



territory  
**artifacts**

An initiative of the Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums

Local Les Mis  
**Shines**

**TRACKS: Giving voice  
to Territory culture**

**Circle of the Caterpillar**

**Youth Arts Explode**

## Minister's Message



### International Year of the Volunteer

Those of you lucky enough to have caught the wonderful Superstar production of *Les Miserables* in Darwin in April, will be able to attest to the incredible contribution made by volunteers in the arts.

210 people, almost all of them volunteers, gave up their time to create this magical theatrical experience for the people of Darwin. Their only reward was satisfaction in the quality of their work and the audience's obvious delight.

Volunteers are the backbone of the arts sector, working in many areas in many ways. As Board Members they regulate and manage organisations, as front of house staff they take our money and see to our comfort at performances, as technicians they bring light and sound to performances, in regional museums they open up our heritage and history, as gallery sitters they permit us access to places of beauty and wonder... the list of their contributions is almost endless.

To date, over thirty members of the local Darwin community have volunteered to participate in the

recently introduced MAGNT Volunteer Program. Following a comprehensive training program, that includes presentation skills, multi-disciplinary content based information sessions and public speaking, Education Volunteers will work with the Education Team in the delivery of programs through the Discovery Centre.

I am pleased to announce Territory arts and museums volunteers will benefit from a major national training program, an initiative of Regional Arts Australia, the peak national advocacy body for the arts and cultural development in regional and rural Australia. Funded \$1.2 million over three years by the Federal Government, the training program will commence in 2002, offering a total of 800 days of accredited training to arts and museums volunteers in regional areas across Australia. At this stage locations and details of the training program are still to be determined but the Northern Territory Government will make every effort to ensure that as many Territorians as possible enjoy its benefits.

Finally thank you to all our arts volunteers in the Territory – next time you attend an event spare a thought for the many hours of volunteer effort that will have gone into making your pleasure possible.

**Peter Adamson**  
Minister for Arts and Museums

### Department of Arts & Museums Arts Sponsorship Program Round closing 30 November 2000

1.	\$4,000	Adi Dunlop - Beanie Festival 2001
2.	\$9,000	Centralian Eisteddfod Council - 2001 Centralian Eisteddfod
3.	\$3,500	Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi - Nyirripi Art Workshops
4.	\$10,000	Alice Springs Festival Committee – Alice Springs Festival
5.	\$4,000	CASART - CASART Mixed Ability Theatre Production
6.	\$7,500	Irrkelantye Media Unit - Cinema Arratye Anthurre Festival
7.	\$2,500	St Philip's College - Annual Piano Recital
8.	\$2,000	Bangla Association of Darwin - Bengali Festival of Dance and Music
9.	\$2,600	Suzanne Knight - NT Artnotes contribution to Art Monthly Australia
10.	\$6,000	Waak Waak Jungi - Waak Waak Jungi Victoria Tour
11.	\$4,500	Luckstar - Manufacture and promote Luckstar's Debut CD
12.	\$10,000	Shellie Morris - The Dream Tour
13.	\$10,000	Jodie Cockatoo - Good Medicine Tour
14.	\$1,500	Milena Young - Get-A-Head Exhibition
15.	\$10,000	Gillian Hunter - Dust
16.	\$1,150	Penny Campton - Dog Running
17.	\$1,500	Annette Anderson - 29th International Viola Congress
18.	\$2,000	24HR Art - Artists Who Write Workshops - Alice Springs
19.	\$3,000	24HR Art - 24HR Art Promotional Brochure
20.	\$3,000	Australian Red Cross NT Division - Music Mentor Program
21.	\$6,000	Darwin Chorale Inc - Series of Concerts
22.	\$3,000	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Arts Office - FIGJAM
23.	\$2,500	Darwin Patchworkers and Quilters Inc - Territory Quilts 2001
24.	\$6,000	Northern Territory Writers' Centre Inc - 2001 Literary Events Program - Darwin
25.	\$750	Gail Warman - Attend Partnerships for Knowledge Conference
26.	\$6,000	Northern Territory Writers' Centre Inc - NT Writers' Weekend 2001 - Darwin
27.	\$5,000	Northern Territory Writers' Centre Inc - Program of Regional Writing Workshops
28.	\$10,000	Barefoot Theatre - Oceans of Young IDEAS
29.	\$4,000	Jacki Fleet - Imaika
30.	\$7,000	Arafura Ensemble - Four Chamber Music Performances
31.	\$10,000	Corrugated Iron Youth Arts Inc - 2D: Darwin to Dili Phase 2
32.	\$3,000	Drum Drum - Recording
33.	\$5,000	Arafura Ensemble - Performance in the Festival of Darwin
34.	\$10,000	Darwin Fringe Festival - Darwin Fringe Festival 2001
35.	\$4,000	Darwin Fringe Festival - Fist Full of Films Short Film Competition
36.	\$6,500	Brown's Mart Community Arts Inc - Bamboo Lounge
37.	\$2,500	Pine Creek Community Government Council - Arts /Cultural components of Goldrush Weekend
38.	\$2,000	Territory Craft - Katherine Division - Skills Development workshops in machine embroidery
39.	\$8,680	David Lane - Exhibition Development
40.	\$8,000	Palmerston Association for Dancing Inc - Peter Pan: the Ballet
41.	\$1,500	Scott Nicholas - Exhibition of Contemporary Art
42.	\$1,600	Rural Potters Association Inc - Pottery Workshops
43.	\$7,000	Watch this Space - Outside
44.	\$3,000	Patricia Forscutt - NT Country Music Talent Quest (8th Year)



