

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

MEDIA RELEASE

Queensland Theatre tackles prize money disparity with heartwarming comedy as Rachel Gordon returns for *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race*

Queensland Theatre is tackling the gender pay gap this October as Rachel Gordon returns home in the heartwarming comedy *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* opening at the Bille Brown Theatre on Thursday, October 12.

Embarking on a journey of inspection and introspection, *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* follows Dr Penny Anderson as she returns to her hometown, Appleton, and confronts the traditional roles and values in regional Australia smashing through the glass ceiling, one potato race at a time.

Written by former journalist Melanie Tait, *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* is her sophomore outing as a playwright drawing inspiration from her own experience confronting prize money disparity at the Robertson Show's iconic potato race in 2018.

"This play has grown so much from what it began as in my own town, these characters are all strong women who come at this issue from very different situations. They all believe deeply that they're doing the right thing for themselves and their town before eventually coming to an understanding of each other," said Tait.

"The best way to knock down these barriers is with a little humour and courage. We can show the world that there's more than one way to win a race."

Award-winning director Priscilla Jackman takes the reins for *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* carefully translating Melanie's unique voice and message to stage for Queensland audiences.

"*The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* touches on so many of the conversations that are at the top of our national consciousness at the moment - topics that are flowing into regional Australia. It's an empowering story of compassion, empathy, feminism and a community coming together to have these conversations," said Jackman.

"This play was written so eloquently by Melanie and it is clear in every word that she's a country Aussie at heart. She raises awareness of these issues in a voice that is so quintessentially Australian prompting change in an utterly charming way that is certain to resonate - and I can't wait to bring that to the stage."

The cast boasts Brisbane-born talent Rachel Gordon (*Odd Man Out*) taking on the role of Nikki Armstrong and local actress Libby Munro (*Grounded*) in the lead role of Dr Penny Anderson, alongside Barbara Lowing (*Rovers*) as Bev Anderson, Francesca Waters (*Vieux Carré*) as Barb Ling and Natassia Halabi (*NCIS: Los Angeles*) as Rania Hamid.

Queensland Theatre Artistic Director Lee Lewis is excited for this Australian story to play on our state's major stage showcasing Queensland talent and marking a moment of national progress.

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“These stories are the threads that weave the culture of our state and I’m thrilled to see Queensland actresses, Libby Munro and Rachel Gordon, take centre stage of the Bille Brown Theatre alongside this incredible cast of impressive women,” said Lewis.

“This cast and these characters are strong women standing their ground, and there’s nothing more Queensland than standing your ground.”

Tickets are available now for performances from Saturday, October 7 to Saturday, October 28 at <https://queenslandtheatre.com.au/plays/the-appleton-ladies-potato-race>

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The Appleton Ladies’ Potato Race

By Melanie Tait

Directed by Priscilla Jackman

7 October – 28 October 2023

Bille Brown Theatre

Cast

Penny Anderson Libby Munro

Bev Anderson Barbara Lowing

Barb Ling Francesca Waters

Nikki Armstrong Rachel Gordon

Rania Hamid Natassia Halabi

Creatives

Writer Melanie Tait

Director Priscilla Jackman

Set Designer Michael Scott-Mitchell

Costume Designer Leigh Buchanan

Lighting Designer John Rayment

Sound Designer Brady Watkins



Queensland Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.