

# DANCENORTH AUSTRALIA



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Dancenorth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we make our work, the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun, and the Bindal of Thul Garrie Waja.

The Wulgurukaba and Bindal people continue to nurture a deep and respectful relationship to land and sea and it is our great privilege and honour to create on their incredible Country.

We respectfully acknowledge neighbouring groups of our region – the Gugu Badhun and Nywaigi. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and their Elders past and present. We acknowledge the fact that sovereignty was never ceded and that Aboriginal people are Australia's first dancers.



COVER: (From Top) Damian Meredith, Michael Smith, and Tiana Lung in Dancenorth archival costumes. Image by Amber Haines, 2025.  
ABOVE: Yunbenun landscape. Image by Amber Haines, 2024.

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Sabine Crompton-Ward and Michael Smith. Image by Amber Haines, 2025.

## PURPOSE

Creating a culture of consciousness through the universal language of dance.

## COMPANY

A major champion of the arts in North Queensland, Dancenorth Australia balances a dynamic regional presence with a commitment to creating compelling contemporary dance that tours the world.

Deeply committed to the creation of adventurous, thoughtfully conceived, and highly acclaimed new work; Dancenorth has presented work in more than 55 International Arts Festivals and venues around Australia and the world. Dancenorth is recognised as a model for making outstanding works in a regional community, with accolades including the prestigious Sidney Myer Performing Arts Group Award, an Australian Dance Award, two Greenroom Awards, two Helpmann Awards, two IMPACT Awards and five Major Festivals Initiative (MFI) commissions.

Dancenorth has become an epicentre of cultural change by empowering, supporting and welcoming many artistic voices including a diverse range of choreographers, guest collaborators, Artists in residence and dancers.

Alongside the professional Ensemble and touring productions sits an equally vital pillar of focus: Community Experience. Dancenorth's dedicated team works with diverse communities across Queensland using dance to support, enhance, inspire and heal.

Led by Co-Artistic Directors Kyle Page and Amber Haines, and Executive Director Hillary Coyne, Dancenorth is an integral part of the Australian dance ecology, making a significant contribution to the dance sector and building contemporary dance literacy.

## IMPACT

People are more isolated and disconnected than ever before. Dancenorth is an antidote to disconnection, a place of belonging. We are mobilising a community of engaged citizens by creating and sharing dance works and experiences that remind people of the essential qualities of life that arise when we connect with our bodies, hearts and minds, nature, and each other.

## CULTURE

We are curious and creative beings who believe that the body is central to all that we do, and we consciously loosen the grip of the mind to honour, cultivate, listen and know more deeply. We thoughtfully disrupt convention and provide a space in which connectivity between people and place nourishes the bodies, hearts and minds of our team, our collaborators and all those we encounter.

We collaborate and work according to our values and principles:

Robust friendship is central to our collective dance. We welcome difference, divergence and diverse points of view in celebration of our shared humanity.

Artistry is in everything we do. The liminal space between each and every human (heart, mind and body) is understood as the source of creativity and collaboration, where systems emerge via multiple perspectives and approaches.

Bravery is how we navigate the world. We embrace the not knowing as much as the knowing, and understand that systems are living, unfolding and evolving with new inputs shaping their course.

Integrity guides our relationships, decisions and approaches. When we listen, we listen deeply and actively. When we speak, we speak clearly. And when we move, we move with our whole being.

Balance is where we find harmony and strength amid change. We are creative beings who are not afraid of disruption, agitation and abrasion, and we choose to move towards openness, love and life.

## GOALS

- + Create new dance works that are virtuosic and relevant, made through our artistic process of enmeshing body, nature and community.
- + Share compelling dance works and experiences with our community in Gurambilbarra and Thul Garrie Waja (Townsville) before taking them far and wide to people around Australia and the world.
- + Invest in our national dance ecology by providing a creative hub for many Artists and makers, and be known as an epicentre of dance research and innovation.
- + Walk and work alongside First Nations Artists and makers by building relationships, creating new work and sharing knowledge, skills and space.

## FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The Wulgurukaba, Bindal, Gugu Badhun and Nywaigi peoples have nurtured a deep and respectful relationship with the land and sea in our region for millennia.

Dancenorth is committed to sustained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement. We do this through dedicated and engaged consultation with Elders and community leaders, respectful adherence to cultural protocols and a commitment to deepening our understanding and perspective of the Traditional Custodians of this country.

Guided by our First Nations friends and community in Gurambilbarra (Townsville) and its surrounds, we are working and walking together to generate previously unknown possibilities and ways of understanding and being with each other.

We continue to connect and collaborate in ways that are not always outcome-focused; to breathe life and build community strength into this wonderful place. In so doing, seeds are sown, and opportunities to create and collaborate are identified. There are countless ways that we connect: through gatherings, conversations, presentations, event hosting, and many cups of tea.

In these exchanges we are afforded the time for reciprocity, deep listening, and understanding. We are invited to consider new ways of working together; deconstructing and dismantling familiar processes and approaches that can at times be stultifying and rigid and, in doing so, freeing us to be able to embrace different ways of feeling, seeing and doing.

# BOARD + STAFF

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr Judith McLean  
John Drummond Montgomery  
Dr Lindy Hume AM  
Lucy Martinez  
Sarah O'Brien  
Roshni Senapati  
Courtney Thompson  
Jacinta Wight

Chair  
Deputy Chair  
Director  
Director  
Director (from February 2025)  
Director  
Director  
Director

## STAFF

Kyle Page  
Hillary Coyne  
Amber Haines  
Eloise Grace  
Candice Marshall  
Felicity Organ-Moore  
Daniel Lobley  
Sarah Mathiesen  
Susannah Smith  
Aaron Ashley  
Caitlin Halmarick  
Jordan Galliot  
Letitia Kowski, PVW Partners  
William Koiki Mabo  
Yoshie Kenny

Co-Artistic Director, Co-CEO  
Executive Director, Co-CEO  
Co-Artistic Director  
Company Producer  
Production and Operations Manager  
Operations Manager (until March 2025)  
Production and Operations Coordinator (from June 2025)  
Marketing and Development Manager  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
Videographer and Content Designer  
Office and Program Coordinator  
Community Experience Coordinator  
Bookkeeper  
First Nations Industry Placement (until July 2025)  
Production Technician

## ENSEMBLE DANCERS

Sabine Crompton-Ward, Tiana Lung, Aleeya McFadyen-Rew, Damian Meredith, Jag Popham, Felix Sampson, Michael Smith

## GUEST DANCERS

Taliah Barry, Cyra Burns, Chris Dyke, Bella Hood, William Koiki Mabo, Darci O'Rourke, Aunty Rosalind Sailor, Ashley Saltner Jnr, Latisha Sparks, Deja Wyles

## DANCE TEACHING ARTISTS

Madaleine Armstrong, Joshua Cutler, Andy Dexterity, Andrea Gillham, Jordan Galliot, Caitlin Halmarick, Bella Hood, Serafina Lewis, Tiana Lung, Gail Mabo, Kady Mansour, Damian Meredith, Jag Popham, Tara Jade Samaya, Michael Smith, Susannah Smith, Shara Van Hees, Chris Young, Miranda Zeller



Dancenorth Ensemble on Yunbenun. Image by Amber Haines, 2024.