# territory artifacts

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**Front cover:** Adam Best's  
portrayal of Enjolras in the  
recent outstanding performance  
of Superstar Productions'  
*Les Miserables*.  
Photo by Andrew Clasholm.



**Northern Territory Government**

## Contents



<b>Our Company is Our Community</b> TRACKS – giving voice to Territory culture.	4
<b>Moving Skin</b> Taxidermy: making nature look real.	6
<b>Local Les Mis Shines</b> Darwin's biggest and most ambitious community musical project to date.	7
<b>The Circle of the Caterpillar</b> Local artists and community participants revisit an Aboriginal creative ancestor.	8
<b>Contemporary Music of the Barkly</b> A contemporary music program grows in leaps and bounds.	10
<b>Hand in Hand</b> An exchange of skills and ideas from different cultures takes place in Katherine.	11
<b>New Director, New Exhibition</b> The uniqueness of MAGNT will be promoted across Australia.	12
<b>Outdoor Enchantment</b> Fresh air and fruitbats at Darwin's Deckchair Cinema.	14
<b>Last Word</b> A message from Sylvia Langford, CEO, Arts and Museums.	14
<b>Youth Arts Explode</b> Burgeoning youth arts culture explodes in the Alice.	15

## Central Art Unveiled



Photos: Barry Allwright



On 13 March The Hon. Peter McGauran MP, Federal Minister for the Arts opened the new *Araluen Galleries* accompanied by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Hon. Denis Burke, who opened the new permanent Albert Namatjira Gallery featuring the Battarbee Collection.

This new wing was funded with \$2.3 million from the Commonwealth Government's Centenary of Federation Cultural and Heritage Program, secured by the local community support group, Friends of Araluen. The wing offers a previously unavailable opportunity to showcase more than 600 works held in the visual arts collections housed at Araluen.

Friends of Araluen Chairman, Lance Robinson said "The Friends of Araluen are proud to achieve a long cherished community ambition to expand the gallery facilities at Araluen to display its wonderful collections."

Mr Robinson, was presented with a life membership to the Friends of Araluen in appreciation for his hard work and dedication to the new galleries project.

- ▲ Above: Minister McGauran, Suzette Watkins, Sylvia Langford, Minister Peter Adamson and Chief Minister Denis Burke.
- ▲ Lance Robinson and Federal Minister for the Arts Peter McGauran unveil plaque.



# ‘Our company is our community’



## TRACKS: Giving voice to Territory culture

Six years ago, TRACKS’ co-artistic directors David McMicken and Tim Newth remember that gaining support for their particular vision was often a triumph of diplomacy and persistence.

“Dance funding at that time was generally geared towards more traditional practices,” says Mr McMicken “agencies couldn’t understand why we weren’t focussing on a New York residency or training a core ensemble of dancers.”

Six years on their persistence has been rewarded. TRACKS are currently the only performance company in the Territory to receive triennial funding from the Australia Council. Over the years they have consistently attracted positive national attention for their major projects, particularly those presented during the Festival of Darwin.

“*4Wheel Drive: Sweat Dust and Romance* marked a significant milestone in our evolution.” says Mr Newth. “It was really a concept as much as a performance, and that concept still attracts interest in touring to interstate and overseas communities.”

