

# KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE

## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS 1981-2021

Souvenir

8 PAGE LIFT-OUT

### 40 years of Incorporation, 40 years of Community

When I was asked to do this, I really wasn't sure what to write, because I have said it all before, in numerous articles, interviews and blurbs. But here we go...

As a teenager, I remember a group of us would make our way to the Sunday Markets and then onto Sunday afternoon concerts at the Amphitheatre. I was around 18 when I did my first volunteer stint operating a spotlight for the theatre production of *Peter Pan*. Thirty-seven years later—with a couple of years off here and there—I'm still here.

In that time, I have seen many people come and go, hundreds of performances, many upgrades and some hard decisions made—a rollercoaster of good and tough times.

Over a period of 40 odd years, many policies have been made through general meetings and countless committee meetings which then lead on to system procedures and carefully thought out planning and practical workings of the venue. Many ideas thrown away that didn't work or became outdated, and plenty of improvements, fine-tuning and streamlining. It's a massive effort and many have been involved in these decisions to lead us to where we are today. Not to mention the many changes to laws and regulations.

The Administration and Event Management of the Amphitheatre now has a very workable system, through the trials and successes of 40 years. Reinventing the wheel is not on the agenda, there's no time to spare for that! We are either preparing for something, cleaning up after something, or getting ready for the next something. Concert events run like a well-oiled machine, at least on our part. We are good at what we do!

Everyone should be so proud that in a small community, this unique space has been created and actually managed to survive. The Amphitheatre is still an ever-evolving work and I believe always will be. There is a never-ending task list of things to do and things we may never get to do...but there is no doubt that we work and try hard as volunteers to keep the ball rolling, try to please most, and first and foremost, do what is best for the Amphitheatre and crew of volunteers at the time.

We as volunteers are the mainstay and we do matter!

As a team leader of this magnificent venue, it is always like walking a tight rope between community place, access and equity, being fair to all (no one being more important than another), a professional venue manager, a volunteer coordinator (can this person work with that person?), a kitchen mother, a gardener, a toilet cleaner, talking to 'officials', tour managers ... and then there's the administration side and the occasional spat because I'm only human. Those past Presidents are hearing me I'm sure.

Observation and experience, over many years and in many different positions, tells me the most important need for the venue and Society to remain alive, active and growing, is the recruiting of people who are willing to jump on board as active volunteers (and committee positions as they become available). The Management Committee is always happy to take on assistants to be trained in KAS operations. There is so much to learn and so many skills to gain by being an active member. Please come along and see what we do.

With many suggestions and advice coming the Management Committee and Support's way since our letter to the community, I would say to you, offer your services, help out, train up to be here for future generations. Volunteering your time is the most important thing you can do for your community. It brings humility, patience, generosity, staunchness, selflessness and so many more life skills. Not to mention new friendships and connections. It is a great thing.

It has been a difficult few years to keep the Amphitheatre going. We take it for granted that it will always be here. But we shouldn't. Times are changing once again—and without the big concerts to keep us financially viable—we look back to some of the fun day activities we used to have and remember how much laughter there was, the simplicity of it all.

Our Birthday/Spring Festival Day will bring back some of those simple pleasures of sitting on the terraces, listening to the locals perform, having a beverage or something to eat, catching up with friends...and just watching the kids play. A place for everyone.

I do hope with all my heart that we are here to stay.

Liza Dewey  
President 2021  
Kuranda Amphitheatre Society Inc 1981-2021



Liza Dewey building steps at the Amphitheatre 1987. Photo: Courtesy KAS

### 2021 Committee

President: Liza Dewey  
Secretary: Kerry Walker  
Treasurer: Beatrice Sam  
Committee: Nicky Gibson and Zananda Foorde

### Support

Event Manager: Mandy Dewey  
Site Manager: Tim Gronwold  
Membership Payments, Forms: Trish Green (Honey House Kuranda)

## KURANDA SPRING FESTIVAL 2021 PROGRAM

### IN THE VILLAGE

11am to 1pm – Kids Treasure Hunt

All children 12 and under welcome to participate  
Meet behind the Kuranda Visitor Information Centre to start your Treasure Hunt Adventure

### KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE

12pm – Gates Open

Food available

### Live Music and Entertainment

- Burn Bright Dance • Diggis • Koalition • Willie & Friends •
- Toshi Sakamoto • Secret Tuesdays • Muddy Barron Shakers •
- Lunar • Engine Room •

### Face Painting and Bubbles

1pm – Bar Opens

3.30 pm – Box Car Rally

7pm – Venue Close

# A big story...

**Purpose, Passion, Intent.** Three words that underscore the origins of the Kuranda Amphitheatre.

It's a big story, spanning four decades, with a huge cast of passionate individuals who have invested, and continue to invest, thousands of hours developing and maintaining one of the most iconic venues in Australia – a classic story of "from small things big things grow". The Kuranda Amphitheatre is located on crown land, a scenic and recreational reserve, held in trust by the Mareeba Shire Council and was once used as a workers camp for the 120-odd blokes who built the Barron River hydro.



Robin Dods, Councillor Jay Grievson, architect Terry Martin and Inaki Aboitiz, surveying the site for the terraced seating area 1980.

From the outset, the purpose of the Amphitheatre was to create a not-for-profit community place – a place to gather and celebrate a true spirit of community. To secure a lease, and allow for community ownership, the minimum requirement was to create a membership-based incorporated society, with a duly elected management committee drawn from the membership. A constitution was drafted and endorsed by the members, with operational guidelines for those who came forward and volunteered to fill the management positions.

To volunteer is to "Give of one's self without expectation of return." This simple principle clearly shaped this outstanding example of social enterprise that has endured for the past 40 years.

As a venue, we needed to raise capital to build basic necessities like shelters, toilets and eventually a fully functional stage to host larger events, which would in turn ensure an ongoing supply of capital. One of the critical requirements was to understand the many skills needed to manage and negotiate with a wide range of users. These larger gigs involved hiring the venue to professional entrepreneurs, which also included numerous legal and compliance issues that changed with each and every event.

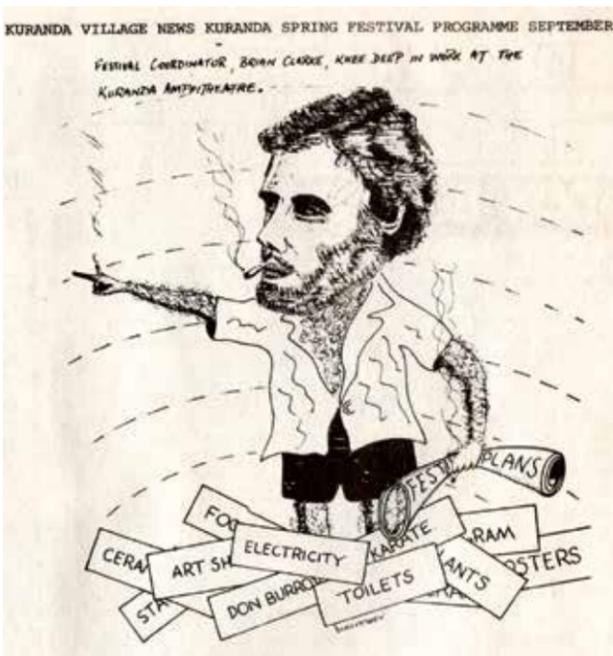
Successful promoters are few and far between. They are a difficult bunch to deal with and usually have deep pockets and a team of lawyers lurking in the background. They risk vast amounts of their own capital and apply their skills and experience to guarantee a successful event, and as such they usually drive a hard bargain. This classic quote from Hunter S. Thompson is probably one of the best insights into the industry.