## COLLABORATORS AND ARTISTS

Aaron Ashley, Madaleine Armstrong, Taliah Barry, Big Eye Theatre, Wes Bluff, Leigh Buchanan, Cyra Burns, CONJAH (Jahra Wasasala and Ooshcon), Hillary Coyne, Joshua Cutler, Cameron Deyell, Chris Dyke, Matthew Erren, Jordan Galliot, Andrea Gillham, Eloise Grace, Chloe Greaves, Costa Hagiaglou, Caitlin Halmarick, Michelle Heaven, Nicole Hector, Bella Hood, Naomi Jean, Hiatus Kaiyote, Yoshie Kenny, Jenni Large, Robert Larsen, Serafina Lewis, Daniel Lobley, William Koiki Mabo, Kady Mansour, Candice Marshall, Sarah Mathiesen, Damian Meredith, Darci O'Rourke, Chloe Ogilvie, Felicity Organ-Moore, Jasper Page, Niklas Pajanti, Keely Pronk, Gabriela Quinsacara, Nicholas Roux, Aunty Rosalind Sailor, Cassidy Saltner, Ashley Saltner Jnr, Tara Jade Samaya, Felix Sampson, Asrin Sastradipradja, Zane Saunders, Andrew Schneider, Hailey Scott, Byron J. Scullin, Josh Siganto, Susannah Smith, Isabella Stone, Justin Talplacido Shoulder, Hiromi Tango, Aloali'i Tapu, Andrew Treloar, Saidah Tuaoi, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Shara Van Hees, Bella Waru, Anna Whitaker, Wulgurukaba Walkabouts, Deja Wyles, Chris Young, Miranda Zeller.

## SECONDMENT DANCERS

Jannah Allen, Poppy Anthoney, Grace Arnold, Aylin Atalay, Madeleine Backen, Matilda Backus, Lacey Bilger, Lola Borroni, Kerrod Box, Hannah Brookes, Caitlin Christie, Rebekah Coates, Alice Collins, Harrison Cook, Oriel Copeland, Hayley Corderoy, Kelsey Dell, Tash Dotti, Franky Drousioti, Lori Favero, Maddison Fraser, Zendra Giraud, Caitlin Halmarick, Anna Hosking, Siahn Howatson, Tayla Jackson, Tara Kinajil-Moran, Sureakha Krishnan, Brianna Luddieth, Siobhan Lynch, Sandy Marion, Cecilia Martin, Hoyori Maruo, Tessa Moffat, Evie Morwood, Riley Okely, Cameron Park, Charlotte Pickard, Cleopatra Pryce, Otto Pye, Mia Rashid, Hayley Roe, Sarah Saad, Sophie Sibbons, Susannah Smith, Ruby Surtees, Nikki Tarling, Scotia Taylor, Rebecca Thomas, Lily Tieu, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Julia Villafior, Tori Watanabe, Josee Wilson.

## THANK YOU

Dancenorth extends our warmest thanks to our wide community of members, audience, volunteers, participants, secondments, partners, donors, supporters and friends.

# HIGHLIGHTS

TOURING STATE & NATIONAL



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7

New Works, including short pieces for Tomorrow Makers 7

86

Artists and Arts workers, including the Dancenorth team

749

Local Audience

1,997

National Audience

2,746

Total Audience

1,595

Attendance at free showings, sharings, exhibitions, salons and conversations



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193

Open Classes

2,881

Open Class Attendees

54

Secondments and Interns

170

Workshops

3,976

Workshop Participants

4

Volunteers

# CHAIR REPORT

Dr Judith McLean  
Chair



Image Courtesy of Judith McLean.

There is a line I encountered recently at the beautiful Museum of Art in Atami Japan that has stayed with me:

“humanity seeks the truth, and the arts are most powerful when they are grounded in everyday life.”

This has been the work of Dancenorth.

The Company has moved steadily, and with intention, deeper into the lives of the people for whom it makes work – embedding its practice not only in performance, but in process. This is evident in workshops, in creative development, in the quiet and rigorous building of relationships, and most profoundly in its work alongside First Nations communities under the extraordinary leadership of Kyle Page, Amber Haines and Hillary Coyne, and in partnership with the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts led by Ashley Saltner Jr.

This commitment found a powerful expression in 2025's *A Live Moment* – an unforgettable collaboration between Dancenorth and the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts (Townsville's premier First Nations dance company). In the performance, there was a moment where something shifted for the dancers and the Company as a whole. Those present will remember it: the tingling, the beauty, the humanity, the truth. No distinction between the dancers, no hierarchy of form or training; only a shared excellence, a shared language of movement, and a shared presence. It was a rare and thrilling moment, and a profound artistic achievement. It spoke not only to skill, but to trust, time,

and deep listening. Work of this calibre does not happen by accident. It is made possible through sustained investment and belief.

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the support of the Australian Government through Creative Australia and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, and the extraordinary commitment of the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation. The Foundation's nine-year investment has provided a level of stability previously unknown to Dancenorth, allowing the Company to think long, take risks, and grow with confidence. We thank Tim, Gina, and the Fairfax family for this transformative partnership.

I would also like to acknowledge the remarkable work of the executive team; the dedication of the entire staff, whose loyalty, creativity and care underpin everything the company achieves; and the incredible dancers whose commitment is truth in motion. My thanks, as ever, extend to the Board, whose insight and commitment ensure that governance remains both rigorous and enabling, and who give their time so generously in service to the organisation.

To our other wonderful donors who stay with us year after year - thank you. We could not do what we do without you. Finally, to the audiences - your presence, your curiosity, and your belief in this work continue to sustain us. You all give the Company the courage to keep moving forward.

If the arts are indeed at their most powerful when grounded in everyday life, then Dancenorth stands as a compelling example of what is possible when that principle is lived with integrity.



*A Live Moment*, Taliah Barry. Image by Tszar, 2025.

# CO-CEO REPORT

Hillary Coyne and Kyle Page  
Co-CEOs

This year marked a milestone in Dancenorth's unfolding journey: 40 years of movement, creativity, and connection.

After an extraordinary year of touring *Wayfinder*, both nationally and internationally in 2024, 2025, in contrast, was a year of returning home.

We sank our roots deeply into the earth of Gurambilbarra (Townsville), honouring place, celebrating community, and sharing the transformative power of dance. It was a year of homecoming, a year of presence, a year of grounding.

Our 40<sup>th</sup> birthday gift to our community took the form of a year of free dance classes, generously supported by Philip Bacon AO. Dismantling price as a barrier enabled us to welcome over 300 regular participants to an expanded schedule of classes and workshops throughout the year. The offering saw our building pulsing with life, vibrancy and togetherness.

At the heart of this year's creative program was *A Live Moment*, a joyous collaboration with the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts and Auntie Rosalind Sailor. This work was undeniably the defining expression of our 40<sup>th</sup> year, radiating generosity, humour, and deep cultural exchange, beyond our walls and into the world. The response from our audience was extraordinary:

"Oxygen for me. Hope."

"I couldn't stop smiling from beginning to end."

"(a reminder) that magic can happen in this place [Gurambilbarra]"

"Ashley Saltner Jr. is an extraordinary Traditional and contemporary performer. I felt I was in the presence of greatness."

We also returned to Chris Dyke's heart-expanding work, *Lighting the Dark*. Touring across regional Queensland as part of our annual Regional Workshop Tour, Chris and the Ensemble hosted classes and workshops with over 2000 young dancers, culminating in two rapturously received performances for school students in Gimuy (Cairns) and Yuwibara (Mackay).

In the studio, we welcomed back explosive powerhouse duo CONJAH, whose influence during their No Show residency reinvigorated the Ensemble's creative practice, nurturing play, trust, and collective authorship. This spirit of collaboration also infused residencies with Michelle Heaven, Jenni Large, Zane Saunders, Justin Talplacido Shoulder, Aloali'i Tapu, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, and Bella Waru, who each brought their unique practice and artistic philosophies that stretched and inspired us all.

