

TRACKS

# Annual Report

2025



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Nadine Lee in Antidote. Photo Duane Preston

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# First Nations

## Acknowledgement

Here at Tracks, we respectfully acknowledge the Gulumoerddjin (Larrakia) people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we have the privilege to create. We express our gratitude to those who have passed, whose knowledge and stewardship of this land have provided us with invaluable insights.

We honour those who are actively preserving their culture today and look forward to the incredible contributions that the next generation will bring.

We recognise our shared responsibility to respect the wishes of the original custodians of this land. We acknowledge all the songs, dances, stories, designs, and ceremonies that have originated from this place, which have kept the culture alive and maintained unbroken connections.

We extend this acknowledgement to all other First Nations people across Australia, and further to other International First Nations people with whom we work.

We take pride in adding to this rich heritage.



# A Message From The Chair

As I reflect back on the past three decades of my involvement with Tracks, it remains dedicated to producing high-quality work that reflects the diversity and rich lifestyle that exists in this part of the world. Despite the challenges of reduced funding going forward, Tracks remains committed to strong community engagement, particularly with the young and the old.

Tracks Dance Company has had another strong year striving steadfast into the future, maintaining its core values to produce new and exciting works.

The Board is proud of all the members of our diverse and passionate team. Tracks reflects the community it works with, while producing work for that community. The company continues to evolve with the arrival of fresh faces on both the artistic team and on the board in the coming year. New faces bring fresh ideas and perspectives, hopefully charting a sustainable path to a brighter and more productive future. While change for the company is risky, it is also accompanied by an opportunity to walk different pathways and develop better ways of doing things.

We celebrate the contribution of steady hands at the rudder in the past and the new leaders taking their place. To all our Board members, staff, dancers, creators, mentors, and volunteers, your collective dedication and talent has been the cornerstone of Tracks' success for the last 30 years.

It is their unwavering support that has enabled Tracks to remain relevant and impactful within our community, providing a platform for diverse voices to be heard and our stories celebrated.

This is my final year serving Tracks as a board member. It has been a rich, rewarding and entertaining journey for me. I will treasure the memories of each and every performance that I have been lucky enough to see. I wish everyone at Tracks the very best and look forward to experiencing more in the future.

David Taylor

# Governance

## Core Staff

**Artistic Director: David McMicken**

**Company Director: Sean Pardy**

**Artistic Leadership Team**

**Rachael Wallis, Alyson Evans, Jenelle Saunders, James Mangohig, Jenelle Saunders, Kelly Beneforti (on parental leave)**

**Production Manager: Duane Preston**

**Administrator: Jocelyn Tribe**

**Bookkeeper: It Figures**

**Auditor: AMW Audit**

## Committee

**Chair: David Taylor Stretton**

**Treasurer: Glenn Bernardin**

**Public Officer: Sean Pardy**

**Ordinary Committee Members**

**Anna Lindsay, Andrea Wicking, Claudia Lee, Lachlan Spargo Peattie, Max Stretton, Rachael Wallis, Sarah Rennie, Venaska Cheliah**

**Ex-Officio: David McMicken, Sean Pardy**

## Our Vision

**To give voice to Territory culture and to develop contemporary cultural expression through the movement arts in the Northern Territory.**

## Our Values

**Respect for People**

**Our stories, truths and diverse heritage**

**Celebration of Place**

**Darwin with the deserts of Central Australia to the south and the tropics of South East Asia to the north**

**Evocation of Spirit**

**The vitality of living culture enriched by traditional and contemporary life**



Antidote Seven Sisters. Photo Duane Preston

**Tracks Incorporated**

**Street: GO3 Harbourview Plaza, 8 McMinn**

**Street Darwin, NT**

**Post: GPO Box 823, Darwin N T 0801**

**admin@tracksdance.com.au**

**(08)89 411 410**

# 2025 at a glance

## Artistic Leadership Team



Antidote - a remedy for now



Antidote



Antidote

## Choreolab



## Fresh Tracks



## Fresh Tracks



## Fresh Tracks



## Fresh Tracks



## Grey Panthers



## Dead Singers Dance Society



## Detour Residency Feras Shaheen



## Season New Zealand



## Suara Indonesian workshop



## Northern Territory Performing Arts Award - Best Show - Antidote



# Finances

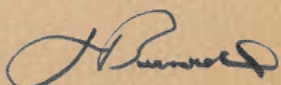
at a glance

<b>TRACKS INC.</b>			
<b>ABN 83 009 367 124</b>			
<b>STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>			
<b>FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025</b>			
	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
<b>Income</b>			
Revenue	3	653,730	651,319
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>653,730</b>	<b>651,319</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Direct program costs		(49,243)	(103,204)
Non-direct program costs		(226,915)	(258,049)
Salaries, wages and fees		(348,882)	(395,160)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>(625,040)</b>	<b>(756,413)</b>
<b>Profit (Loss) for the year</b>	4	<b>28,690</b>	<b>(105,094)</b>