"The music business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side."

Following the very homespun Kuranda Plant Festival,



"In the difficult economic era that we have entered it is important that projects of this kind be viewed with enthusiasm by everyone, and helped along by those in a position to do so. The age of self help has dawned again, our pioneering forefathers could do it, why not us? Kuranda is leading the way, with a minimum of fuss the work is being done, and being done well."  
The Kuranda Village News, October 1981.



"Festival Coordinator, Brian Clarke, knee deep in work at the Kuranda Amphitheatre."  
Kuranda Village News, October 1981

**"Sewerage pumps: just to confirm, the Sewerage Pumps are stuffed, and need to be replaced. This will be a very expensive exercise. Without a bumper year, Fairy Godfather to come to our rescue, we could be in the shit."**

**Amphitheatre News  
Kuranda Paper February 2004**

was the first big event staged in November 1980, followed by the inaugural Kuranda Spring Festival in 1981 featuring Australia's leading jazz artist Don Burrows, with George Golla and the Paul McNamara Trio. This was a strategic move to demonstrate that the Amphitheatre was not just a 'rock & roll' venue, predominantly the opinion of Council and others, but rather one able to bring to the tropics a range of talent that would never have normally ventured this far north. We did it again for the next couple of years featuring mostly mainstream jazz, and classical music acts, to secure the venue's reputation.

But we also recognised that it's a risky business being both a venue and promoter at the same time. For large full capacity events it takes over 100 volunteers to operate a successful gig. Grounds and site preparations, front of house, backstage crews, bar, kitchen, cleaning and waste crews. Truly a massive effort by our local volunteer community. So many have gone on to become leading musicians, tech operators, managers ... the list is huge ... initially inspired by their participation in this local endeavour.

For the first few decades, power supply and toilets were two of the biggest problems. When you have three to four thousand people in the same place at the same time working on a septic system (and an old one at that, the legacy of the long gone bridge builders – a large concrete septic tank rediscovered and put back into use), and old style power infrastructure, the demand on both was huge. Our local sparkies and plumbing crews were onsite, hard at work throughout the gigs, to make sure the shit didn't hit the fan and the lights didn't go out.

Our story started to circulate throughout the music industry... During the 1980s, we were fortunate to hook up with a couple of Australian promoters who valued our venue for their last show of the East Coast touring programme.

We worked with them to capitalise on the very successful Kuranda Sunday Markets. Most Sundays the Village was alive with people, so why not start a show in the afternoon and swing them over to the Amphitheatre with the main act kicking off just at sunset ... lights, action ... let the party begin.

INXS is one group whose last show in Australia was performed here before heading overseas to become the international band that we know today. Interestingly, when they chose to come back to Australia years later, they remembered that last gig and wanted to kick off their final tour here with us again. How cool is that!



First onsite meeting 8 July 1979 to establish a Kuranda 'sound shell', which became the Kuranda Amphitheatre project.  
Photo: Robin Dods, The Kuranda Village News 1981

To stand on stage and look out to a sea of faces, young and old, is an inspiring experience. The shape and size of the site allows a personal connection with the audience. We hear it in the backstage comments of the performers time and again as they complete their shows. Then there are the times when the full moon rises from behind the stage and the audience is washed in moonlight. You can't get that from stage lights!

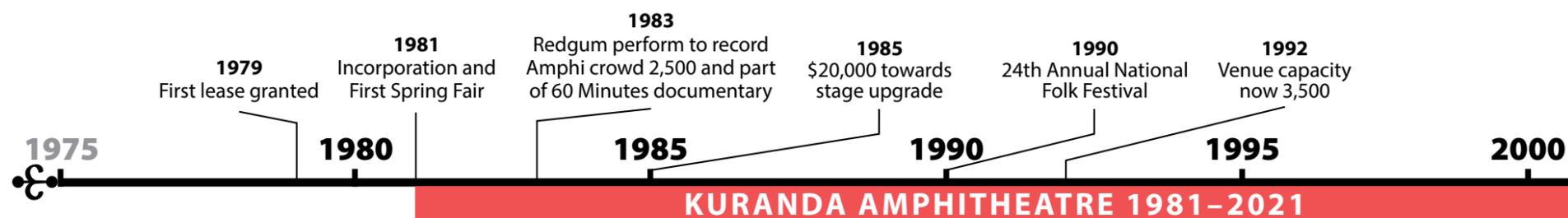
I hope this brief summary inspires you, who may have never volunteered or even thought that your individual participation could enable another 40 years of good times, to bring your purpose, your passion, your intent, your talent, your skill, your strength, your resourcefulness and add them to all that has come before.

There have been difficult times for the Amphitheatre in the past, and even though these times are different, we should not let this contribute to the loss of this wonderful place.

In 2014, the Amphitheatre funded, with the help of generous local people, a minor economic study to demonstrate to Council the economic benefit to the region every time a main stage event was held. The study concluded that each main stage event contributed at least \$500,000 to the economy of the region. This proved that the Amphitheatre should be included in the Kuranda Infrastructure Strategic Plan and funded through it. Sadly, the Amphitheatre never saw a cent come its way. All upgrades were made, and still are, through grant funding from other sources, and local input.

If you don't think that your hands, your voice, your membership fee, your place at a working bee, a members night, a concert or a play is important ... you are wrong, and there are 40 years of Amphitheatre history to prove it. The Amphitheatre needs YOU, and in the words of one of our past presidents "If you think you don't need the Amphitheatre now, do it for your children". We must not lose this wonderful place, this magic venue and meeting place we have made, and whose full potential is yet to be realised.

Brian Clarke, inaugural President Kuranda Amphitheatre Society 1981–1983, President 2006–2009, still volunteering in 2021.



# Reminiscences on the Kuranda Amphitheatre

by Eve Stafford

"It was 40 years ago today..." (with apologies to Sgt. Pepper).

Two late 1970s initiatives set Kuranda's path to becoming a successful day-destination tourism niche – the Kuranda Markets, and the Kuranda Amphitheatre. Both were outcomes of the entrepreneurial DIY ethos arising out of the communitarian counter-culture moving into Kuranda, building quirky hand-made houses and growing gardens.

The original Honey House markets followed 1970s markets rotating between private dwellings for years, with barter, socialising and acoustic music afternoons. The Amphitheatre was a deliberate lifestyle move by musicians, especially the *Rainbow House Country Band*, keen to play for their 'home' community with their young families in the outdoors.

In 1979, the long-haired, 'alternative' proponents thought best to put forward four upstanding members of the community as trustees to negotiate the recreation reserve lease with the shire council in conservative Mareeba. These were Joan Dods, Jeremy Darvill, Jay Grievson and Thelma Cohen.

After many working bees, the semi-circular amphitheatre terraces were sculpted and grassed, the grounds landscaped with hundreds of donated palms, and a 'top shed' and makeshift stage built. Everyone was assigned a share of the workload.

With a liberal sprinkling of crafts and music, the Kuranda Plant Festival in November 1980 was the first event. The economic injection of a wider regional audience followed in 1981, with the first Spring Festival headlined by jazz legend Don Burrows and his Quintet.

The second Spring Festival in 1982 led to a debt, giving rise to tensions between the trustees making the decisions, and 'workers' doing the grunt work. This conflict is amply documented in Kuranda anthropologist Rosita Henry's book, *Performing Place, Practising Memories: Aboriginal Australians, Hippies and the State*.

