

Palmerston North Dance Association

26th Annual Dance Festival

The Regent on Broadway
19th - 25th September 2025



2025 Presidents Report ~ Maryanne Mechen

Greetings Everyone

Here we are again, on the eve of our September competitions.

Our newsletter begins with highlights from the PNDA Competition Festival 2024. There is always so much to celebrate, this yearly competition is very true to the 'Festival' title, embracing the versatility, and artistry across the many dance genres. We extend our sincere thanks to all our dancers and those who support bringing the performances to the stage each year.



A changed format to the Gala in 2024, including the winners of the Jazz Championship classes in the 'guest artists' slot acknowledged more endeavour and significant successes across the competition. It was also a positive move towards building our audience numbers. Peta Spooner, from Nelson, adjudicated across the ballet and modern genres, with Amanda Wilson adjudicating the Tap.



At the Gala there was a coming together of dance teacher contemporaries who have enjoyed a close association with PNDA. Peta Spooner adjudicated for PNDA in the early 2002. Deirdre Tarrant, our newly appointed Patron adjudicated in 2013, and again 2018. Maureen Ax, a foundation member of PNDA in 1972, and President in 2000 – 2001. Yvonne Hocken, current Vice President, Life Member and longstanding adjudicator assistant was President 2001-2008. Unfortunately, Michelle Robinson, PNDA Dance Representative and Life Member, was backstage busy preparing her dancers for the evening session. Michelle was the person missing to complete the picture of this very prestigious line up. It was such a treat for us all to witness this coming together. Check out the pic!



PNDA members and sponsors are invited to the drinks and nibbles as part of the Gala. If anyone reading this is feeling left out, all you have to do is join the PNDA. All that is required for membership is an enjoyment of dance and a small fee. More information is in the newsletter. Please do not hesitate if you are interested!



We want to take this opportunity to thank the Member of Parliament for Palmerston North; Tangi Utikere; Mayor of Palmerston North, Grant Smith; Rachel Bowen, Chair of the PNCC Arts and Culture Committee, and Councillor Lorna Johnson, for their continued support of our events. We enjoy tremendous support from PNCC via the Arts Event Fund, and the ongoing advice from Gillian Tasker, PNCC Community Development adviser for the Arts. We also acknowledge the funding received from Central Energy Trust and the Lions Foundation. This funding is key to us holding our competition in the Regent on Broadway.



Last year we welcomed our new Patron, Deirdre Tarrant and had a fitting farewell to our past Patron (2000 - 2023) Sir Jon Trimmer. Thanks to Katrina for the photo tribute to Sir Jon. We moved from our Competitions straight into PACANZ, NYPA. Nikki Cunningham (CEO) at the helm. It was a very well organised event once again. We played our part as a hosting organisation, before, during and after. Our PNDA and gifted society nominees all performed to a very high standard, Danceworks and Dreams Academy of Dance (DAPPA) winning a place in the troupe final. Camden Woodrooffe and Taylor Waters, our PNDA tap nominees made it into the tap final. A huge achievement! Saem Woodward was placed 3rd in the Vocal section and Scott Sun was placed 2nd in the piano forte section. Both Saem and Scott performed as Manawatu Performing Arts Competition Society guests at our Gala celebrating MPACS 100yrs 2023. Very, very exciting for PNDA & MPACS. Congratulations go out to all nominees.



We were delighted to be able to offer the Monica Skinner Scholarship and PNDA Excellence Awards towards Tertiary Study 2025 to the following: Jake Maskill received a Monica Skinner Scholarship. Abby-Rose Bailey, Kyla Forsyth, Piper Woods received PNDA Excellence Awards. Congratulations to all. Don't miss their inspiring profiles in the newsletter.



First up in 2025, we held our February Restricted and Open Tap Competition at the Globe Theatre. The solo entries were slightly lower, on account of it being a non-tap nomination year. However, there was plenty of tap to entertain. The troupe nomination class attracting more audience support.