Tracks had a financial turnaround in 2025, after incurring deficits for several years funded by reserves. Deficits were the result of a material reduction in government support and the company's planned approach to return the company to surplus over time while limiting disruption to operations. In 2025, Tracks improved its financial performance from a \$105K deficit in 2024 to a \$29K surplus this year. The improvement comprises a 0.4% increase in revenue while expenses declined by 17%. As a result, net assets increased by 5% to \$642K.

The marginal increase in Tracks revenue is largely attributable to increases in performance fees offset by changes in other revenue categories such as interest and investment income. Reductions in expenditure were across several categories, including infrastructure, administration, production, travel and accommodation costs.

Tracks continues to maintain a healthy level of reserves to fund its short-term obligations, maintaining a current ratio of 3, meaning it holds 3 times more in liquid assets than its short-term obligations. A return to surplus in 2025 charts a more financially sustainable path for Tracks going forward, assuming a prudent and conservative approach to financial management continues.



Glenn Bernardin, Tracks Treasurer

# Artistic Report

Tracks is dedicated to producing high-quality work that reflects and enhances our local community and culture.

In 2025, we introduced a new leadership model. Tracks has always embraced multi-artform approaches, community engagement, and intergenerational and multicultural practices. Despite the challenges of a reduced funding environment, we committed to employing a team of talented artists with diverse skills and backgrounds, as well as strong community arts and engagement practices. This team, known as the Artistic Leadership Team (ALT), is responsible for creating and delivering our programs, including the development and production of our major new work for the Darwin Festival, titled *Antidote: A Remedy for Now*, which won the Northern Territory Performing Arts Award for Production of the Year.

We initiated a new program in collaboration with Darwin Community Arts: Critical Conversations. This program included four events with four Darwin arts organisations, addressing important topics such as relationship building, ethical storytelling, arts censorship, and First Nations engagement with institutions.

Our Professional Development program supports and challenges our sector through independent studio residencies. A new format of Choreolab 2025 was delivered by the ALT, and we hosted Palestinian dance artist Feras Shaheen as part of the National Detour Residency Program.

The Participation program included the Grey Panthers senior dancers (Darwin and Coomalie), the Dead Singers Dance Society, and workshops conducted in schools and studios.

Unfortunately, Newmont discontinued its Community Investment Program, resulting in a loss of funding for our work in Lajamanu.

We continue our legacy building through partnerships with the University of New South Wales and the University of Auckland.

David McMicken  
Artistic Director

# 2025 Artistic Program

## New Works

### Antidote

**Winner of the 2025 Northern Territory Performing Arts Awards for Production Of The Year.**

Tracks' Hope Collectors gathered stories, sounds, and movements from the Darwin community, creating a suite of offerings reflecting playfulness, resilience, and optimism, connecting us through collective visions and the aspirations of our passionate locals. Antidote encompassed a comprehensive package of arts offerings.

**Dance It - A dance for the times we find ourselves in.** On the Esplanade, beneath the spirit-filled Milkwood trees, and overlooking our glorious harbour.

*One free show, in the Darwin Festival. 64 performers and storytellers. 560+ audience*

**Tell Stories - A heartfelt evening of storytelling exploring the world we live in and the futures we imagine.** Featuring real stories from local voices, celebrating hope, resilience and joy across cultures and generations. Developed through the making of Antidote. *2 sold-out shows, 4 storytellers plus dancers, extending the stories gathered for Dance it.*

**Listen Deep: A Sonic Journey to a New Hope.** Audiences entered a meditative soundscape that invited them to slow down and be immersed. The experience drew on community sounds, voices, and instruments collected throughout the making of Antidote. *2 sold-out shows*

**Messages of Hope - A Community Manifesto.** Over 700 messages of hope gathered from the Darwin Community are to be transformed into a public manifesto of hope and remedies for hard times

*"An exquisite show that gave all the joy with humour and community!"*

*"Such a beautiful and connective show. It was heart-warming and reaffirming."*

*"It felt like a dream of what the world could be."*

*"A beautiful setting, amazing music, dance and blending of different cultures"*

*"The stories connected me to our joint sense of humanity."*



*"Entertaining, engaging and heartfelt"*

*"Tracks is the most genuinely community-minded company I know; I love their work always."*

*"What a feast for the senses! From music to dance to costumes to storytelling and comedy, the range of ages - all so impressive but, in every way, what I have come to expect and love in a Tracks show."*

## Amazing Greys

The Grey Panthers Cabaret was to feature 35 dancers from Darwin, outer Darwin, and the Coomalie region, all enjoying life in their 60s and beyond. A vibrant, spirited attitude of Australia's longest-established senior dance group. With grace, passion, and a wealth of life experience, these performers bring their lives to the stage through movement and storytelling: a celebration of joy and creativity, blending vibrant choreography with heartfelt narratives.