The Mareeba Council stepped in to adjudicate, recommending an incorporated association with annual elections, so the membership-based Kuranda Amphitheatre Society was born.

Built by and for the community as an egalitarian meeting place, in the absence of any town hall, little did we know that simultaneous movements put musicians on the road Australia-wide. *Bullamakanka*, *Redgum*, *Goanna*, *INXS*, *Midnight Oil*, *Slim Dusty*, *Warumpi* and more Australian bands began touring to large outdoor concerts that included Kuranda, as celebrated in the six-part ABC doco *It's a Long Way to the Top If You Wanna Rock 'n' Roll*.

Community members gained valuable skills in all aspects of event management by rotating between the gate, catering, bar, backstage, sound and lights, poster design, and the managerial aspects of booking the bands or applying for liquor licences.

The three main revenues were a share of the ticket price, the bar and the kitchen. One big concert, thirsty patrons were five-deep, with over \$18K (in 1980s money) taken across the bar.

There were several serendipities in Kuranda's success. Morning markets and the afternoon concerts were both on a Sunday. With no Sunday trading for supermarkets, Kuranda became a region-wide magnet for shopaholics and families out for a Sunday drive.

At a time when many pubs and clubs were still nominally segregated, the Amphitheatre became the 'village green' where everyone was welcome. From the outset in the early years, Kuranda's own crowd favourite, the Mantaka band, was almost always the go-to support act. To this day, their *Living In Kuranda* is considered a Kuranda anthem.

When the Cairns International Airport opened in 1984, overseas artists began playing the amphitheatre – Charlie Pride, Odetta, the Fureys, and the Wailers. Throughout the 1980s I did publicity, with a weekly Cairns Post and Tablelands column on the arts page. Seeing the manifests of all the bands coming, it struck me how often Kuranda Amphitheatre was only one to two concerts in Australia. Holding a crowd of 3500, the Amphi was the ideal size for touring shows, long before the Cairns Convention Centre, Tanks Arts Centre or the new Cairns Performing Arts Centre were built.

Sunday afternoons I would lay with my zoom camera against the rise of the first terrace closest to the stage, facing the 'orchestra pit' where people danced. On moonless Sunday nights, I would develop the film and print one photo, delivering it pre-internet to the Cairns Post Monday mornings.

Then a funny thing happened. Like moths to the limelight, community members wanted to be on the stage themselves, and community theatre was born. Sometimes there were 100-150 people involved in all the creative arts – set design, costumes, music, choreography, skits and eventually, local playwrighting. These were spectaculars.

While *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland* or plays by David Williamson, Michael Gow or Dario Fo were imported scripts, locally written plays and variety shows took over. After they moved to Kuranda, Don and Judy Freeman first produced *Babble on Babylon*, then *The Odyssey You'll Ever See*, which led to the founding of Tjapukai Dance Theatre with daily shows in the main street, employing many local Djabugay dancers.

*Timewarp*, written and performed by Dave Harris and many Djabugay members for the 1988 Bicentennial told the story of 200 years since the First Fleet arrived, then travelled forward in time to Kuranda in 1888 and then the future, before returning to present day Kuranda.

Spoofing the Logies, a Toadies Awards night saw winners presented with a gaudy Golden Toad in several categories. Though tongue-in-cheek, these awards were much coveted. A trove of this flowering of creativity is best viewed on the Kuranda Amphitheatre Friends Facebook page.

The Kuranda Amphitheatre became the centre of



## ASH WEDNESDAY FUNDRAISER

In February 1993, the Kuranda Amphitheatre hosted an Ash Wednesday (Victoria/South Australia disaster) Bush Fire fundraiser, with a seven-hour open air concert, with all performers donating their time, farmers and producers donating food.

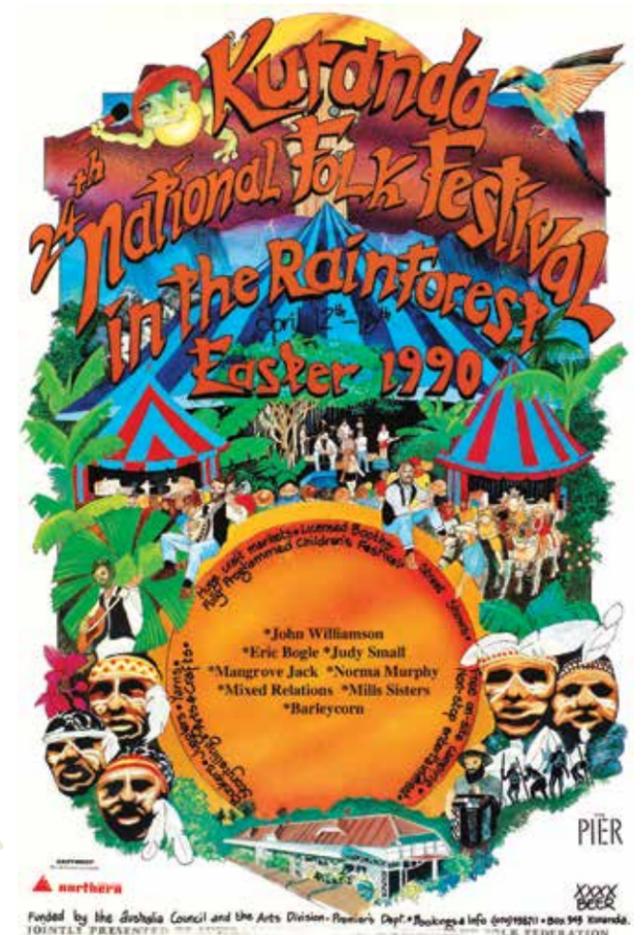
"Some of our top local bands and visiting musicians... strung together a great afternoon of entertainment for almost 1,000 people." *Helmut Katterl, Cairns Post*

The entire event was voluntary, a complete community effort that raised \$9,000. It was a perception-breaker for many, who saw the great generosity of spirit evident in the Kuranda community, concentrated in the Amphitheatre to raise funds for others devastated by natural disaster thousands of kilometres away.

community life and in daily use, morning, noon and night. Several theatre groups sprang up. There was a mums and bubs play group, aerobics and dance classes, tai chi and much more. CDP projects and regular working bees transformed the landscape with lush plantings and intriguing rock works.

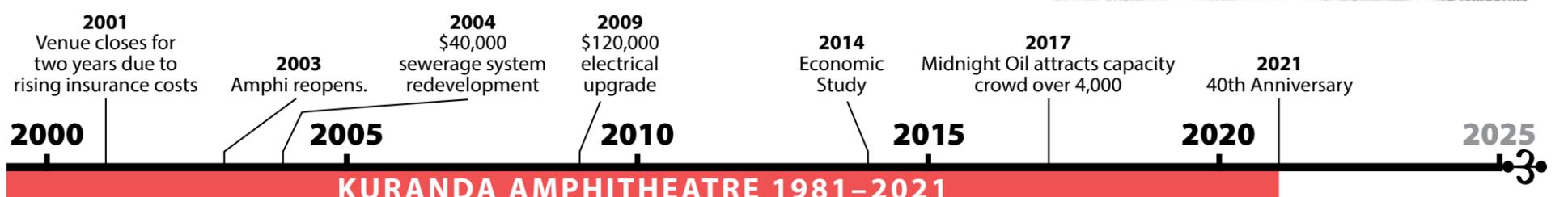
The Amphitheatre hosted numerous fundraising concerts, such as the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfire appeal with \$9,000 raised, and the Djabugay protests against Skyrail. Although Skyrail was built, protest was effective in raising environmental standards, with Skyrail going on to win an environmental award.