The impromptus continue to be well supported and enjoyed by our dancers.

Our adjudicator was Jay Cochrane who was accompanied by her writer and mum,



Congratulations to our two troupe nominations – A combined studio of ‘Move it Dance Works’ & ‘You name it’, performing ‘Defying Gravity’ and “Maximum Dance Zone” performing, ‘Feels This good’ A big shout out to ‘Pub Charity’ who supported this competition with a grant for adjudicator fees and venue.

Our March Competition lived up to expectations. Our Adjudicator, Catriona White from Opotiki, experienced something akin to a ‘baptism by fire’ with 35 solo entries for the NYPA modern nomination class, plus 13 in the troupe nomination class. This resulting in 5 modern solo nominees and 3 troupe nominations.

Congratulations to Annabelle Connelly and Georgie Farley, our PNDA nominees. Millie Grotrian and Mackenzie Waters, our gifted society nominees from Dance NZ Made and Zamara Howard, our Gifted society nominee from Titans of Tap.

The trend towards larger troupes means more competitors awaiting results on the regent Stage, adding to the buzz and excitement of the evening. Congratulations to our three PNDA Troupe nominees Elite Dance Company – Les Mis ‘One More Day’, Step Out Dance Company and Sweet Studios – ‘MJ’. Another shout out to our Funders NZCT for their support for venue hire and security.

Our biennial Calendar alternates between dance workshops and the Dance 2000 series, 2025 was a workshop year with tutors Turid Revfeim, (Ballet) & Emily Down (Modern). Thank you to the PNCC Performing Arts Trust Grant for supporting this event. Despite scheduling clashes for the senior classes. The workshops were a success. The ‘showing’ by the participants at the end of the day never fails to impress. The tutors returned to Wellington inspired by the dancers that they had the opportunity to work with. Check out our pics on the Workshop pages. Congratulations once again to all our member teachers, students and care givers who help make our PNDA events thrive.

Acknowledgement is needed to those working behind the scenes who help us with our events.

The competition dance world has embraced the world of apps with great enthusiasm. Thank you to Rachel Ouwegan who assists with the app progress and the magic links for music downloads. John Anson, who helps us with membership mailouts, and Janette Craigie who helps us with our PNDA website. This assistance is greatly appreciated by the PNDA committee who operate on large doses of volunteering of their own skills, time and goodwill. Having it returned in kind is like winning Lotto I need to acknowledge the PNDA committee for all that is achieved in a year. It is no small feat, it takes commitment, so we should feel a sense of pride in what we mange to pull off together. Thank you to Lauren Francis who is an important point of contact for the PNDA. Whether it be your competition entries, trophy returns, costume design, or costume fixes, Lauren is always available and very generous with her time.

The newsletter is a wonderful pictorial review of our 2024/2025 year. Our editor and PNDA Committee member, Katrina Rose, works her photographic magic with the newsletter each year. Thankyou to Dion Martin, for his pics of our Gala and his ongoing commitment to the videoing of the dance items.

Our biggest challenge is to get more audience engagement. We know that the talent and creativity across the mix of genres from our competitors delivers top entertainment and inspiration for any audience. We need to work together on this and spread the word !

Please don’t hesitate to share our newsletter, follow us on Facebook Palmerston North Dance Association INC or via our website pnda.nz.