*Tomorrow Makers 7* illuminated the raw creativity of our Ensemble. Six Artists stepped forward as choreographers, crafting bold, intimate works that reminded us of the beauty of artistic risk and offered a glimpse into the creative heart of these wonderful humans. Their performances reaffirmed our belief that the future of contemporary dance is alive and thriving right here in regional Australia.



Hillary Coyne and Kyle Page. Images by Amber Haines.

In October, our work *Wayfinder* was presented at DanceX, a national celebration of dance curated by The Australian Ballet. Sharing the stage with Australia's leading companies, Dancenorth's presence bolstered our role as a vital and distinctive voice emanating from regional North Queensland.

Our next mainstage work, *Galaxia*, moved into an exciting new phase, supported by Brisbane Festival, Sydney Festival, Adelaide Festival, the North Australian Festival of Arts, and Monash M-Live through the Major Festivals Initiative Creative Development Fund. Inspired by the work of Nigerian philosopher Bayo Akomolafe, *Galaxia* explores resonance, power, uncertainty, and transformation, inviting dancers, sound, and light into an evolving web of relationality.

This 40<sup>th</sup> year has been a celebration of continuity and change, honouring the legacy of those who came before us and embracing the vision of those shaping what comes next. Our future is profoundly strengthened by the extraordinary support of our most generous philanthropic partner, the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, which in 2025 recognised Dancenorth's work by entering into a nine-year partnership with the Company: the longest philanthropic funding agreement anywhere in Australia. A commitment of this magnitude is catalytic. It sends ripples through the ecosystem that will reverberate for years to come. Our landscape is changed forever because of this trust-based investment and philanthropic leadership.

This generosity has been echoed by so many thoughtful people in our community, with our number of donors increasing 10-fold. To know that people believe so deeply in what we do that they're willing to personally invest in helping others experience the impact, too, keeps us striving to enrich more and more lives through dance.

As we look towards the next 40 years, we are profoundly grateful to our community, collaborators, supporters, and audiences. You are an integral and inseparable part of this living story.

As we close out what has been another year of significant undertakings and deep learning, we recognise that we ask a lot of those with whom we work. We don't choose to do things because they are easy; rather, we are compelled by our collective creativity and a strongly held belief that our work can make a small but powerful and positive difference in what, at times, feels like an incomprehensibly troubled world. We continue in our shared conviction that our small sphere of influence matters and we are humbled by the trust bestowed on us by our extended community - our funders, partners, audiences, donors, peers and friends - to do the work we do.

With love and gratitude,  
Hillary and Kyle

# NEW WORKS + TOURING



# A LIVE MOMENT

“PURE, JOYOUS, EXHILARATING, LIFE-AFFIRMING CHAOS!”

- Audience Member, *A Live Moment*

Dancenorth’s mainstage work for the year, *A Live Moment* was a whole-of-company never-to-be-repeated creation, made to celebrate our 40 year anniversary.

*A Live Moment* was not a catalogue of remounted works over the years, rather an interpretation and interpolation of the physical and sentient archives, finding moments of intersection and collision in repertoire, an overflowing celebration and recognition of all that has come before us, and what will continue beyond us into the future.

The work was ambitious – exhausting even – an intentional disruption that activated every pocket of our home of over 40 years at the Dancenorth, School of Arts building, with all staff members contributing creatively in myriad ways.

A highlight for the Company was the collaboration with Ashley Saltner Jnr and the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts (William Koiki Mabo, Deja Wyles and Cyra Burns) performing and creating the work together with strength and gentleness, interwoven and indelibly infused into the whole.

This was, in many ways, the heartbeat of the work.

Dancenorth Australia  
with the North Australian Festival of Arts  
24 Sep – 27 Sep  
Dancenorth Building, Gurambilbarra (Townsville)  
Number of Performances 4  
Number of Attendees 348 - sold out season

#### CREDITS

##### Concept and Choreography and Direction

Amber Haines and Kyle Page

##### Composition/Sound Design

Damian Meredith and Felix Sampson

##### Design Chloe Greaves

##### Lighting Design Matthew Erren

##### Performers/Choreographers

Dancenorth Ensemble: Sabine Crompton-Ward, Tiana Lung, Aleeya McFadyen-Rew, Damian Meredith, Jag Popham, Felix Sampson, Michael Smith and Bella Hood.  
Wulgurukaba Walkabouts: Ashley Saltner Jnr, William Koiki Mabo, Cyra Burns, Deja Wyles  
Aunty Rosalind Sailor and Taliah Barry  
Naomi Jean  
Costa Hagiaglou

##### Featuring

Aaron Ashley, Hillary Coyne, Jordan Galliot, Eloise Grace, Amber Haines, Caitlin Halmarick, Jasper Page, Kyle Page, Daniel Lobley, Sarah Mathiesen, Candice Marshall, Cassidy Saltner, Susannah Smith

##### Production Manager

Candice Marshall

##### Production Technicians

Daniel Lobley and Yoshie Kenny

##### Costumier

Leigh Buchanan

##### Systems Electrician

Wes Bluff for Krank'd Productions

##### Production Assistants

Nicole Hector, Keely Pronk and Josh Siganto

*A Live Moment*, Dancenorth Ensemble in Dancenorth archival costumes. Photography by Amber Haines. Additional Treatment by Tszar, 2025.

# TOMORROW MAKERS 7

“MESMERISING, AMAZING. THE ATMOSPHERE SPILLED OUT ONTO THE FOOTPATH AND WRAPPED AROUND THE OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING. NORTH QLD NEEDS MORE MOMENTS LIKE THIS!”

- Audience Member

Supporting the future of dance, the annual Tomorrow Makers series empowers the Dancenorth Ensemble to embody the role of choreographer, shaping original works that redefine the possibilities of contemporary dance.

In 2025, *Tomorrow Makers 7* was a bold leap into the unknown – a space for movement, ideas, and creativity to collide. The program featured six new works, covering a vast terrain and deep interrogation – each artist bringing a voice of honesty, curiosity and insight into their inner worlds without concession to trend or expectation.

“There is now a whole community wrapped around Dancenorth that appreciates what it means for a regional company to be providing a container of care, skill and love for makers and the community to engage in reflection, curious exploration and excellent art making, and the community truly feels a part of it. How lucky is the company to have Amber holding this beautiful event the way she does. The audience was bursting with enthusiasm, erupting in spontaneous cheers and applause midway through the works, gasping, raucously laughing and energetically hurling glowing trash (when appropriate!).”

- JACINTA WIGHT,  
BOARD DIRECTOR AND AUDIENCE MEMBER

## Dancenorth Australia

22 May – 24 May

Dancenorth Theatre, Gurambilbarra (Townsville)

Number of Performances 4

Number of Attendees 401

*Angel Down* by Michael Smith

*Ernest Livingstone* by Jag Popham

*TRASHWORLD* by Damian Meredith

*She Looks Like Me* by Sabine Crompton-Ward

*Fitting In, Falling Out* by Aleeya McFadyen-Rew

*It's just dancing.* by Tiana Lung

## CREDITS

### Makers/Performers

Sabine Crompton-Ward, Tiana Lung,  
Aleeya McFadyen-Rew, Damian Meredith,  
Jag Popham, Michael Smith

### Featured Performer

Felix Sampson

### Curator and Dramaturge

Amber Haines

### Lighting Designer and Technical Operator

Yoshie Kenny

### Production Manager

Candice Marshall

### Stage Manager

Felicity Organ-Moore

### With contributions from

Dameboy, Dreijer and Dreijer, Julia Holter,  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jag Popham,  
Felix Sampson and Hailey Scott

*Tomorrow Makers 7*, Aleeya McFadyen-Rew.  
Image by Amber Haines, 2025.



