Palmerston North Dance Association



27th Annual Festival

The Regent on Broadway

25th September ~ 1st October 2026

2026 Presidents Report ~ Maryanne Mechen



2026 Presidents Report – Maryanne Mechen

Kia ora, Greetings Everyone

Here we are again, the blossoms are making a show, and we are on the eve of our September / October Competition Festival. Before the doors open on 2026 our newsletter takes us back to mark and savour the wonderful celebratory moments of our September Competition Festival 2025.
Each year, expectations are exceeded, to prove yet again how artistry has no bounds, once it has taken root it spreads.



Our adjudicator, Alana Todd, from Auckland, contributed to the overall success of the Competition Festival in September. Her collegiality towards the committee and her attentive, constructive adjudication was a real bonus.

We enjoyed capacity entries again across the genres which is very pleasing. The Troupe sessions and the Gala format are definite highlights of this festival. The pictures speak for themselves.



We take this opportunity again to acknowledge the Member of Parliament for Palmerston North, Tangi Utikere; the Mayor of Palmerston North, Grant Smith; and Chair of the PNCC Arts and Culture Committee, Rachel Bowen; for their standout unswerving support of our event. Acknowledgement also to PNCC councillors Lorna Johnson and Kaydee Zebedee, who were both in attendance at our Gala event 2025. The leadership from the mayor and councillors, mentioned above, is reflected in the support received by Gillian Tasker, PNCC Community Development Arts adviser and her team.



The PNCC ‘Arts Event Fund’, alongside the funding received from Central Energy Trust and the Lion Foundation are of huge significance towards the success of our competition festival and enable us to continue to be at the Regent on Broadway. This year, to add to this support we have new sponsors for our Jazz, Ballet and Tap Championship classes. More information in our competition programme.



PACANZ NYPA (National Young Performer Awards) arrives on the heels of our competition festival. This event is a testament to the organisational skill and effort steered by Nikki Cunningham (CEO) and the PACANZ Board. Societies affiliated with PACANZ across the country, alongside local hosting societies MPACS and PNDA are also integral to the success of the NYPA. Congratulations to our nominees who performed to a very high standard in 2025. Special mention to: Mackenzie Waters, who reached the Jazz Semi Final; and Elite Dance, who placed in the Troupe Final with ‘Les Mis’

We were delighted to be able to offer ‘Monica Skinner Excellence Awards’ towards tertiary study 2026 to Jess Redman, Annalyssa Turia and Charlotte Wenman. Don’t miss their inspiring profiles in our newsletter.



Before moving into 2026, a highlight of the year for myself was presenting Luke Cooper with flowers on the Regent Stage at the season finale of the Nutcracker, on behalf of the Palmerston North Dance Association, on his retirement from the RNZB (Royal New Zealand Ballet)
Thank you to Tracey Horman who organised the beautiful bouquet of red berries, ferns and fronds, wrapped in a Harakeke Mat, on behalf of our PNDA committee.



Now moving into the 2026 year:
Tap at the Globe Theatre in February.
Our Adjudicator from the Northern School of Ballet, Gemma Boswell, was true to her name, an absolute ‘Gem’, such a pleasure to work with. We had the highest percentage rate of scratchings, at any of our competitions. The competition environment nationally is alive and firing! So, it has become hard to avoid clashes. Despite this, the feedback from competitors and participants was overwhelmingly in favour of us continuing. We were assured that our Tap competition was more than viable, it was friendly, well organised and a great way to start the year. So PNDA Tap will be back in 2027.



We need to acknowledge Pub Charities for their funding towards the hire of the Globe Theatre and adjudicator and writer accommodation. Our adjudicator awarded 3 soloist nominations: Oliver Swan and Samara Pickering receiving PNDA nominations, with Sophie Meikle receiving a DanceNZMade – ‘gifted nomination’.

A Tap Troupe nomination went to Sweets Studios - Junior Tap with ‘Happy’



Moving to our March competitions, our adjudicator, Sonia Hems, joined us from Auckland. Sonia has been on the PNDA radar for a while. Circumstances prevented her making it to our competitions. Finally, it came together. You could say, in perfect symmetry. Sonia was a perfect fit for our March comps with its combination of restricted ballet and modern solos, open duos, trios and troupes. Moving to the PACANZ NYPA ballet, solo and troupe nomination classes, at the more intense high stakes end of competitions, Sonia was unfazed and positively embraced every bit of it.
Our acknowledgment and thanks to NZCT for a grant towards the Regent on Broadway venue, adjudication costs and security.



Our ballet nominees for NYPA are Azaziah BatachEL and Chloe Crawford, with gifted nomination from DanceNzMade for Leticia Coombe. Our troupe nominees are Step out Dance Company with 'Make a Move', Elite Dance Company with 'Moulin Rouge' and In-Motion with 'Vortex'
We are looking forward to seeing all our nominees on stage at NYPA in October, at the Regent on Broadway.