(Unfortunately cancelled the day before opening due to Cyclone Fina.)

## Seven Seasons

Commissioned by the Darwin Convention Centre, Rachael Wallis worked with Larrakia Elder Nadine Lee to create a First Nations performance that went alongside a seven-course meal developed around the seven Larrakia Seasons. Performed twice



## Fresh Tracks

4 new works  
(See under  
Development)

## Dead Singers Dance Society

4 new works  
(Participation)

Developing: sector and professional skills

# Artistic Practice

## Choreolab 2025

In its 16th year, Choreolab provided professional skill development for people interested in multi-artform practice. Over 80 hours the course offered a unique, specialised environment to delve into collaboration, devising, dance-making, music, theatre and storytelling, submerging into an immersive, rich and playful creative environment.

2025 cohort: Anita Lakatos, Antony Sinni, Bibi Ahmed, Flynn, Grace Dong, Jennie Attrill, Jocelyn Tribe, Kyhanna Tabakovic, Nadine Lee, Sheila Rose

"Great to see individual & group creativity... impressive local talent, not just choreography and dance but including music composition"

"I thoroughly enjoyed the performance for its thoughtful presentation, its community-centred approach and how it normalised the presentation of works in progress.

### Professional and Skill Development

**Space Time Residency**  
123 hours - 3 residents

**Choreolab**  
10 participants  
80 hours Lab work

**Detour Residency**  
3 weeks  
Feras Shaheen (Palestinian)

**Practise Practice**  
31 hours

**Generating Divergence (Grey Panthers)**  
44 hours

**Fresh Tracks**  
4 artists/groups  
90 hours of development

## RESIDENCY PROGRAM

### Space Time Residency

Local independent dance artists provided with access to development time in the well-appointed Tracks space during Wet Season (Nov- Feb)

#### Residents:

Molly O'Hagen: workshopping of a new commercial/contemporary dance with elements of physical theatre

Venaska Cheliah: Exploring our feminine awakening and what it means to return to familiar movements or starting anew.

Jules Gabor: explore ways we can use contemporary, hip-hop and K-Pop styles of dance to bring young people together

## Detour Residency

In a spirit of mutuality and reciprocity, five leading Australian dance companies host an independent dance artist for a 15-week interconnected paid residency. Detour was made possible by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, and partner companies Dance Makers Collective, Dancenorth, GUTS Dance, Tasdance, Tracks Dance and STRUT Dance. Our 2025 resident was Feras Shaheen.



Feras Shaheen's Residency included:

A Dabke Workshop. This Palestinian dance form is celebratory, full of strong footwork. Although Feras has a Hip Hop background, Dabke is his cultural dance. Feras is continuing to explore his work - Dance Dance - Intifada. Sound: Kuya James + Ya Zareef Al-Toul by Al-Aksi and Autostrad presented as part of Fresh Tracks 2025, Darwin Fringe Festival.

Motherhood in the Colony - a film screening and panel discussions hosted by Palestinian Action Group Garramilla, Feras, Tracks, and Garuwa. In a world shaped by violence and erasure, this film brings together 8 Palestinian and First Nations mothers. Through intimate storytelling, the film unravels stories of colonial trauma and mothering as an act of resistance. Feras raised questions with Larrakia artists Nadine Lee, and Cyan Sue-Lee, Genevieve Grieves (filmmaker and storyteller), Natalie Hunter (Close Don Dale Now, Justice not Jails), Mago Shaheen (Feras' Mother via Zoom)

Critical Conversations Episode 3 - Arts Censorship - How do we navigate censorship in small communities

Kuya James produced a new hip-hop track with Feras.

## Generating Divergence

This group of Senior Dancers and dance makers is drawn from the broader Grey Panther program. Begun in 2022 through a program led by Helen Herbertson, this group met weekly to develop improvisation and choreographic skills to explore dance and the ageing body.