The Tomorrow Makers series is presented by Dancenorth Australia through the support of the Ian Potter Foundation.





Wayfinder, Tiana Lung. Image by Amber Haines, 2021.



Lighting the Dark, Chris Dyke and Dancenorth Ensemble. Image by Amber Haines, 2024.

## WAYFINDER

The Australian Ballet invited Dancenorth to perform a 17-minute excerpt of *Wayfinder* as part of their DanceX Festival. Working with the Ensemble, Amber Haines built an extraordinary ‘highlights’ reel of the full-length work, showcasing its trademark heart-filled exuberance – warmly appreciated by Naarm (Melbourne) crowds, and reintroducing the Company to new contexts and audiences.

Dancenorth was recognised for the lasting impact of its 2024 Wayfinder national tour with a PAC Australia IMPACT Award at a ceremony in at the Australian Performing Arts Exchange (APAX) in Garramilla (Darwin) in August 2025.

The award recognised the tour’s landmark achievement in scale, ambition and community connection.

“Bestowing an IMPACT Award to Dancenorth for the second time in just four years is a testament to their artistic leadership and the deep care embedded in their practice.”

- KATHERINE CONNOR,  
PAC AUSTRALIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DanceX, The Australian Ballet  
8 Oct – 11 Oct  
Playhouse Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne,  
Naarm (Melbourne)  
Number of Performances 5  
Number of Attendees 1997

### CREDITS

Concept, Direction and Choreography  
Amber Haines and Kyle Page  
Lighting Design Niklas Pajanti  
Composition Hiatus Kaiyote  
Sound Art and Design Byron J. Scullin  
Sound Sculpture Design, Construction, and Implementation  
Robert Larsen and Nicholas Roux  
Visual Design Hiromi Tango  
Design Associate Chloe Greaves  
Design Assistant Jeanette Hutchinson  
Polyrhythm Consultant Naomi Jean  
Performers/Choreographers  
Sabine Crompton-Ward, Aleeya McFadyen-Rew, Tiana Lung, Damian Meredith, Darci O’Rourke, Felix Sampson, Michael Smith, Latisha Sparks

*Wayfinder* was commissioned by Brisbane Festival and North Australian Festival of Arts (NAFA) in 2022. This project was made possible by Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government Initiative. Dancenorth Australia is assisted by both the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. Dancenorth Australia is supported by Townsville City Council, and gratefully acknowledges the Wayfinder Giving Circle, which supported the making of this work.

## LIGHTING THE DARK

*Lighting the Dark* is a groundbreaking dance work directed by Chris Dyke, a dancer and choreographer based on Kurna Country (Adelaide). Inspired by the revolutionary spirits of Banksy, David Bowie, and Freddie Mercury, Chris weaves a deeply personal yet universal journey that captivates and inspires audiences.

This work contributes to the vital conversation surrounding Down syndrome and inclusive arts practice, demonstrating the transformative power of dance to challenge perceptions and expand the possibilities of artistic leadership. *Lighting the Dark* redefines who tells stories on stage and how those stories are shared.

In 2025, Dancenorth presented an adapted version of this work for presentation in school-based Performing Arts Centres, and presented it as a complement to the year’s Regional Workshop Tour.

This touring model enabled regional school students to experience a work that celebrates the power of creativity, diversity, and human connection.

Regional Workshop Tour  
25 July and 31 July  
All Saints Theatre, St Andrews School, Gimuy (Cairns)  
Northern Beaches School,  
Yuibera/ Yuwibara Country (Mackay)  
Number of Performances 2  
Number of Attendees 190

### CREDITS

Direction Chris Dyke  
Concept and Choreography  
Chris Dyke, Amber Haines, Kyle Page  
Composition/Sound Design Anna Whitaker  
with Additional Lyrics and Composition by Felix Sampson  
Design Andrew Treloar  
Lighting Design Chloe Ogilvie  
Performers/Choreographers  
Chris Dyke, Sabine Crompton-Ward, Tiana Lung, Aleeya McFadyen-Rew, Damian Meredith, Jag Popham, Felix Sampson, Michael Smith  
Production Manager  
Candice Marshall

*Lighting the Dark* was commissioned by Brisbane Festival, and is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, and the Ian Potter Foundation. The Regional Workshop Tour of *Lighting the Dark* was supported by the Queensland Government.

# REGIONAL GRAVITATION



A.R.T. artists Gabriela Quinsacara and Seidah Tuaoi, who collaborated with Aloali'i Tapu, sharing with invited guests. Image by Tszar, 2025.



A.R.T. and Dance Makers Collective Detour artist Bella Waru. Image by Tszar, 2025.



A *Live Moment*, Wulgurukaba Walkabouts with Dancenorth Ensemble. Image by Tszar, 2025.

The Regional Gravitation Program is delivered with support from The Ian Potter Foundation and Arts Queensland’s Strategic Partnerships Fund. In 2025, the second of a three-year partnership, the Program provided a suite of creative opportunities for myriad voices.

Dancenorth takes seriously our role in providing opportunities and spaces for independent artists to develop their professional practice and to create an environment for collaboration, dialogue and creative exchange.

We welcome and host choreographers, guest collaborators, artists in residence, dance artists and secondments to spend time with our Company and in our spaces. They come to us from around Queensland, Australia and overseas, and we continue to find ways to expand our programs so we can do more. Australia’s dance ecology will only thrive when the artists and makers at its heart can make a living from their work and build long careers over their lifetimes.

In 2025, Regional Gravitation saw the paid engagement of First Nations dance artists Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Bella Waru, CONJAH (Jahra Wasasala and Ooshcon Masseurs), Zane Saunders, and Aloali’i Tapu with Gabriela Quinsecara and Seidah Tuaoi. Additional residencies were hosted for Jenni Large with Anna Whitaker, Justin Talplacido Shoulder, and Michelle Heaven.

Through Regional Gravitation, we also welcomed the long-form residency of the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts, who joined the company in developing and presenting the truly spectacular work, *A Live Moment*, with Ashley Saltner Jnr, William Koiki Mabo, Deja Wyles and Cyra Burns seamlessly joining the Company in creative collaboration.

## WULGURUKABA WALKABOUTS PARTNERSHIP

Building on the time spent in conversation and creative mentorship with Sidney Saltner (Bangarra Dance Theatre) in 2025, Ashley Saltner Jnr worked with local First Nations artists Cyra Burns, Deja Wyles and William Koiki Mabo in creative residency in the Dancenorth studio and on Country on Yunbenun (Magnetic Island).

Thereafter, Ashley Jnr, Cyra, Deja and William collaborated with Dancenorth to create a traditional and contemporary cultural performance for *A Live Moment* in September.

In addition, Aunty Rosalind Sailor and her granddaughter Taliah Barry created a special segment for *A Live Moment*, inspired by Aunty Rosalind’s Yalanji connection to the pandanus tree. Aunty Rosalind extended cultural learning to the women of Dancenorth, with two dedicated yarning and weaving circles on Country – a very special experience for all involved, and true to the intention of continuing a deep and reciprocal exchange in our partnership.



Dancenorth Ensemble during a creative development showing from *The Whole Thing*. Image by Tszar, 2025.



Zane Saunders during a showing as part of his residency. Image by Tszar, 2025.

## THE WHOLE THING

The Whole Thing funds independent Artists to create new Australian works from the seed of an idea through to presentation.