That concept is a shift from using trained dancers to interpret the world, to working with the community, in all its diversity, to tell stories. TRACKS aim to give voice to the community and to look at it honestly, reflecting it as truly as possible through performance. The company consistently widens the notion of possible performers and the idea of technique. They work across both Western and non-Western dance disciplines and cultures, embracing the notion of diversity and ‘community dance’, a concept sometimes held as synonymous with second rate. TRACKS’ view is quite different.

“We look at the people who live here and ask what do they have to say? Our philosophy is to celebrate people for who they are, and the excitement inherent in that. We see the community as people who can and do in other contexts, not as people who haven’t trained as dancers!”

With the current trend for diminishing contemporary dance audiences, companies everywhere are being encouraged to connect more strongly with the community and TRACKS are now held up as role models.

By Hania Radvan

◀ Rukshana Ramachandra and Siddhartha Vemuri, *Rivers of the Underground*, Photo: Mark Marcelis.  
Julia Quinn, *Love versus Gravity*, Photo: Elka Kerkhofs. Grey Panthers, *Love versus Gravity*, Photo: Therese Ritchie

▶ Assorted stills from *Outside the Camp*, Photos: Todd Williams.

The company works in three distinct ways: professionals and community working together side by side, community performers facilitated by professionals, and solely professional artists working on performances where the initial notion and information processes are consultative.

“We have a particular process, but our first goal is to create work, the process itself is a vehicle not a goal,” emphasises Mr Newth. “The quality of the product is the most important thing, we are a professional company and a lot of energy goes into our professional infrastructure.”

TRACKS maintains that it creates work specifically for a Northern Territory audience, in a particular context, but that the national door is now open because of an increasing interest in the Territory and TRACKS’ ability to articulate Territory experiences.

National opportunities, such as the recent request to collaborate with Stompin’ Youth Dance Company on *Placement* for Robyn Archer’s inaugural Tasmanian Arts Festival, *Ten Days on the Island*, are the result of McMicken and Newth’s extensive experience in working with Aboriginal communities to rediscover and articulate community stories.

“When you go out bush in the Territory the expectation is simple, you are told ‘you will learn that’. Then when you work in cities with people who have had ceremonies taken away or diminished you are told ‘I can’t remember’. We provide contemporary skills that assist many in the re-visioning and re-ignition of their culture, acknowledging all kinds of history. It’s an amazing place to be,” explains Mr McMicken.

Tasmania and the Northern Territory may seem diametrically opposed, yet Mr Newth argues that there is much common ground. “In both places isolation is absolutely an issue... and young people in the Territory are often faced with the same question as young Tasmanians – do I stay or do I leave?”

Contrasts are striking nonetheless: “You can be a local in two weeks in Darwin, whereas in Tasmania that may take two generations!” jokes Mr McMicken.

“The quality of the product is the most important thing, we are a professional company and a lot of energy goes into our professional infrastructure.”



TRACKS are using the financial stability of their triennial funding to plan future programs. This year’s projects include *Rivers of the Underground*, *Fierce*, *Between Foot and Voice* and *Mother and Daughter*. The program encompasses the large-scale outdoor performances for which the company is known, along with further developmental work in the remote Central Australian Aboriginal community of Lajamanu, with whom TRACKS have forged a long and fruitful working relationship. It also includes further work into the themes of dying as ritual and passage, and the culmination of TRACKS’ previous work on *Miss Olive Pink* (once labelled as ‘the fiercest white woman in captivity’). A multicultural large scale community performance at the Darwin Entertainment Centre, in kind sponsors of the Company since 1997 through a residency agreement, will conclude the performance season in November.

“The great thing is we are now able to think and plan for a future for the company, 2001 to 2003, with a degree of certainty,” said Mr Newth.

The employment of Betchay Mondragon as a resident Dance Animateur to work with a multicultural focus arises out of the company’s significant commitment to truly give voice to Territory culture. Previous work, such as last year’s acclaimed *Sticks’n’Stones* project (nominated for a human rights award) is a good example. After many years of working on honing the Aboriginal voice and making it speak on a contemporary level, the time has come to also amplify these other voices.

“What sustains and maintains me as an artist are the connections, you have to keep doing a lot of reactive work with the community and keep feeding down,” explains Mr McMicken. “Energies, such as those of the African and Serbian refugees, can be easy to miss unless you search them out.”

Tim Newth sums up TRACKS’ work. “We’re making sense of where we live,” he states simply. a