## Fresh Tracks

An opportunity for dance artists to present more experimental works in development. Drawn from our ongoing residencies, Choreolabs, and development programs, Fresh Tracks provides support to increase the creative capacity of the dance community and audiences in the Northern Territory of Australia. New works were:

**Viscosity** by Kate Mornane, with Jenelle Saunders, Maari Gray

**Consequences** by the Grey Panthers Choreographic Extension ensemble:  
Ellen Hankin, Darryl Butler, Nicki Charlesworth-Canning, Lyn Minchin, David McMicken

**Fragmentation** by Grace Dong

**Dance Dance Intifada** by Feras Shaheen

Artist Q and A led by Alyson Evans, and Emma Corrick

2 Sold out shows - total 86 Audience members



## Practise Practice

A weekly multi-artform practice session led by members of the Artistic Leadership Team

## Company Development

The company held two days of development. Tracking our present, mapping our future, we delve into the needs of the company in order to deliver our strategic plan.

## Seasoned Symposium - Christchurch, New Zealand

David McMicken was invited to attend and present at the 2025 Seasoned Dance Symposium - Maturity in Movement, held in Christchurch (Ōtautahi), focusing on older adults. The three-day event featured classes, workshops, and a performance evening called Bloom. The symposium showcased a strong current of Maori culture throughout. The chance to share what David had done in the First Nations Space with people from New Zealand was excellent. It was a great opportunity to benchmark our work with older adults against another country and culture. David ran two workshops, choreographed a dance for the final performance, and attended other workshops, forums, and discussion groups.

## Sector Development

Hungry Hearts Collective - (Connecting People Through Story)

1 week Residency - 1 week working on new youth show - Life is Swift by Ciella Williams

Drama Dance NT Professional Development

Jenelle and David attended a session to put forward the history of Tracks artistic practice and its relevance to the education system

Additional: School and Holiday Programs: Darwin Middle School, Haylebury College, Nhullunbuy Holiday Program, Teacher Training Sessions

**667 hours used for 20 Tracks' development programs**

**131 hours of studio time utilised by 14 community groups**

# Participation

## Grey Panthers & Dead Singers Dance Society

### Grey Panthers Seniors Dance

Tracks believes in dance as a whole-of-life activity exemplified by the Grey Panthers troupe for the over-60s. Established in 1988, it is arguably the longest-running seniors community dance group in Australia. From February to December, they gather for a weekly dance class in Darwin on Friday and Wednesday in Batchelor (servicing the Coomalie Region). As regular performers on the region's calendar, the group performs repertoire and new works at community, charitable, and Senior-specific events. The troupe performed for International Women's Day, Seabreeze Festival, and Brenda Logan's Celebration of Life at Darwin Community Arts. They prepared a full-length Cabaret, Amazing Greys, that was postponed to 2026 due to Cyclone Fina.

### Dead Singers Dance Society

Four 4-week courses and performances held across the year,  
Course 1: International Women's Day. Dead Singers celebrated: Janis Joplin, Nina Simone, Sophie, Tammi Tyrell. Performance IWD, Civic Park,  
Course 2: Kurt Cobain. Performance - Seabreeze Festival  
Course 3: Roberta Flack (Remixed by James Mangohig). Performance: Boots Club - Flora's Temper Mexicantina  
Course 4: Frank Sinatra. Performance cancelled due to Cyclone Fina.

164 hours of Grey Panther workshops.  
6 community performances

20 hours Dead Singer workshops.  
3 community performances

# More classes and workshops

- Two-day school holiday program delivered by Rachael Wallis
- Three-day Nhulunbuy school holiday program - Bala Neba, Olivia Marchesi
- NAIDOC WEEK CLASSES: Rachael Wallis
- Nightcliff Middle School - First Nations approaches - Rachael Wallis
- Darwin Middle School First Nations dance styles
- Hailebury Renshaw College - Well Being Day. Rachael Wallis, Spencer Spillet, Triki, Olivia Marchesi
- 3rd Annual Dancers Picnic - Sunset Park, Nightcliff. A chance for the dance community to gather and claim the same place the dance stage is every year for the Seabreeze Festival
- Two performances for International Women's Day
- Three performances at Seabreeze

## Research, Legacy, and Conversations

Ongoing research through the University of New South Wales with Professor Jennifer Biddle and Dr Sudipter Dowsett, funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), researching Milpirri as a radical long-term First Nations artistic practice spanning Warlpiri and contemporary practices.