What started as a community building a venue, became a venue that built the community, based on civic-minded ideals of participatory democracy. Several of us went on to larger regional, state and national roles in the arts, tourism and environmental spheres. There is a study waiting to be done into what became of the next generation who were kids hanging out together there during the 1980s while their parents 'played'. It's clear to see the influence of creativity in many of their lives, making careers in fashion, jewellery, music, circus, sound and lights, and even international DJs.



"Yesterday's lineup (at the National Folk Festival) concentrated on two main venues, the amphitheatre and the big top erected in the Kuranda State School grounds ...capable of seating 2,000 people. After showers on previous days dampened proceedings at the amphitheatre, hay was scattered and 2,000 people brought tarps, folding chairs and even garbage bags, to prevent wet, muddy backsides. Kuranda did well to cope with the influx of about 5,000 people during the day. An estimated 30,000 will have visited the area by tonight. More than 400 tents were erected in the school grounds, as all accommodation was booked out months ago."

Eve Stafford, The Cairns Post 16 April 1990.



KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE presents  
"Finger pickin' good"  
**BLUE GRASS**  
Chris Duffy AUST. #1 BANJO & Paul Wookey TOP GUITAR  
Mangrove Jack & Buckley's Chance  
1pm to 5pm—Sunday 27th May—Gate 14; Kids Free  
1984

Featuring NATIONAL TOUR '84  
**RED GUM**  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST  
**Bullamakanka**  
SUN. 28 OCT.  
**KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE**  
1984

**Midnight Oil!**  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1984

BLACK AUSSIE ROCK 'N' REGGAE  
**mantaka**  
WITH Elektron Lance Riley Friends  
THE ROSE JAMES BAND.  
Kuranda Amphitheatre. \$4  
SUN. 2nd JUNE. 1pm. KIDS FREE  
1985

# 40 YEARS OF MUSIC

"Until last Sunday I'd never seen Paul Kelly at Kuranda Amphitheatre either. Now I'm hooked."  
Geoff

**RED GUM**  
SUN 9TH JUNE  
The DROVERS' DOG TOUR  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
NEW SINGLE The DROVERS' DOG  
1985

FRONT PRESENTS  
**KATE CEBERANO & HER SEXTET**  
1985

The Greatest Australian Jazz event in 200 Years  
THE AUSTRALIAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA  
11 of Australia's finest musicians together for a BICENTENNIAL JAZZ SHOWDOWN  
Under the stars  
**KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE**  
Thursday 16th June at 7.30 pm  
Jazz from 6 pm with "FUN JUNGLE" & "HOT GOSSIP"  
Tickets: \$13 Adults \$7 Ch/Pens.  
BOOKINGS: CITY PLACE BOOKING OFFICE PH. 51 3211 and KURANDA TRADING POST  
Proudly presented by Cairns City Council & Radio 4  
1988

THE BAND  
LIVE ON STAGE DOWN UNDER FOR THE FIRST TIME  
THE TOUR - ROCK OF AGES  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE Sunday, June 5, 1988  
Tickets: City Place Booking Office, Cairns Trading Post, Kuranda  
Children under 12 half price  
Gates open 1 pm, Showtime 2 pm  
THE HITS  
RAG MAMA RAG, THE NIGHT THEY DROVE OLD DIXIE DOWN, THE WEIGHT, UP ON CRIPPLE CREEK, THE SHAPE I'M IN, STAGE FRIGHT, SHELLS OF SHELLS, HOW TO SURVIVE DISAPPOINTMENT  
1988

**Leo Sayer**  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SUNDAY 11th JUNE - 7.30pm  
ADULTS \$23 CHILDREN \$16  
1988

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S  
Sunda

**SLIM DUSTY**  
CELEBRATION TOUR 1988  
SUN 17th AUGUST  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
TICKETS NOW ON SALE  
SPECIAL GUESTS  
\*MCKEAN SISTERS  
\*ANNE BIRBA (PHILIP)  
\*HELEN BIRBA  
1988

singer of "You've Always Got The Blues" from the ABC TV series "Stringer".  
**KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE**  
Sunday 10th July. 1.30pm  
WITH FUN JUNGLE FOOD & BAR  
1988

JULIAN BYZANTINE  
GLAPAGOS DUCK

GOLDSTAR ASSOCIATES PRESENT  
**ODETTA**  
"The most glorious voice in American Folk Music"  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SUNDAY MAY 29, 7-10PM  
Tickets: Cairns City Booking Office, Cairns Trading Post, Kuranda  
1989

**INXS**  
AND SPECIAL GUEST  
**JENNY MORRIS**  
OCTOBER 1990  
SAT 6TH & SUN 7TH  
CAIRNS KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
TUES 9TH & WED 10TH  
HERVEY BAY - MELANESIA VILLAGE  
ROCKHAMPTON - BUSBY BOWL  
TOWNSVILLE - SCORDBELL  
NEW ALBUM "G" ON SALE OCTOBER 1990  
1990

DO  
K  
R  
C  
★ CLAIRE

THE BOYS FROM THE BUSH  
LEE KERNAGHAN  
TANIA MAREE KERNAGHAN  
"THE BOYS FROM THE BUSH BAND"  
1992

**JAMES MORRISON**  
LIVE  
October 18 Kuranda Amphitheatre  
1991

**Johnno's Blues Band**  
SKITZ  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1993

MICHAEL COPPEL PRESENTS  
**UR40**  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1994

THE AUTUMN "SWEAT" TOUR  
FEATURING  
THE GRAMMY AWARD WINNING  
**innercircle**  
AND  
THE PLATINUM SUCCESSFUL  
**divinyls**  
1995

with TELEVISION & MUSIC  
**silver**  
REGUR  
SAT 27 JULY - KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1995

energy  
The Reopening!  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
Sun 3rd August  
2pm - 10pm  
bar + food  
1993

## BATTLE OF THE BANDS

AN EVENING WITH  
**JACKSON BROWNE**  
SOLO ACOUSTIC  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST  
**RENEE GEYER**  
SATURDAY 10 APRIL  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
ON SALE THURSDAY  
1994

THE JOHN BUTLER TRIO  
SUNRISE OVER SEA National Tour  
Kuranda Amphitheatre  
Friday 16th July  
1994

25TH ANNIVERSARY  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SUNDAY 15TH OCTOBER - ALL DAY  
MADEIRA POINT FIRE SHOW KIDS SHOW  
ASH GRUNWALD - SHANE HOWARD  
MANTANA - BRIDGE  
ZENITH - ANONYMOUS INSTINCTS  
VIGORAS - HONOLULU  
WILLIE AND THE FOUR BROTHERS - THE TROOP  
PEEP SHOW - SISTAZ FOR PEACE  
SHILE FLANDE - DAVE COCKETT  
CARRIFON DE WARRA - MIDGE  
1996

**KURANDA ROOTS**  
JULY 1-2 2011  
FESTIVAL OF SOUL, REGGAE & SOUND SYSTEM CULTURE  
THE BIRD ARCHIE ROACH OPIUD  
DUBMARINE ZENITH DARKY ROOTS  
THE UPSTEPPERS  
SCHOOLFIGHT IMAN DAN  
BASTAPU RHYTHMS  
KOAHLITION THE FLOUMES  
THE BOOZY BROTHERS BILLY BREAD LUMINO  
CLOSEST SPORT THE LINK & MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1991