Thank you for reading and congratulations for getting to the end of this report!
Kia Kaha / Keep Strong, Go well

Maryanne Mechen
Palmerston North Dance Association





2024 Gala Evening



Sir Jon Trimmer Trophy 2024
Best Demi Characterisation
Georgia Sage—The Grinch
Adjudicator—Peta Spooner





2024 Gala Evening



2024 Senior Ballet Championship

1.	Mackenzie Waters
2.	Lina Peachey
3.	Emily Sutherland





2025 PACANZ Nominees National Young Performer Awards

Pacanz Tap Troupe Nomination 2025

Move it Dance Works & You name it performing Defying Gravity (PNDA)
Maximum Dance Zone performing Feels this good (PNDA)



Pacanz Modern Nomination 2025

Annabella Connolly (PNDA)
Georgie Farley (PNDA)
Millie Grotian (Dance NZ Made)
Mackenzie Waters (Dance NZ Made)
Zamara Howard (Titans of Tap)



Pacanz PNDA Troupe Nomination 2025

Elite Dance Company performing Les Mis One More Day (PNDA)
Step Out Dance Company performing This just In (PNDA)
Sweet Studios performing MJ (PNDA)





PACANZ 2025

national young performer awards



National Young Performer Awards * PROUD
2025

24-26 October
2025

Palmerston North

Troupe Musical Theatre Instrumental Speech & Drama Modern



Monica Skinner Awards Winners

The Monica Skinner Scholarship is offered by the Palmerston North Dance Association when funds are available, to assist a dancer who is to further their dance experience through tertiary study at an acknowledged tertiary institution. The applicant's proposal can include further study or training in dance. The Scholarship may be undertaken in New Zealand or overseas. Applicants are required to demonstrate how their study will help them to enhance dance excellence. Monica was a valued committee member as well as a hardworking secretary of PNDA from 2004 until 2009. Her diligent achievements in securing funds to further dance education are the impetus for this scholarship in her name.

2025 Application forms are with your Dance Schools—please ask your teachers for a form if you'd like to apply.

Previous Recipients Are

2024 Jake Maskill
2023 Amelia Simpson, Georgia Kirk, Mikah BatachEl and Willa McLachlan
2022 Keearndra Tohill and Ayla Cooksley
2021 Aylin Atalay and Mārie Jones
2020 Isabella Jones
2019 Shavaun Tohill
2018 no applicants
2017 Charlotte Gilmour and Tobyn Gregory
2016 Megan Morrison
2015 Luke Cooper and Daniel Hardcastle
2014 Michelle Geange and Emily Hancock
2013 Kara Imrie
2012 Nicola Morrison
2011 Ashley Hodges
2010 Emma Martin





2024 Monica Skinner Scholarship

Monica Skinner 2024 Award—Jake Maskill

My first six months at Brent Street has been one of the most eye-opening times of my life. Sydney is an amazing city, with plenty to do and more to see. My musical theatre training has been extremely beneficial to both my development as a performer and myself as a person.

We are lucky enough to have a variety of teachers who are all currently active in the performing arts industry. This allows us to make the connections we need while also getting first-hand experience into life after full-time training. All our classes contain quality teaching from professionals that many dream to be able to work with.

Being a practical course, we are given many performance opportunities. Firstly, at the end of each term, we have a singing night where we each showcase a solo song for friends and family. These performances not only give us something to work towards and look forward to, but another chance to perform and practice being on stage.

We also have a musical each year, ours being in term three and presented in September. This year, we are doing Legally Blonde the Musical. The musicals are another chance to perform and practice combining our dance, singing and acting training, creating a realistic training experience.

In July, I was able to attend Light the Way dance convention, where I spent four days in mock auditions and dance workshops, learning from some of the most sought-after choreographers in Australia. On the final night, I danced and sang in the Brent Street musical theatre showcase piece, which we had been working on since the beginning of Term 2. I thoroughly enjoyed learning and performing with some of Australia's best.



One of the best things about my course is the development in versatility. In dance, I have been growing in jazz, theatre, contemporary, ballet, lyrical, hip hop, commercial, tap and more. This gives me a broad range of dance styles that I can

Also, being in the musical theatre course, I have been lucky enough to extend my singing and acting training. I have deepened my understanding of contemporary and classical singing, as well as many forms of acting, including improvisation.

Overall, my time in Sydney has been extremely beneficial to my training and development as a performer. This would not have been possible without the support from the Monica Skinner Memorial Scholarship. I am extremely grateful to be pursuing the career of my dreams.