Inaugural recipient Michelle Heaven is a choreographer, performer, movement consultant/ collaborator and play therapist. Michelle has worked nationally and internationally with Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin Inc, BalletLab, Helen Herbertson, Ben Cobham, Sue Healey, Walter Dunderville, Leigh Warren, Tamara Saulwick, Michael Kantor, Sandra Parker, Nicci Wilks, Susie Dee, Polyglot Theatre, Black Hole Theatre, Chamber Made Opera, Victorian Opera, and her independent work has been presented at Melbourne Festival, Beijing Dance Festival, Dance Massive and Castlemaine State Festival.

In 2025, Michelle returned for the second of three annual residencies, continuing creative development of her new work with the Dancenorth Ensemble. The work will be presented in 2026.

“Dancenorth is a courageous, supportive, and attuned company of individuals. Their generosity, enthusiasm and dedication create a warm welcome: their eclectic skills and knowledge are inspiring. Embarking on this residency, the dancers and I have been fortunate to develop an accumulated language and understanding. Throughout this process I have enjoyed deepening this working relationship, further uncovering their impressive individual skills, and drawing upon the unique group dynamic. Working with Dancenorth is an inspiring experience which forms an enormously valuable part of my evolving artistic career. I am grateful and honoured to have had this experience and deeply value the exchange, porosity, and ongoing collaboration, as this approach is essential to my way of working and being.”

- MICHELLE HEAVEN

## ZANE SAUNDERS

Zane is an Aboriginal descendant of Butchulla, Gunggari and Jarrowia peoples of Southern Queensland. His work is influenced by cultural references, using sound, media and contemporary concepts.

Zane, based in Kuranda North Queensland, is a cross-art form, interdependent artist who crafts one-off performances embedded in story and location. He describes his performances or dance style as ‘Artistic Movement’; a deep theatrical play in particular space and time. His work communicates a ritualistic incorporeal language, drawing from his esoteric cultural roots and entwined in religious and worldly influences.

Zane’s motivation is to reconnect with ancestral spirituality. He does this by prompting himself and asking audiences to engage, reimagine, and utilise their cultural origins to find solidarity within, and solace of mind and heart.

Importantly, his work is placed in many diverse settings and contexts, transforming formal spaces, employing all manner of mediums and media in realising visually arresting and critically challenging work.

In 2025, Dancenorth welcomed back Zane for his eighth residency, a five-week engagement in partnership with Regional Arts Services Network (RASN) and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC).

“It is a privilege and honour to be able to further develop my work and practice and contribute further to the ongoing conversations and development of Indigenous interests in this country. Dancenorth - particularly their staff and contacts in the community - have always made me feel welcome and allowed me to create not only stunning works but relationships that I now take with me beyond each residential outcome.”

- ZANE SAUNDERS

SUPPORTED BY



AN INITIATIVE OF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT THROUGH ARTS QUEENSLAND



Jahra Wasasala. Image by Amber Haines, 2024.



Jenni Large developing the work *LIP* during her A.R.T. Image by Tszar, 2025.

## NO SHOW

Dancenorth's No Show program is a radical offering, an open-ended opportunity steeped in the potential of everything and nothing all at once.

Celebrating process, failure, attempt and the unknown, No Show celebrates all that is available when artists are given time, bodies and space.

Through our No Show program we offer funded choreographic opportunities for independent choreographers to work with the Ensemble for three to four weeks per year in a process-driven environment, free from the omnipresent focus on outcome, product and performance. No Show is an invite-only program facilitated by Dancenorth and generously supported through the Ian Potter Foundation.

Since 2020, the program has welcomed artists from across Australia, including Alisdair Macindoe, Jo Lloyd, Chris Dyke, Bhenji Ra, Thomas E.S. Kelly, Felix Sampson, and Michelle Heaven. In 2025 Dancenorth welcomed CONJAH.

CONJAH is a performance collective led by Jahra Wasasala and Ooshcon, a Fijian/Pākehā and Samoan/Pākehā duo of artists, world-builders, dance-theatre makers, poets, film-makers, vocalists, writers and entity-benders.

Raised on and informed by the whenua/lands of Aotearoa, and now based in Naarm (Melbourne), Jahra and Ooshcon are the innovators of CONJAH - a creative force of 'feeling'; bleeding beyond the traditional boundaries of physical performance and creating immersive worlds inhabited by compelling beings. CONJAH's work is in conversation with non-human phenomena, the body's memory, cultural-mapping, resistance, reimagined futures and emotional rigour.

## A.R.T.

Artist Residency in the Tropics (A.R.T.) offers independent dance practitioners the opportunity to live and work in the spectacular environs of Tropical North Queensland – a landscape thoroughly conducive to creativity.

A.R.T. residents are afforded time and space away from the familiarity of their usual surroundings, enabling space for reflection, research and development; and entirely new experiences from which to draw creative inspiration.

In 2025, we welcomed Aloali'i Tapu with Gabriela Quinsecara and Seidah Tuaoi, and Justin Talplacido Shoulder to the company as first time resident artists in the program. We also reconnected with 2024 A.R.T. resident Glory Tuohy-Daniell to extend her artistic enquiry, and much-loved ex-Ensemble member Jenni Large to develop her work *LIP*, commissioned by Lucy Guerin for the 2025 *Pieces* season. A partnership with Dance Makers Collective, also saw us host Bella Waru as part of the Detour artist residency program.

### JENNI LARGE

Jenni is an independent dancer, teacher, and award-winning choreographer/director based in Lutruwita (Tasmania). Driven by the personal, political, and transformative forces of embodiment, Jenni's multi-limbed practice centres on care and radical play. Her choreographic work analyses patriarchal systems, celebrates women and attempts to playfully expose assumptions of stigmatised subjects. Heavily influenced by aesthetics and cinematic tropes, Jenni values experimentation, endurance and entertainment within her work.

Jenni received the People's Choice Award at the 2022 Keir Choreographic Awards, and was honoured to receive a Chloe Munro Fellowship. Her first mainstage work *Faraway*, commissioned by Australian Dance Theatre, will premiere at Adelaide Festival in 2026.

"The experience of time and space to develop my new short work *LIP* during my A.R.T. residency, was utterly invaluable. Removed from the responsibilities I feel when I create work in my hometown, or the pressures and pace of lifestyle inherent when working in a bustling metro area, being in Gurambilbarra (Townsville) and at Dancenorth was particularly spacious. Having full access

to the space and a deep trust and support from the team ultimately allowed me to lean into whatever aspect of my creative process was calling.”

- JENNI LARGE

## JUSTIN TALPLACIDO SHOULDER

Justin Talplacido Shoulder is a shape shifting artist and storyteller, working primarily in performance, sculpture, video and collective events. Also known as Phasmahammer, their practice is an eco-cosmology of alter personas based on queered ancestral myth. Creatures birthed are embodied through hand crafted costumes and prosthesis and animated by their own gestural languages. Shoulder believes in performance and shared ceremony as communal medicine for difficult times. Shoulder is a founding member of queer artist collective The Glitter Militia with partner and key collaborator Matthew Stegh. Shoulder is also co-director of collective Club Ate with previous Regional Gravitation artist Bhenji Ra. Inspired by their shared Filipinx heritage and interest in creating new narratives of motherhood and sisterhood, the pair created a series of fundraisers, balls, and variety nights inviting and celebrating their local Asia-Pacific queer and trans family.