Work with Auckland University with Professor Nicholas Rowe around Tracks 'alternative Community-Based choreographic practices'

Attend Meeting of Arts Professionals: in Katherine ,David, Sean, and Alyson



# Critical Conversations

A new program devised by Darwin Community Arts and Tracks. At a time when the world seems to be all about creating division, four of Darwin's leading arts organisations (Brown's Mart, Darwin Community Arts, Darwin Fringe Festival, Tracks Dance Company) curated current conversations about arts activism, ethical practice, and our social responsibility as creatives. Each organisation focused on topics of relevance to them.

**Episode 1 - Tracks - Building long-term cultural and artistic relationships in quickly changing times.** Panellists: Rachael Wallis, Alyson Evans, James Mangohig, and Jenelle Saunders. Évocateur Sean Pardy

**Episode 2 Darwin Community Arts - Ethical Story-telling, collaborating with care, respect, and responsibility.** Panellists: Genevieve Grieves (GARUWA), Shay Jayawardena (Qubit Gallery and Incubator), David McMicken (Tracks Dance). Évocateur Alyson Evans

**Episode 3 Darwin Fringe Festival - Censorship and the Arts. How do we navigate arts censorship in small communities?** Panellists Cyan Sue Lee, a Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and Karajarri woman, Feras Shaheen, born in Dubai to Palestinian parents (Gaza/Al Lid), Justine Davis, Independent NT Politician and working in peacebuilding work and conflict transformation, Therese Ritchie, artist, writer, portrait photographer and graphic designer. Évocateur Sean Pardy.

**Episode 4 - Brown's Mart - What does it mean to navigate an industry not built with you in mind?** BIPOC women and queer artists share what it means to be the first, the only, or the few in creative spaces. Panellists: Yvette Walker, Brown's Mart CEO and Artistic Director, Rachael Chisolm, playwright, actor, and activist, and Larrakia artist Cyan Sue Lee. Curated by Brown's Mart Emerging Creative Producer Tahlia Biggs.

*"Connection through art is vital, especially now when some countries/people seem to be moving away from true commonalities that make us human; the event was encouraging that Tracks values and actively works to support people connecting through art."*

# Report against goals as stated in the Tracks constitution

Goal 1: To create, produce and develop original movement-based work that reflects culture

- (i) developing and encouraging expressions of identity and place;*
- (ii) exploring the relationship between dance and other forms of cultural expression;*
- (iii) working towards excellence in the movement arts with artists of traditional, Western and non-Western training in a professional context;*
- (iv) further developing artistic and cultural exchanges with Aboriginal communities.*

**Achieved through:**

*Antidote - a remedy for now - Dance It, Listen Deep, tell Stories, Community Manifesto*

*Fresh Tracks 4 new works*

*Dead Singers Dance Society 4 new works*

Goal 2: Facilitate the development of dance and cultural activity in the Northern Territory

**Achieved through:**

*4 courses of Dead Singers Dance Society*

*84 Grey Panthers classes - Darwin and Coomalie*

*1367 hours of Studio use, equivalent to 38 full-time weeks (36 hour week)*

*3 Space Time Studio Residents  
Detour National Residency - Feras Shaheen*

*44 hours Generating Divergence  
Seniors Development*

*30 hours Practise Practice*

*Schools and Holiday programs*



## Goal 3: To develop the profile of Tracks within the Territory, Nationally and Internationally

### **Achieved through:**

*University of New South Wales Arc Linkage research grant and presentations*

*3 days Seasoned dance for the MAture Artist, NZ*

*Website*

*Documentation (Photos & Videos)*

*Year-round active social media presence (more engagement)*

*Articles / Media / EDM's*

*Performances*

*Radio Interviews*

*Advertising and editorials*

## Goal 4: To have a healthy and responsible organisation that realises Tracks artist and community goals

### **Health:**

*operating on Secured 5 year organisational funding from Arts*

*NT, and 4 year funding from*

*Creative Australia*

*Annual Staff Check-in and review completed*

*Policy & Procedures maintained and reviewed*

*All staff First Aid Trained*

*2 Staff Company Development Days held*

*Positive and safe workplace environment created*

### **Responsible:**

*100% Funding acquittals*

*All Board Meeting held*

*All staff who are working with children hold current Ochre Cards*

*All staff hold First Aid certificates*

*Completed regular Test and Tag of all equipment*

*Insurances are current and reviewed*

*Contracts in place for all staff*

*Financial reserves maintained above 20% of turnover - currently over 100%*

# Thanks to:

## *Company Partners:*



## *Project Partners:*

**DARWIN  
FRINGE  
FESTIVAL**

**DARWIN  
FESTIVAL**

## *Supporting Partners:*

**LITCHFIELD**  
*Outback Resort*

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