PNDA Dance Excellence Award—Kyla Forsyth

It's hard to believe that I have been in Melbourne for six months already!

I love training at Transit dance and working towards the two year Pre Professional Diploma of Elite Performance. We get amazing opportunities to work with incredible choreographers and get to experience performing in epic shows.

There are many highlights so far, the end of term showcases, attending VIC dance festival, and the Beetlejuice live show but I especially enjoyed performing Alice in at the Wonderland Ball Gala fundraiser and at Diamonds fundraiser at the Crown Palladium. It showed me what it would be like to be a professional dancer it was so much fun and very inspiring.

I would like to thank Palmerston North Dance Association for their encouragement and support ever since my first dance competition at six years old.





2024 Monica Skinner Scholarship

PNDA Dance Excellence Award—Piper Woods

After spending 4 years at University, completing two different degrees, I still consistently found myself contemplating 'what if' I had chosen to pursue dance professionally. So, I took this as a sure sign that a career in dance is one hundred percent where my heart lies.

After much research into different full-time schools, I decided Ettingshausens PRO, in Sydney, Australia, was the school for me and auditioned. I will never forget the phone call where I was offered a position in their 2025 cohort, and the feeling of pure excitement toward starting my new journey I felt for the 8 months leading up. After beginning my time at Etts this year, I am now more sure than ever that this is the career path for me and I genuinely couldn't have made a better decision for myself when it came to choosing a full-time school.



Though the full-time schedule is gruelling - 8.30-3.30pm, Monday to Friday, which is both physically and mentally taxing. More than anything, it is so so rewarding. To this day, it is hard to fathom that I am learning from the best in the biz, working industry professionals that I have followed and looked up to for years prior. And now I get to experience and take in their knowledge first -hand, everyday and have the opportunity to form relationships and connections with them too.

The Sydney dance scene also has so many different opportunities available and I am so fortunate to have been able to experience some of these as a student at Ettingshausens. A notable opportunity was attending Light The Way Dance Convention, taking classes from a panel of big names, partaking in a mock audition with Kelley Abbey, and performing alongside my cohort for the first time, in a piece choreographed by Jess Smithson and Alex Miedzinski.



Nearing the end of my first year, I am hoping to continue my full-time training into 2026, working toward my Advanced Diploma of Professional Dance.

I was very grateful to be granted a scholarship by PNDA. This helped reduce some of the financial stress associated with moving and course fees, allowing me to take the first step toward pursuit of my dream career.

Warm Regards,

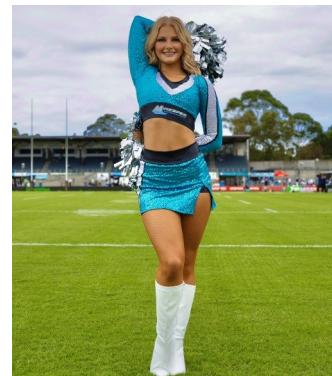
Piper.

PNDA Dance Excellence Award—Abby-Rose Bailey

Hi Everyone, I'm Abby-Rose and this past year has been an incredible chapter in my dance journey, filled with growth, challenges, and unforgettable opportunities.

Studying full-time at EttingsHausens PRO, a dance school in Sydney, has pushed me in every way; physically, mentally, and creatively.

Every day has been a chance to refine my craft and deepen my love for dance. I'm training across a wide range of styles including jazz, ballet, lyrical, hip hop, contemporary, and musical theatre, and working with an inspiring faculty of choreographers and mentors who constantly push me beyond my comfort zone.



One of the highlights of my year was becoming part of the **Cronulla Sharks Mermaids**. Being on the field as an NRL cheerleader brought a whole new energy to my performance. Dancing in a stadium full of fans, feeling the roar of the crowd, and representing the Sharks was a surreal and empowering experience. The Mermaids team is full of strong, talented women, and I'm so proud to dance alongside them.