## ALOALI’I TAPU

Aloali’i Tapu is a Samoan stage, design, and dance artist from Ōtara, Te Tonga o Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa (South Auckland, New Zealand). Interested in non-Western kaupapa, Samoan values, and collective creativity, a focus of Aloali’i’s work is strengthening community and expanding the possibilities for Pacific and Indigenous artists to create, tour, and sustain careers.

Aloali’i received the 2016 FAUST Prize and was a resident choreographer at K3 – Zentrum für Choreographie | Tanzplan Hamburg in 2022-2023.

Alongside lifelong collaborator Tori Manley-Tapu, Aloali’i co-founded Ta’alili, a collective blending film, theatre, poetry, street dance, and siva Samoa into bold, community-rooted works that reflect and celebrate contemporary Pacific experiences. Ta’alili received the 2021 Arts Foundation Springboard Award.

Aloali’i practice is expanding beyond Pacific Futurism-driven projects toward collaborations that develop a shared language between kindred artists - where identity is felt through relation, rhythm, and care rather than category.

## GLORY TUOHY-DANIELL

Glory is a completely unique dancer, storyteller, and descendant of Indjalandji-Dhidhanu and Alyewarre Aboriginal people, in the North West Queensland and Northern Territory.

Glory graduated from NAISDA Dance College then joined Bangarra Dance Theatre in 2016. In 2023, Glory made her choreographic debut with *Keeping Grounded* for Bangarra’s production *Dance Clan*, and has also toured with Karul Projects and Performing Lines. 2025 saw Glory’s second residency with Dancenorth, exploring deeply personal work inspired by female Aboriginal Drovers in the 1900s.

“I’m very grateful that I got to do the A.R.T residency again - both times I have left with my cup very full and inspired by the Company. This residency is so valuable, because you get time to explore in North Queensland surrounded by lovely beautiful humans...

Being able to write 11 pages of a script and have 25 minutes of content, a vision and a pathway of where this could keep going just inspires me heaps and I’m just like, ‘I need to do this. Like, this will happen one way or another.’ The support from Dancenorth is really how it got here and it’s just inspiring to be a part of that and for Dancenorth be a part of that with me.

My creativity scale is definitely at a 13. I started making a work last year and then came back this year and was able to continue it. I keep getting inspired and researching and finding out new information about this Country, my people, my family, myself, all with the support of the Company, the dancers and the office mob.”

- GLORY TUOHY-DANIELL

## BELLA WARU

Bella Waru (Ngāti Tukorehe, Taranaki Tūturu, Celtic) is a takatāpui choreographer/dancer, musician and eternal student of the Māori healing, weaving and martial arts. Living and listening on sacred, unceded Wurundjeri lands, they are a foreign Sovereign navigating life, lore and culture from, between and towards Indigenous lands and peoples. Bella seeks to draw connections, highlight relationality and kinship; articulating new-ancient possibilities honouring Indigenous knowledges and worldviews as means for communal wellbeing and futurity. They create stories and spaces emerging from and returning to the communities, contexts, lands and peoples who have made them who they are, with reverence and acknowledgement of those that came before them, and those that will follow after.

Bella Waru’s residency was supported by the Dance Makers Collective Detour program, supported by Creative Australia.



Justin Talpacido Shoulder during their A.R.T. Image by Tszar, 2025.



Tilly Backus during an environmental responsive session in Secondment Week. Image by Tszar, 2025.



Glen Thomas from Wulgurukaba Walkabouts. Image by Amber Haines.

## SECONDMENT WEEK

Our annual Secondment Week Program invites emerging dancers to participate in a five-day full-time program working on skills training, creative workshops, and repertoire with the Dancenorth Ensemble.

A further series of ongoing guest secondment positions were made available by invitation throughout the year. Dancenorth is committed to offering all Secondment Program opportunities to participants free of charge to improve access to professional development opportunities and invest in the next generation of dancers.

In 2025, the Secondment Program was extended to two five-day Secondment Weeks, essentially doubling the reach of the program. 54 enthusiastic emerging dance Artists worked with Amber Haines and the Ensemble in exploring movement methodologies within elongated morning classes, creative workshops and task processes, environmental responsive sessions within the stunning Gurambilbarra (Townsville) landscape, and interrogation of Dancenorth repertoire.

“It was one of the most challenging, fulfilling, and life-giving experiences I have had in a long time. I have always known dance to be my purpose, it lives in me, and at Dancenorth I felt that truth magnified in such a way. The Ensemble’s generosity and depth of knowledge were remarkable; they poured so much into us, and over the last few months I have felt that material continue to simmer and grow in my body.

I started training in contemporary dance at 20 years old, and for a long time I felt as though I was too late, that my moment had passed, or that my training and path wasn’t formal or direct enough. But at Dancenorth, all of that quickly dissolved. Instead, I felt as though everything had led me to that moment, with the right people, at exactly the right time.

Coming from Namibia, I was raised in a capital city similar in size to Townsville. It was moving to find so much culture and vitality in Townsville, a warmth that came not only from the climate but also from the spirit and energy of the community... I carry so so much gratitude, and I know this experience will stay with me always.”

- LOLA BORRONI, 2025 SECONDMENT DANCER

## 4 WALLS AND A FLOOR

4 Walls and a Floor provides free studio space to independent Artists, movers and makers, providing a place for reflection, research, development and creative inspiration.

4 Walls and a Floor is a discretionary program available to Australian movement-based Artists all year-round, dependent upon opportunity and availability of space in our annual schedule.

In 2025, we welcomed Ben Graetz and Glory Tuohy-Daniell in support of Graetz’s work *TINA* for the North Australian Festival of Arts; the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts; William Koiki Mabo; Cameron Deyell; Michael Smith (for The Farm); and Damian Meredith and Csilla Peto in creation of their community work *Hello Possum*.

Each of these residencies empowered the artists to leverage development and commissioning funding to further support their work.

# COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Dance for Absolute Beginners class.  
Image by Tszar, 2025.



# CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF OUR COMMUNITY

In 2025, our Community Experience program championed accessibility and inclusion in dance through an extended class offering, new and continuing partnerships, and the reimagining of engagement methods.

## OPEN CLASSES

In 2025, we deepened our commitment to dismantling the barriers to participation in dance by making our full suite of Community Experience Classes free to attend for the entire year. This was our gift to the community as we celebrated our 40th year.

At the heart of Dancenorth's ethos is the belief that every human being – regardless of age, experience, physical ability or income – should be able to access the transformative power of dance.

Making our classes free to attend in 2025 enabled us to welcome more than 500 people, many new, into our home to move, connect and belong. These offerings became places to pause, reconnect with the body, explore new forms of creativity and self-expression, and discover the pure joy of movement alongside others. For many participants, the removal of cost made attendance possible for the first time, highlighting it as a significant barrier to access.

In this milestone year, we also expanded our offerings to invite more children and young people to engage with dance. The simple act of moving together became a celebration and continuation of a long-held commitment to transforming communities through the power of dance.

Dancenorth engaged teaching artists, independent dance artists, and members of the Artistic team, including our Co-Artistic Director Amber Haines and Ensemble Artists, to facilitate our suite of workshops and classes – with each facilitator sharing their diverse practices with the community.

Dance For Absolute Beginners welcomed 38 participants, many stepping into a dance space for the first time. This program fosters curiosity and courage, inviting people to move beyond comfort zones and into new relationships with their bodies and with each other.

Our Contemporary Dance Class engaged 292 individuals seeking skill development and creative release. With a rotating cohort of teaching artists, the program reflected the breadth of contemporary dance practice while maintaining a consistent sense of care – described by one participant as “the safest space in Townsville”.