**RAGGAMUFFIN**  
FEATURING  
DJ ROOTS  
DUB SMUGGLERS  
HOT RUBBER GLOVE  
STEAMIN' KITCHEN  
6-11 PM  
\$5 ADMISSION  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2003

★ MARGARET URLICH ★  
★ JOHN WILLIAMSON ★  
★ NO FIXED ADDRESS ★

**KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE**  
SUNDAY ON THE TERRACES  
7TH DECEMBER 2014  
KOAHLITION BLACK RISING  
INONYMOUS GUDJU GUDJU  
DIGGIS BOSKO & HONEY  
KINDRED SPIRITS  
BLACKROBATS  
FOOD & BAR, A TRIP DOWN MEMORY  
LINE 2PM-4PM @ THE U-STAGE  
KIDS FUN AND WATER PLAY TENT  
GATES OPEN 11AM-7PM  
ENTRY \$5 - 12 & under FREE  
2014

KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE PRESENTS  
**MOTORCYCLE EXPO 2**  
Saturday 2nd October 2010  
from 11.00 Am to 11.00pm  
Day & Overnight Bike Security - \$20.00 entry  
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY  
'LORD' & 'BATON ROGUE MORGUE'  
with 6 Nth Qld Bands: Chronic Haze, Munition & more  
Bike Displays & 35 Categories with Trophies  
By Day: Family Friendly, Fun for Kids,  
Stalls, Jumping Castle, Fashion Parade & Live Music  
2010

BERNARD  
DEPARTING  
SATURDAY  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
CAIRNS  
TICKETS ON  
2010

# YEARS OF MUSIC

Paul Kelly play. I'd never been to the...  
I've done both and it was magic."  
Scott

**The Black Sorrows**  
Hold On To Me  
December 10th 1989

**GONDWANALAND**  
didgeridu, synthesiser, percussion  
featuring Charlie McMahon on didgeridu  
Unique Australian Music  
Unique Worldwide music  
ALSO APPEARING  
"BROKEN ENGLISH"  
"ISLAND REGAE"  
★ Food and Bar ★  
Sunday, August 20, 1.30 pm  
Kuranda Amphitheatre  
Tickets at gate from 12.50 pm  
Adults \$12, Students \$10, Under 12 free  
Bus returning to Cairns after concert. \$3

**WILLYMAKANKA**  
AT KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
DOUBLE PA 1983

**GUDGU GUDGU ★ WICKITY WAK**  
Mickie On  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE • TUE 23 OCT 1990

**RAINBOW HOUSE COUNTRY BAND**  
PASS OUT

**Kuranda National Folk Festival**  
Easter 1990  
ARCHIE ROACH ★ SNAKE GULLY

**regurgitator\***  
artour  
custard & the resin dogs...  
WED 6 OCT  
MT Isa... Civic Centre  
FRI 8 OCT  
Alice Springs... Legends  
SAT 9 OCT  
Darwin... Ski Club  
SUN 10 OCT  
Cairns... Kuranda Amphitheatre  
TUES 12 OCT  
Townsville... Showgrounds

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**JOHN BUTLER TRIO**  
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS  
MAMA KIN  
17 AUGUST  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
ON SALE NOW

**JOHN BUTLER TRIO**  
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS  
MAMA KIN  
17 AUGUST  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
ON SALE NOW

**Sydney Contemporary JAZZ**  
WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST  
7-5pm SUNDAY 19 MAY  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1985

**The Black Sorrows**  
Touring JUL/AUG/SEPT  
AT THEATRE KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE SUNDAY 19th AUG  
12.50 ADULT, 11.00 CHILD, FOOD & BEV. BUS TRAVEL AVAILABLE  
2007. 100% LOCAL SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS. TICKETS \$12.50  
GATES OPEN 4.30PM.  
New Single HARLEY ROSE out now. New Album out!

**HURRY BOOK NOW**  
HUNTERS & COLLECTORS  
SUNDAY OCTOBER 13  
Twilight  
Kuranda Amphitheatre  
Gates open 4pm  
Announcing the new single "HURRY" 1997

**HAIR**  
THE TRIBAL LOVE ROCK MUSICAL  
1992

**REGGAETOWN**  
WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL 2012  
BACK TO OUR ROOTS - KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SATURDAY 1st SEPTEMBER  
BLUE KING BROWN KATCHAFIRE  
GRAMP'S MORGAN-RICE & MORNING STAR - BOBBY ALU-ZENNITH  
TICKETS ONLINE: TICKETS.CAIRNS.COM.AU, TICKETLINK.COM.AU  
TICKETS IN STORE: SHIVA MOON, KURANDA VIDEO  
WWW.REGGAETOWN.COM.AU 2012

**REVAMP THE AMP**  
BLUES & REGGAE  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
ASH GRUNWALD  
CHASE THE SUN • KINGFISHER  
LACHRY DOLEY • IRISH MYTHEN  
BULLHOORN • ZENNITH • PLAYSKOOOL  
MIKE ELDRINGTON • KOAHLITION  
TIM GRIFFIN • CLEVELAND BLUES  
8TH APRIL 2017  
\$85 PER PERSON GATES OPEN 10.00PM  
EARLY BIRD TICKETS - \$65  
CAMPING @ HILLABONG • MARKET STALLS • CONCESSIONS  
TICKETS @ THEATRE.COM • WWW.REVAMPTHEAMP.COM • AVAILABLE

**GOANNA**  
OCEANIA  
LIVE IN THE TROPIC OF CAPRICORNIA  
SPECIAL GUEST DANNY HANFATER  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SUNDAY 14th APRIL 1985

**ALBERT KING**  
ON HIS FIRST AUSTRALIAN TOUR  
BLUES GREAT  
THE LEGENDARY  
ALBERT KING  
AND HIS BAND  
ALBERT KING, along with B.B. KING & JOHN LEE HOOKER  
ARE THE GREATEST BLUES MUSICIANS STILL PERFORMING TODAY!  
TOUR DATES  
TICKETS AVAILABLE USUAL OUTLETS 1990

**WILLIE & THE POOR BOYS**  
FRONT PRESENTS  
**PAUL KELLY**  
AND THE  
**MESSENGERS**  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SUNDAY AFTERNOON JULY 7  
Gates open 1pm  
TOWNSVILLE CIVIC THEATRE  
MONDAY JULY 8 - 8.30PM  
BOOKINGS AT USUAL OUTLETS 1991

**JOHN BUTLER TRIO**  
SAT 29th AUGUST  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2003

**THE WAIFS**  
sat 11th october - all ages/18+  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2003

**WILFATHER**  
GYPSY CARRIVAN TOUR  
SPECIAL GUESTS  
BOOK NOW!  
**KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE**  
3rd JUNE 2017  
GATES OPEN 5:30  
TICKETS \$45  
ON SALE NOW  
WWW.WILFATHER.COM  
2017

**THE FUREYS & DAVEY ARTHUR**  
IRELAND'S FINEST INTERNATIONAL FOLK  
WITH JOHN SCHKIMMEL  
TOURING AUSTRALIA JUNE 1988  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, at 7pm  
1988

**TOMMY EMMANUEL BAND**  
DETERMINATION TOUR  
A NIGHT OF ACOUSTIC AND ELECTRIC GUITAR  
"KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE" SATURDAY NOV 23  
Gates open 7 p.m.  
1991