This year hasn't been just about dancing harder, it was about learning how to take care of myself as a performer, building resilience, and discovering what it means to be part of a team, both in the studio and on the sidelines. I'm so grateful for everything I've learned and excited to take more steps towards my goals next year!



Ballet and Jazz Workshop ~ 15th June Regent on Broadway

The Ballet and Jazz workshops are a exciting opportunity for all dancers from 9 years to join with other local dancers and the take classes with Specialist Tutors from Wellington. The day was divided into Junior, Intermediate and Advanced classes for Ballet from Garde 3 to Advanced 2 and Jazz from 9 years to 14 years plus. The day ended with a public showing for family to watch a small performance from participants to show what they have learnt at workshops.

Guest Tutors

Turid Revfeim BA (Dance—Ballet Tutor)

After a 20 year performance career as a dancer both in Europe and with the Royal New Zealand Ballet, Turid has had a further 25 years as a ballet coach, dance teacher and rehearsal director. She has been involved in the dance industry in New Zealand for nearly all of her professional life. Trained at New Zealand's National School of Ballet (now NZ School of Dance), she began her professional career with the Royal New Zealand Ballet before heading to Europe and performing in the Koblenz Ballet, Germany for 5 years. She also performed in the prestigious Bayreuthe Festspiel each summer from 1982-1986. Returning to New Zealand she became a soloist with the RNZB and after 13 years became their Artistic Co-Ordinator and assistant to the Artistic Director. In 2003 she was appointed the company Ballet Mistress remaining in the position for 11 years. She has not only coached and restaged ballets but has also choreographed a number of works for RNZB. Turid is currently a classical tutor at the NZSD. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Dance) out of QUT. As well as teaching at the NZSD Turid is also the Artistic Director and Producer of the project-based Ballet Collective Aotearoa. Turid is passionate about developing homegrown talent and finding opportunities to help us grow and nuture what is unique and extraordinary about dancers from New Zealand.



Emily Down—Jazz Tutor

Emily grew up in Wellington training RAD Ballet, NZAMD Jazz and Tap, competing in Ballet, Tap and Jazz competitions, before embarking on Full Time Performing Arts Training in Melbourne. After 11 years working professionally overseas Emily returned to NZ where she has spent the last 20 years Dancing, Teaching and Choreography mainly professional dancers and performers. After 18 years of freelancing, tutoring and choreographing for Te Auaha's Full time Commercial Dance and Musical Theatre Course in Wellington Emily opened her own dance school 'The Academy Dance and Stage School which has since merged to become 'Elite Dance Company'. Emily is also an experienced adjudicator and workshop tutor. Over the past 18 years of her teaching career, she has had many successes with her students gaining PACANZ NYPA nominations in both solos and troupes. Emily says she has loved passing her passion for dance and performance to future kiwi dancers.



The year in pictures Ballet



2024 Junior Ballet Championship

1. Bella Mercado
2. Georgia Sage
3. Avis Scott

2024 Intermediate Ballet Championship

1. Hayley Xu
2. Jolene Liu
3. Emma Campbell



2024 Senior Ballet Championship

1. Mackenzie Waters
2. Lina Peachey
3. Emily Sutherland







The year in pictures Modern



2024 Junior Jazz Championship

1. Anna Cooksley
2. Lakeesha Broughton
3. Mabel Henderson



2024 Intermediate Jazz Championship

1. Peyton Waters
2. Niyah Henare-Pearson
3. Jade Tufele



2024 Senior Jazz Championship

1. Maia Stewart
2. Mackenzie Waters
3. Kaitlyn Napier







The year in pictures Tap



2024 Junior Tap Championship

1. Carter Craig
2. Elena Power
3. Milla Bason

Adjudicator—Amanda Wilson



2024 Senior Tap Championship

1. Jessica Wang
2. Taylor Waters
3. Gabrielle Cabauatan

Adjudicator—Amanda Wilson







The year in pictures Groups







The year in pictures Hip Hop





Membership

We are a non-profit, incorporated organisation and our objectives are

- To encourage, foster and promote the practice and appreciation of all dance forms
- To encourage, foster and promote all cultural and education activities of all dance forms
- To inculcate in the individual a sense of responsibility and of sportsmanship to fellow members and associates