Vital Dance designed for people affected by Parkinson's, continues to demonstrate the essential role dance can play in wellbeing. While not a clinical therapy, its impact is significant, with 100% of participants reporting that dance helped take their mind off their symptoms.

Our monthly Every Body Dance workshops reached their highest attendance to date. Following extensive community consultation, the program prioritised co-facilitation and leadership by artists with lived experience of disability. Longterm participants Serafina Lewis and Joshua Cutler stepped seamlessly into facilitation roles, leading each session with sensitivity and insight.

Our Still Dancing participants, comprising up to 45 regular dancers – primarily over the age of 60 – continue to evolve and embrace new experiences. Following the conclusion of Deeper Than Dancing in 2024, the group has demonstrated a growing appetite for challenge and experimentation, and an enthusiastic curiosity about contemporary dance process: an example of positive arts experiences shifting minds and shaping community attitudes.



Still Dancing Participants Judy Taylor and Kate Osborne.  
Image by Amber Haines, 2023.



Participants in the NO WRONG MOVES Seasonal Dance Party. Image by Tszar, 2025.



Regional Workshop Tour. Image by Amber Haines, 2022.

## DANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2025, we expanded our offerings for young people, including two terms of Creative Movement Classes for Kids aged 4–12. Designed as an antidote to the rigidity of traditional schooling and codified dance training, these classes encouraged wild imagination, exuberance and expressive freedom, supporting positive shifts in confidence and creativity.

In collaboration with headspace Townsville, we created DANCESPACE: dance classes for young people aged 12–25. Led by Ensemble Artist Jag Popham and the Community Experience team, the program exposed participants to a blend of street and contemporary dance within the headspace building, unleashing creativity in a social and supportive environment.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS/ CONNECTIONS

In 2025, we continued our long-standing collaboration with Crossroad Arts in Yuwibera Country (Mackay) to deliver C.R.U.S.H. (Community Regional Up Skill Haven); a three-day dance/theatre intensive for artists of all abilities. This year’s program saw increased participation from young and d/Deaf artists, highlighting dance as a universally accessible art form. The inclusion of participants and artists from the Dancenorth community further strengthened connections between our organisations.

This year’s collaborative partnership with the Townsville Community Learning Centre (TCLC) evolved into a co-devised short dance film project for International Day of People with Disability. The project culminated in a film screening at the Centre, celebrating the students’ achievements in storytelling, dance-making and creativity.

Jordan Galliot also worked with young people from alternative learning centres Townsville Flexible School and Creativity Hood to create *Wisdom from the Margins*. Through contemporary dance, shaabi (Egyptian street dance) and improvisation, participants brought humour, curiosity and authenticity to the project.

Dancenorth also delivered workshops and experiences to children, teenagers, adults and families from other local community organisations including Kith and Kin Disability Support Service, Townsville City Council, Townsville City Galleries, the Townsville Multicultural Support Group, Street Uni and a number of after-school-care centres. It was a joy to extend our reach and deepen our connection to the local community.

## CONNECTING BEYOND CLASS

For the first time, Dancenorth hosted NO WRONG MOVES, a seasonal dance party for people of all ages and abilities. Welcoming 111 attendees, the event offered our community the opportunity to connect and dance in an inclusive, joyful and fun environment – described by one participant as a “flat out banger”.

## REGIONAL WORKSHOP TOUR featuring LIGHTING THE DARK

2025’s Regional Workshop Tour ran over four weeks, taking Chris Dyke, the Community Experience team and the Dancenorth Ensemble to 23 locations across regional Queensland.

The team delivered 88 workshops to 2,804 participants from schools, public libraries, dance studios and disability support services.

Workshop content was inspired by *Lighting the Dark* and offered a refreshing and playful way to dance. For the first time, the tour also included the Longreach School of Distance Education, allowing us to expand our reach to children living in some of the most remote corners of regional Queensland.

At the end of each week in Gimuy (Cairns) and Yuwibara (Mackay), Dancenorth partnered with local schools to present two adapted and free-of-charge performances of *Lighting the Dark* to workshop attendees, participants, and the wider community.

At its core, this tour fostered deep community connections, ensuring regional audiences were not just spectators but active participants in the artistic experience.

## WILLIAM KOIKI MABO

Since 2024, and with the support of Arts Queensland, William Koiki Mabo has been in residence as a First Nations Industry Placement with Dancenorth.

Originally intended to align with the development of *Lighting the Dark*, William's plans deepened into an enquiry into his own cultural dance practice, and how he connects with community, as well as building his business, STYKX. Over the two-year period, William focussed on developing his Cultural Schools Workshop Program - called Eram - with support, mentoring, and skills and resource sharing from Dancenorth.

In William's words:

"There are simply no other opportunities like this. The sense of security afforded by this placement has granted me the privilege of time and space to engage in contemplation. This extends beyond mere dreaming, as I am now actively involved in the process of conceptualising and refining these visions into tangible realities. It is noteworthy that such unique opportunities are scarce, further emphasising the exceptional nature of this circumstance.

This two-year Placement opportunity has been a steadily unfurling period of learning and unlearning for me, and for Dancenorth. I have learned to release the expectations I have felt others had for me and step further into embodying cultural leadership. With the foundational base of the Placement, I have found ways to develop my dance and choreographic practice, and to teach and share First Nations dance and culture to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. I have also founded my company STYKX – dedicated to promoting and preserving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, to bridge cultural gaps by offering educational resources and experiences centred on Indigenous knowledge, particularly through dance, music, and storytelling.

My grandfather, Eddie Koiki Mabo, created a school that nurtured Indigenous identity, language, and culture, laying the foundation for many young people to grow with pride in their heritage. I am proud to continue the work my grandfather began. Over the past 24 months, I've had the privilege of integrating culture,

dance and language into schools and community spaces – work that I know will have a profound and lasting impact. While it's hard to measure exactly what this work will look like in the years to come, I know that these experiences have provided me with the tools and insights to continue pushing forward.

I now work with over 70 students weekly, building upon their cultural foundation, identity and sense of self-expression through dance and culture. I cannot stress enough the impact this has on not only the Indigenous students within the school, but the school culture as a whole. The shockwaves of what is happening today will be felt for generations to come, effecting change throughout the Indigenous community and the entire cultural landscape of Australia. None of this could have been possible without the direct support from Dancenorth.

I am constantly impressed by the ways Dancenorth cares and thinks about its responsibility to foster contemporary dance in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts. The Dancenorth Placement and opportunity to develop my choreographic practice over the last two years has been truly transformative – the development of my practice and sustainable business could not have happened without an opportunity like this."

Independent of Dancenorth, William found his own ways to teach and share First Nations culture to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students across Gurambilbarra and Thul Garrie Waja (Townsville). Since helping establish the Weir Indigenous Dance and Didge Academy (WIDDA) in January 2024, William has engaged in long-term partnerships with seven local schools – the impact of his cultural teachings resounds in the energy and joy of every young person involved.

It has been an honour to support William as he continues the work his grandfather began. While his official Placement is now complete, our friendship, mutual support and shared love of dance will endure. Collaboration continues with William, with paid roles as Guest Dancer and Teaching Artist.

This placement was an example of a non-Indigenous led Company (Dancenorth) engaging a young Indigenous person to develop their cultural and creative practice, and without question has been a deeply reciprocal learning experience, with trust and cultural safety being central to its success.

*A Live Moment*, William Koiki Mabo. Image by Tszar, 2025.