**THE PROGOOD**  
IAN MOSS  
FRIDAY, APRIL 17  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
1992

**KURANDA REGGAE FESTIVAL**  
SEPT 4 2004  
MAD PROFESSOR  
FREAKY LOU HOT RUBBER GLOVE  
PAD BOYS KOOH ONE DROP  
YUBBAZ THE BLAKBOATS  
DJE NONG, STORMEN, & MORE  
all reggae, ska, roots, funk, soul  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2004

**Simmer Down**  
ZENNITH  
KOHLITION GUDJU GUDJU  
RACONTEURS CHRONIC HAZE  
PAD BOYS DOUBLE D INFINITEE  
MC DIGGIES TASTY  
A scovio birthday party celebration  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
Barron Falls Road, Kuranda  
Sat. 14 Nov 2009 1-11 pm  
2009

**MIDNIGHT OIL**  
THE GREAT CIRCLE 2017  
TOURING NATIONALLY  
OCTOBER / NOVEMBER  
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS  
ON SALE MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY  
2017

**THE GREATEST REGGAE BAND EVER!**  
THE WAILERS  
BACK IN BABYLON  
APPEARING:  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE:  
SUNDAY JANUARY 27th 2pm  
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT USUAL OUTLETS  
Cairns Civic Centre, Sound Tunnel Smithfield, Tropical Palm Kuranda,  
Blakes Up North Port Douglas,  
BOOK NOW TO SEE THE WORLD'S GREATEST REGGAE BAND!  
"Keeping alive the Word & the T" 1991

**YOTHU YINDI**  
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS  
Archie Roach & Ruby Hunter  
Shane Howard  
Pituri & Mantaka  
SUNDAY MAY 3  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
Gates Open 2pm. Bus Travel \$1 3211  
1992

**THE ROMANTICS**  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2004

**Pete MURRAY**  
SAT 24 JULY  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2004

**XAVIER RUDD**  
KATCHAFIRE (NZ)  
BOBBY ALU  
SUNDAY AUGUST 18  
KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE  
2019



## Homegrown Theatre

Community theatre has been a mainstay of the Amphitheatre since its inception. The first formal Theatre Troupe was Junction Theatre beginning in the 1980s. Shed Theatre evolved in the early 1990s and the Amphitheatre was alive with theatre productions from two groups. Then there were Loony Poets nights, review and cabaret shows, skits for members' nights and smaller scale Understage performances. Even the working bees were entertaining!

There was a hiatus for several years in the theatre sphere, but a revival occurred in the early 2000s with the birth of Focus Theatre. Hundreds of productions have been performed at the venue, giving opportunity for so many community members to gain skills in performance, lighting, stage production, costumery, make-up and props. Many Kuranda-ites found their passion for theatre here, and went on to work professionally in the theatre and motion picture industry.



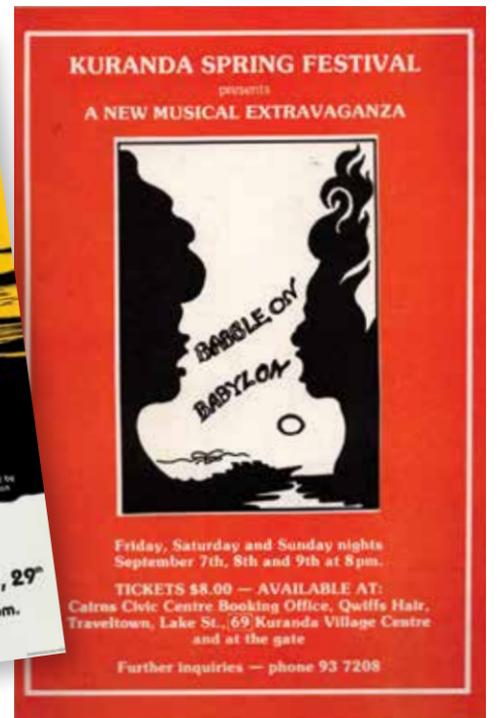
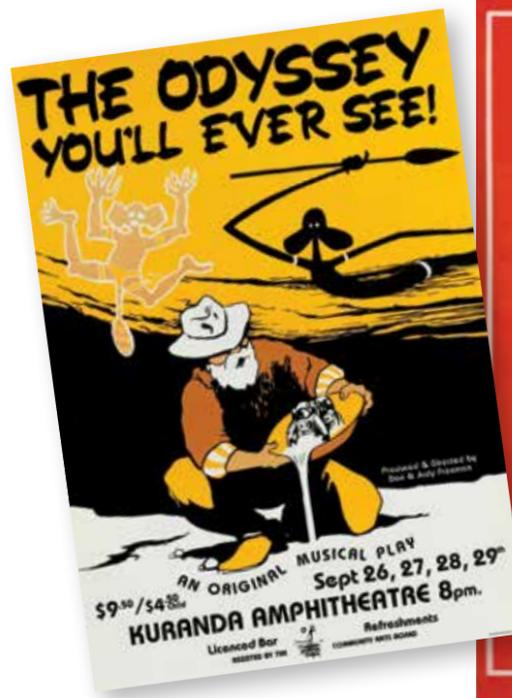
## Kids Theatre, Circus and Dance

Kuranda Kids' Theatre Troupe (KKTT) was formed in the mid 1980s by Diana Kain (Monaghan), involving children and families from Kuranda. KKTT presented a number of theatre productions over the years, even travelling to Townsville to be part of the Children's Theatre exhibition. Several of these children maintained their involvement with theatre productions into adulthood, some going on to perform nationally and internationally in theatre and circus.

Circus has been a popular activity for many years at the Amphitheatre.

"From Little Things, Big Things Grow" is the apt tagline adopted by Kelli Craig for her grassroots group 'Blackrobats'. Kelli was especially focused on inclusion of First Nations children and was extremely successful with the group travelling interstate on many occasions to perform. Kassowary Circus also caught the attention of Kuranda kids wishing to learn circus and performance skills. Then later 'Yak Yak Yak' was seen on the main stage rehearsing for performances.

Carrying on a long tradition of children's dance, Carly is keeping children's theatre, circus and dance alive at the Amphitheatre with Burn Bright Dance - Hip Hop classes and Youth Workshops in Poi and Staff Dance.



## Community Theatre Success

We arrived in Australia in 1982 directly from Goa searching for a new place to live. That very first month we just happened to hear that the Kuranda Amphitheatre was hosting a Spring Festival. That sounded just like it was made for us, as we had a number of original plays ready to go. That year we performed the *Witch and the Dragon*, and thus began our love affair with Kuranda. As community theatre artists, Kuranda welcomed our skills and we went on to write and produce two major plays for the Amphitheatre Spring Festivals of 1984 and 1985. Both *Babble On Babylon* and *The Odyssey You'll Ever See* included more than 60 members of cast and crew, a reflection of a vibrant, eclectic and creative community.

*The Odyssey You'll Ever See* was a story about the coming of the white man to the Cape York Peninsula, and the Gold Rush. It could not be told without an Aboriginal component. We met David Hudson, who took an active lead in the show and brought along some of the local boys as his tribe. Once *The Odyssey* was done, we were approached by a number of tourism industry leaders and asked to consider doing a dedicated Aboriginal show for tourists in the developing township of Kuranda. And so, Tjapukai Dance Theatre was born.

We are forever grateful to the Kuranda Amphitheatre for welcoming us in 1982 for that Spring Festival because had that not happened there may never have been a Tjapukai Dance Theatre.

Don and Judy Freeman

"Theatre performances at the Kuranda Amphitheatre have their own character. I think it has a lot to do with the beauty of the place itself. Kuranda is different - we coast-dwellers can sense it."

Sally Banner, Three Marketeers review.



