interviews can be arranged with Heather Fairbairn, Kate Wild, Toni Scanlan or Byron Theatre Company representatives.



Editorial Request: Please do not shorten “Byron Theatre Company” to “BTC”, but always spell out in full.

Contact: *Kate Love* – media@byroncentre.com.au | (02) 6685 6807 | 0448 141 490

Media Kit: [Click here](#)

Acknowledgements: *Tirra Lirra by the River* is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

About Fairbairn + Wild Productions

Fairbairn + Wild Productions is a cross-border collaboration between theatre directors Heather Fairbairn (Northern Rivers, NSW) and Kate Wild (Brisbane, QLD).

Embracing the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary performance, they create distinctive, artist-led work that is bold in form, conceptually rich, and grounded in dramaturgical rigour. Shaped by a shared belief in slow development and creative risk, their practice emphasises regional leadership and the nurturing of emerging talent.

Together, they develop work that challenges convention and values collaboration, with creative partnerships that span the continent - from Tasmania to Central Queensland - ensuring regionally-made stories are part of national and international conversations.

For more on Fairbairn + Wild Productions and its upcoming productions, visit: www.fairbairnandwild.com.au

About Byron Theatre Company

Byron Theatre Company is the producing arm of Byron Theatre, based at the Byron Community Centre. Following its debut production in 2025, the Company is building a long-term vision for theatre in the Northern Rivers — supporting artists to train, develop and present original work locally, while connecting regional practice with national excellence.

For more on the Byron Community Centre and its work across arts and social support, visit: www.byroncentre.com.au