Download our [**2026 Membership Form**](#) from our web site <https://pnda.nz> or contact our president

Maryanne Mechen at maryanne.mechen@xtra.co.nz

Internet Banking – Westpac 03 1522 0013110 00

Membership is due by the end of February each year

Benefits of membership

- Members are issued with one free Festival pass to our September competitions (currently Festival passes are \$25, giving you a wonderful bonus for supporting us)
- PNDA newsletter celebrating local dancers, dance schools and activities
- Discounted rate to events including our biennial Workshops/Dance 2000 series
- Contacts and networking as members of the dance community
- PNDA is a member of PACANZ which means we can offer nominations in Ballet, Tap and Modern Dance, and are covered for APRA (music copyright fees)
- Consideration for a travel subsidy to such events as Winter School and other dance education opportunities. This is always dependent on funds being available
- We have launched a Gala Evening event as part of our September dance competitions. This is run to highlight and support ballet dancers participating in the championship classes. Members are invited to be part of this entertaining, social and networking occasion

Annual membership

Family Membership \$20

Individual Membership \$10

Teacher Membership \$20

Local Dance Teacher financial members are offered the opportunity to take part in our biennial Regent Dance day where they can have their studio perform an item in conjunction with other dance studios from the area. On alternate years we offer workshops which, in the past, have included ballet, contemporary, jazz, musical theatre and impromptu dance skills.

We are a hard working committee, dedicated to providing dance opportunities to local dancers and their teachers. While we have ballet, modern/jazz, contemporary and tap styles of dance as our priority, we are trying to extend our networking as time and resources allow.

We appreciate your support of our efforts on behalf of the dancers, by showing your commitment through becoming a current financial member of PNDA.



2025

PNDA Annual Dance Competitions & Gala Evening

19th—25th September 2025. Regent on Broadway

PACANZ NYPA — Troupes, Musical Theatre, Modern Dance, Acoustic Instrumental, Speech & Drama

24th—26th October 2025. Regent on Broadway. Hosted by PNDA and MPACS

Monica Skinner Memorial Scholarship : Applications close—

10th November 2025—5pm

PNDA AGM

5th December 2025

2026

PNDA Restricted and open Tap Competition and Open Impromptus + PACANZ Tap and Tap Troupe Nomination offered

13th—15th February 2026 Globe Theatre

PNDA Restricted Ballet & Modern Competitions + PACANZ Ballet and Troupe Nomination offered

27th —29th March 2026 Regent on Broadway

PNDA Dance 2026

21st June 2026 Regent on Broadway

PNDA Annual Dance Competitions & Gala Evening

25th September —1st October 2026 Regent on Broadway

PACANZ NYPA — Troupes, Tap Dance, Ballet Dance, Pianoforte, Vocal

22nd—26th October 2026. Regent on Broadway. Hosted by PNDA and MPACS

Palmerston North Dance Association Inc.

Patron: Deirdre Tarrant CNZM/MNZM

President / Convener: Maryanne Mechen

Vice President: Yvonne Hocken

Secretary/ Convener: Lauren Francis

Treasurer: Kathy Geange

Dance Teacher Representative: Michelle Robinson

Newsletter: Katrina Rose

Photographer : Katrina Rose—Rose Photography

Committee: Christine Booker, Dayle Campbell, Pam Fowler,

Ashley Hodges, Tracy Horman, Lisa Procter, Katrina Rose,

Facebook: Palmerston North Dance Association

Website : PNDA.nz



Thanks to Katrina, and Dion for
photos used in this newsletter