# COMMUNITY BUILT ... COMMUNITY RUN ... COMMUNITY FUN

“The community has certainly put a tremendous effort into the Amphitheatre. It is a great asset for the culture of the town and I would like to congratulate everyone who has been involved.”

Richard Newport Queensland Tidy Towns judge 1983

The Kuranda Amphitheatre has been, from the first onsite meeting, when the blady grass was flattened to form a seating circle, shaped by the hands of volunteers too numerous to count. In its earliest days, Sunday working bees were held most weeks and were popular. Hard work rewarded with good company, shared food and often a little music afterwards – the terraces were carved out, rockworks made, gardens established, basic shelters built. Eager to be able to host events, things took shape ... so much so, that when a Council inspector visited in 1983, he seemed surprised to find “a fairly substantial wooden stage”.

As the Amphitheatre grew, the demands on volunteers across a wide range of tasks, from grounds, to events, maintenance to management, and fundraising, grew with it. In 1986, the Amphitheatre was fortunate to be included in the CEP (Commonwealth Employment Program). Some of the most ambitious site improvements were completed through this program ... and lasting friendships made by the participants. All the surrounding rock walls, toilet blocks, earthworks and much more was accomplished. Two groups went through this program.

In 2016/2017 CDP began an activity at the Amphitheatre (JobFind) doing many upgrades, training and general maintenance of the Amphitheatre. RISE then took over from Jobfind continuing their participation and support of the venue. TRACQS is currently running CDP and continue to support mowing, whipper snipping and working on

renovations. There have been some great works by these programs over the years and the venue looks so much better for the improvements and the hard work of all the participants involved.

Perhaps it is the human scale of the place—and all the human hands that have made it—that makes it feel, in Goldilock’s words, “just right” whether it’s packed to capacity with a 3,500 plus audience, or a small community event, a wedding, a meeting, a wake. For many Kuranda-ites, it’s just an extension of home. A place for us all.

For several years, the Amphitheatre has been the home of NAIDOC in Kuranda and brought the whole community together in the spirit of respect and togetherness. Thanks go to all who have made this happen.

When it comes to the littlest ones in our community, the Amphitheatre has always been a magic place. A place to see stars, and even be stars. A place to roll down the grassy terraces, chase bubbles through the rapt crowds, and in the old days ride a funky Kuranda train in the playground. Many Kuranda kids took that magic far into their adult lives, building successful creative careers.

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED THE AMPHITHEATRE OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS.**



CEP crew 1986



CDP crew 2017 on same steps as above



Volunteers end of year barbeque 2012. Photo: Courtesy KAS



Completed steps by CEP crew 1986



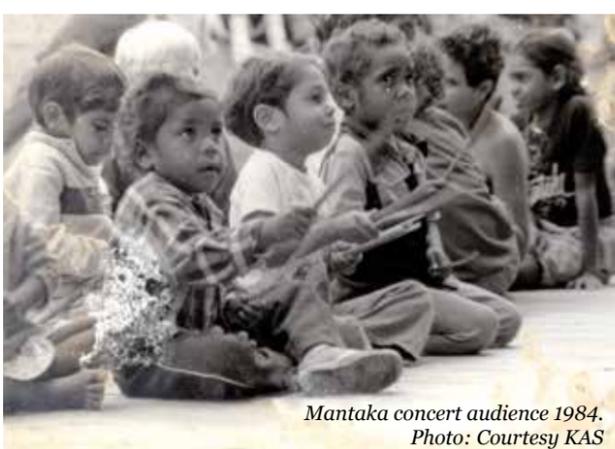
Kids train playground 1988

**A Celebration Of Black and White Music**  
**Kuranda Amphitheatre Sunday 21**  
**Mixed Relations**  
**Dreadnauts**  
**Mantaka**  
**Missing Link**  
**PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS**  
 12-6pm Bar Open, Great Food \$10 per head, \$7.50 conc  
 1991

“The Amphitheatre is a very culturally diverse place where we all come together to participate and volunteer as one family. This is who we are.”  
 Beatrice Sam  
 (Treasurer 2019–2021)



NAIDOC 2019. Photo: Greg Hillman TRACQS Kuranda Photography

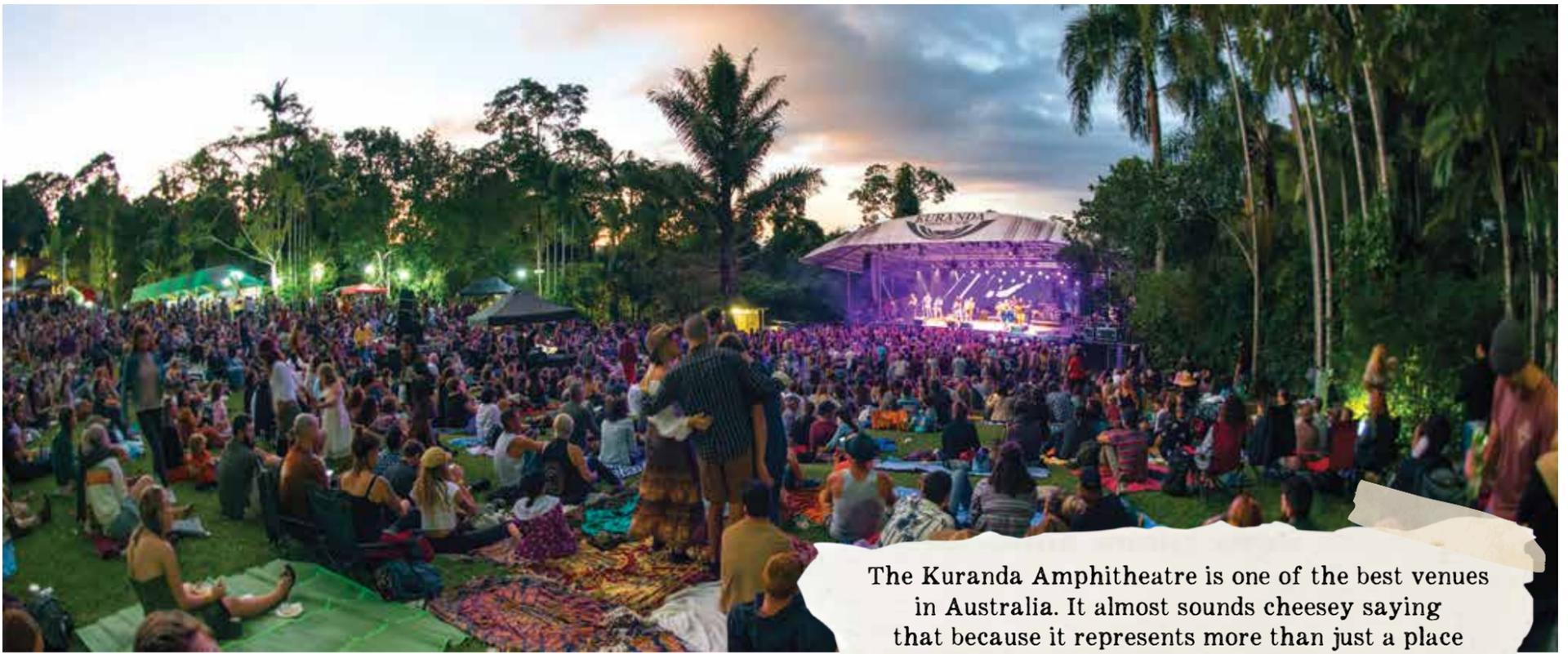


Mantaka concert audience 1984. Photo: Courtesy KAS

**Official 2018 NAIDOC Celebrations**  
 @ Kuranda Amphitheatre  
 10AM to 3.30PM THURSDAY JULY 12  
 NAIDOC PARADE 9.45AM  
 MEET @ CENTENARY PARK  
 ELDERS MORNING TEA @ The Amphitheatre  
**LIVE MUSIC**  
 from Kuranda’s favourite bands...  
**DAMPER COMPETITION**  
 make your best & bring it on the day...  
**BEST DRESSED** - in age categories...  
**KUP MAURI** - \$5 ADULT - \$3 KIDS  
**FACE PAINTING** - KIDS SPACE  
**STALLS** - LUCKY DOOR PRIZES  
**COMMUNITY BUS RUNS**  
**ALL AGES WELCOME-ENTRY IS FREE!**  
 A DRUG & ALCOHOL FREE EVENT