# 2025 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Dancenorth Australia  
ABN: 98 010 440 678

Financial Statements  
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

*A Live Moment, Felix Sampson and Jag Popham.  
Image by Tszar, 2025.*

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Interest revenue	4,353	6,583
Revenue and other income	2,514,403	4,055,857
Employee benefits expense	(1,697,282)	(1,833,711)
Depreciation expense	(44,027)	(48,169)
Other expenses	(759,349)	(2,126,509)
<b>Profit before income tax</b>	<b>18,098</b>	<b>54,051</b>
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>18,098</b>	<b>54,051</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>18,098</b>	<b>54,051</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

As At 31 December 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,579,501	987,199
Trade and other receivables	87,446	32,178
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,666,947</b>	<b>1,019,377</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	239,472	278,434
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>239,472</b>	<b>278,434</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,906,419</b>	<b>1,297,811</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	59,705	98,925
Contract liabilities	791,295	171,500
Employee benefits	101,552	64,476
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>952,552</b>	<b>334,901</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Employee benefits	45,004	72,145
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>45,004</b>	<b>72,145</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>997,556</b>	<b>407,046</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>908,863</b>	<b>890,765</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	908,863	890,765
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>908,863</b>	<b>890,765</b>

## Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

2025	RETAINED EARNINGS \$	TOTAL \$
Balance at 1 January 2025	890,765	890,765
Profit for the year	18,098	18,098
Balance at 31 December 2025	908,863	908,863

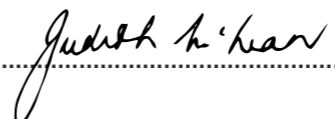
2024	RETAINED EARNINGS \$	TOTAL \$
Balance at 1 January 2024	836,714	836,714
Profit for the year	54,051	54,051
Balance at 31 December 2024	890,765	890,765

## Responsible Entities' Declaration

The responsible entities declare that in the responsible entities' opinion:

- + there are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- + the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2022*.

Responsible entity ..... 

Dated 17 April 2026

## Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Receipts from customers	3,403,828	3,080,416
Payments to suppliers and employees	(2,804,343)	(4,023,466)
Interest received	4,353	6,583
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	603,838	(936,467)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(11,536)	(49,265)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(11,536)	(49,265)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	592,302	(985,732)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	987,199	1,972,931
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	1,579,501	987,199

## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Dancenorth Australia  
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

### OPINION

We have audited the financial report of Dancenorth Australia (the registered entity), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements including material accounting policy information, and the responsible entities' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the registered entity is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* ("ACNC Act"), including:

- + giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 31 December 2025 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- + complying with Australian Accounting Standards, and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the registered entity in accordance with the ACNC Act and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards) (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

EMPHASIS OF MATTER - BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the registered entity's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES FOR THE FINANCIAL REPORT

The responsible entities of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the ACNC Act and for such internal control as the responsible entities determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the responsible entities are responsible for assessing the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible entities either intend to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards website at: [http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

INDEPENDENCE

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act, which has been given to the responsible entities of the registered entity, would be in the same terms if given to the responsible entities as at the time of this auditor's report.

Jessups

Paul Sapelli  
Partner  
Level 1, 211 Sturt Street, Townsville QLD 4810  
Dated: 16 February 2026

# PARTNERS

## Government Partners



## Trusts and Foundations



## Commissioning and Presenting Partners



## Project Partners





# DONORS

In 2025, we felt a surge of support from private Donors of all levels and welcomed an incredible 51 newcomers to our Donor Community. With many of these people based in our hometown of Gurambilbarra (Townsville), we feel optimistic that a culture of Arts Giving is starting to take root in North Queensland.

## A GIFT TO ENABLE OUR GIFT

Long-term donor, Philip Bacon AO, generously supported a year-long offer of free community dance classes to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Philip's donation allowed us to remove the cost barrier to dance for almost 500 people who joined us at our Community Experience classes throughout the year. Approximately 83 per cent of participants attended for the first time, with many of them telling us that they could not afford to pay for classes.

It was a joy to open dance experiences to so many new friends. The response has fortified our resolve to continue finding new ways to achieve equity in participation for our communities.

## TENDING THE CULTURE OF ARTS GIVING

Donations were invited at two key points throughout the year: End of Financial Year and the inaugural AusArt Day on 23 October 2025.

Between these campaigns, many of this year's first-time Donors came to us through small donations when they purchased their tickets to Dancenorth performances. These donations feed directly into our Community Access program, which provides an allocation of free tickets to our local seasons for people who would like to engage with contemporary dance but may not be able to afford a ticket. The program is run on an honesty system, and we often see people utilising one Community Access ticket and paying for another, indicating they see and appreciate the value of what we do and want to support our work where they can.

## BUILDING A CONNECTED DONOR COMMUNITY

With the groundswell of new, local Donors this year, we approached Donor Engagement with renewed energy, hosting small pre-show events for *Tomorrow Makers 7* and *A Live Moment*, and an end of year morning tea at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Additionally, our Donors were invited to showings and sharings throughout the year, and we greatly appreciated the chance to connect and deepen our friendships in these ways.

### Community Maker

\$20,000 - \$49,999

Liz Pidgeon + Graeme Wikman  
Philip Bacon AO  
Philip Bacon Galleries  
Anonymous

### Innovation Maker

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Justice Thomas Bradley + Dr Matthew Yoong  
Sarah + Joseph O'Brien  
Netta and Norman Niven Endowment  
Lucy Martinez

### Art Maker

\$10,000 - \$19,999

Plate Marketing  
Knights Jabula Family Foundation

### Movement Maker

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Jay + Kylie Bartlett  
Dr Judith Mclean  
Marg + Stephen Naylor  
Alexander Pound  
Jacinta Wight  
Love  
Anonymous

### Change Maker

UP TO \$999

Michaela Abraham  
Aaron Ashley  
Stephen Beare  
Alison Bleaney  
Rebecca Bourgault  
Kath Cadd  
Resely Cordery  
Hillary Coyne  
Alison Crombie  
Gypsy Dal Mina  
Peter Dall  
Millicent Q Darby  
Nick Duff  
Kevin Du Preez  
Julie Englefield + Andrew Hooper-Nguyen  
Doug + Elaine Eager  
Joanne Eager  
Stephen Evans in honour of Dancenorth  
Sue  
Leanne Fernandes  
Amanda Galea  
Jordan Galliot

Anamari Goicoechea  
Eloise Grace  
Gail Hamilton  
Pam Hancock  
Philippa Harris  
Catherine Hockings  
Angela Hume  
Olga Iliakis  
Brendan Joyce  
Keziah Kelly  
Amanda Lanarus  
Guillermo Lozano Leo  
Matthew Lynch  
Stephen + Deidre Marchant  
Merissa Martinez  
Alan Marlowe  
John Drummond Montgomery  
Kimberley Nagle  
Stephen Neale  
Maureen O'Connor  
Chloe Ogilvie  
Kate O'Hara

Jessie Oldfield  
Kyle Page + Amber Haines  
Karen and Lauren Palawa  
Mob  
Christina Papadimitriou  
Jan Peterson  
Ivor Preston + Karen Doyle  
Alexandra Prior  
Daniel Qualischefski  
Rikaela Rusch  
Anneke Silver  
Carly Sheil  
Joshua Smith  
Jon Stacey  
Courtney Thompson  
Mary Wallace  
Krissy Wilhelmsen  
Michelle Wylie  
Christine Young  
Sonia Zabala  
Anonymous x 10

The crowd at a donor function before the opening of *Tomorrow Makers 7*. Image by Tszar, 2025.

A centre for dance making,  
collaboration and artistic exchange,  
based on the lands of the Wulgurukaba  
of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun, and  
the Bindal of Thul Garrie Waja.