Stephen Philpott’s iconic bubble machine at work c. 1984. Photo: Courtesy KAS

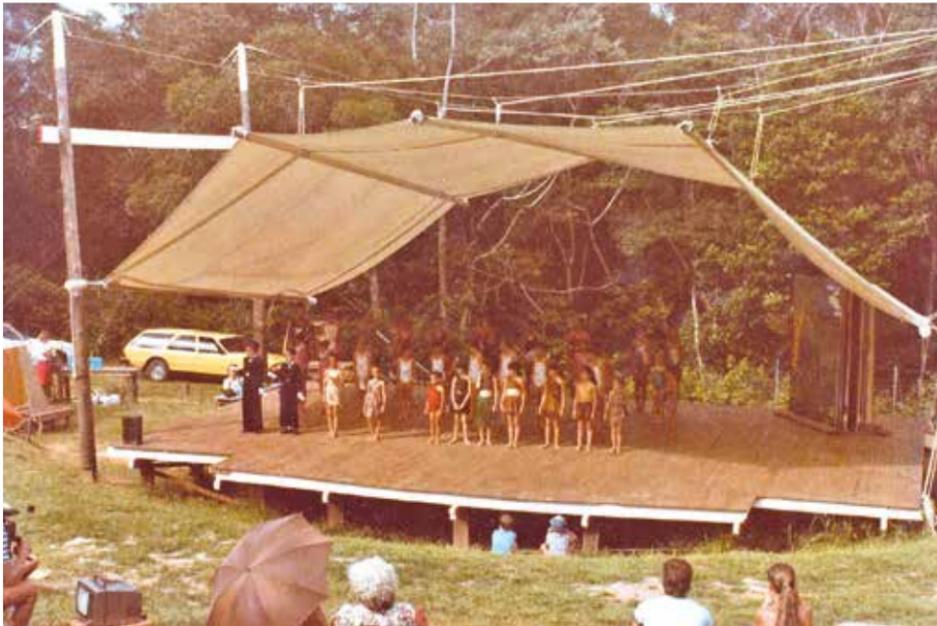


Amphitheatre crowd at Xavier Rudd concert 2019. Photo: Steven Nowakowski

The Kuranda Amphitheatre is one of the best venues in Australia. It almost sounds cheesy saying that because it represents more than just a place to play a gig. For our bands, and I know many other artists, it is hallowed ground. It is a place that we come to in order to have an experience, not just play for an audience but to have a ceremony and ritual with an audience.

I guess for us as artists it has become our version of a corroboree ground. We've always had very special gigs there, so thank you to all the crew who make these gigs happen, punters and organisers alike. May we all have the Kuranda Amphitheatre in our lives for generations to come.

John Butler



Amphitheatre stage 1982. Photo: Courtesy KAS

### SUPPORT THE KURANDA AMPHITHEATRE AND JOIN TODAY!

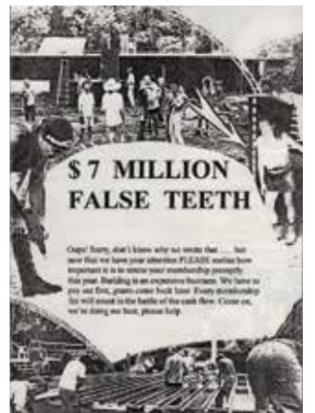
Annual membership is only \$25 family or \$20 single. Join and pay at Honey House Kuranda or online.

Direct deposits to:

**Kuranda Amphitheatre**  
**BSB: 633 000**  
**A/C: 131923039**

\*Use your surname as the reference

*Donations over \$5 are tax deductible*  
**thank you**



Membership is vital to keep the Amphitheatre alive. Sometimes a little humour goes a long way. Kuranda Amphitheatre Newsletter January 1997. Image courtesy David Harris.



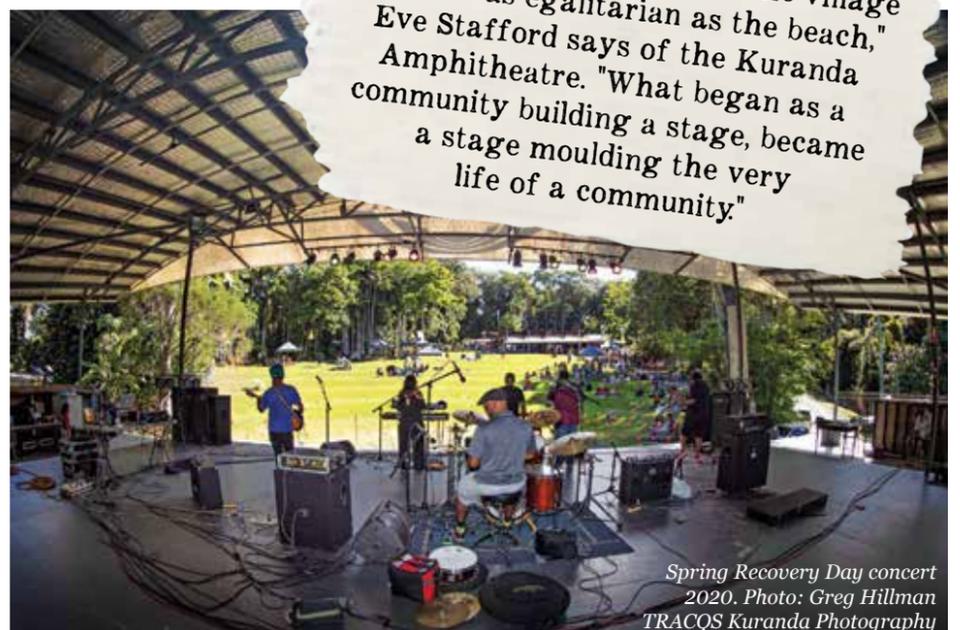
Amphitheatre stage 1991. Photo: Courtesy KAS

The Kuranda Media Association is pleased to publish this souvenir lift-out as a contribution to the 40th Anniversary of the Kuranda Amphitheatre. We would like to thank our volunteers Nettie O'Connell, graphic design and layout, and Gayle Hannah, scanning and research, for all their donated time and resources. Thank you to the Kuranda Amphitheatre Society Committee for access to records, advice and background, to Greg Hillman for photographing historic posters and our wonderful advertisers who have made this, and many other community projects, possible.

"This people's place, akin to the village green, is as egalitarian as the beach," Eve Stafford says of the Kuranda Amphitheatre. "What began as a community building a stage, became a stage moulding the very life of a community."



Amphitheatre 2018. Photo: Steven Nowakowski



Spring Recovery Day concert 2020. Photo: Greg Hillman TRACQS Kuranda Photography