Moving onto June, with 'Dance 2026':

This event is non-competitive. It is a biennial event and a highlight on our calendar of events. This year was no exception, involving the below mentioned dance schools who collectively covered a wide variety of dance genres and ages: DanceWorks Studios (PNth), Dance unlimited (Feilding), Maximum Dance Zone (PNth), Levin The Movement, Michelle Robinson Dance Studio (PNTh), Red Star Dance (PNth) and Tararua School of Dance. In addition to the traditional Dance Studios, we enjoyed Freyberg High School 'Dance Crew' performing musical theatre, Palmerton North Highland Dancers, Cailin Traditional Irish Dancers, Crows Feet Dance Theatre (PNth) and Spring Chickens (PNth). Unfortunately, the Vinok Ukrainian Dance group had to pull out due to sickness. The Catherine Inger School of Dance in Levin also had to pull out due to the sudden death of the Schools Founder, Inger Perkins, (currently living in the UK).
Dance 2026 was dedicated to Inger Perkins. She helped introduce and build the International Dance Teachers Association syllabus in NZ.

Our thanks to PNCC Creative Communities for the funding to assist with the Regent Theatre Hire. Acknowledgment to our PNDA Dance representative, Michelle Robinson, who pulls the Dance 2000 series together every 2 years, supported by Yvonne Hocken as MC. Yvonne Hocken, PNDA Vice President, has been our resident writer for our adjudicators for many years. A former dancer and dance teacher herself, both Yvonne and Michelle are life members and current committee members of the PNDA. We are very fortunate to have their expertise and experience available to us.

Thank you to our dance teacher community who continue to pass on their skills, creativity and passion to another generation, keeping the legacy of dance alive locally. 'Dance 2026' is our opportunity to acknowledge and give tribute to teachers, to celebrate with them what they achieve within their dance studios. The sheer joy and excitement of performance is tangible, and it is not hard to see that it is in our local communities that the foundations are laid for the wider performing arts nationally and abroad. Many students who have danced locally find success on the national and international stage.

Many return to start up their own successful dance schools alongside their dance teachers. Others just want their children to have the same opportunities they had, 'to learn dance for the enjoyment of it '. We all benefit from this.
The pictures in the newsletter speak for themselves







If you are reading this and want to be a part of it, you might like to consider joining PNDA, all that is required for membership is an enjoyment of dance and a small fee. More information is in the newsletter.

Acknowledgment is needed to all those working behind the scenes who help with our PNDA events. We continue to navigate the app world at our 'own pace'. We are very grateful for the ongoing assistance from Rachel Ouwegan, Dance Apps NZ; Janette Craigie, who assists us with our website and John Anson who assists with the membership data base and mailouts.

Acknowledgment to Katrina Rose, committee member and editor of our newsletter. This is a dedicated job capturing a pictorial of our events each year by Katrina. We have evidence yet again of her photographic magic presented in this 2025/2026 newsletter.
Acknowledgment also to Dion Martin, Videographer, for his ongoing commitment to filming our comps and his pics of our Gala.

There is a full list of Committee members on the back page who are all very deserving of acknowledgement for what the PNDA achieves each year.
I feel privileged and humbled to be in the role of President and to be able to acknowledge achievement on behalf of the Committee. My words are weighted with a mixture of disbelief, pride, respect and appreciation for the team effort. We are so very lucky to have enjoyed a continuity over the years of people in key roles. These individuals often carry a much greater time burden and responsibility. They are the 'glue' which holds it together. Long may it continue. Don't get me wrong here, every organisation needs new blood, energy and resources, so don't hold back if you feel you would like to be more involved.

Next year, the PNDA celebrates its 50th year. We are looking to involve as many people as possible who have been involved with the Palmerston North Dance Association over the years.
In finishing, a big thanks to all our members and supporters. We had an increase in membership this year which was very exciting. Welcome aboard! We look forward to continuing working together.
We sincerely appreciate your support of our events.
Don't hesitate to share our newsletter, follow us on Facebook Palmerston North Dance Association INC or via our website pnda.nz

Final Important Message: Please scan the QR code that we have put around the theatre, inviting you to fill out our survey. This has become a requirement of our funders, necessary for us, to receive the funding we require to continue to enjoy our events with you at the Regent Theatre on Broadway. Filling out our questionnaire will help us do that.

Thank you once again
Kia Kaha / Keep Strong, Go Well
Maryanne Mechen
President
Palmerston North Dance Association





2025 Gala Evening

2025 Sir Jon Trimmer Trophy

Best Demi Characterisation

Ella Rowland—Strawberry Patch

Adjudicator—Alana Tod





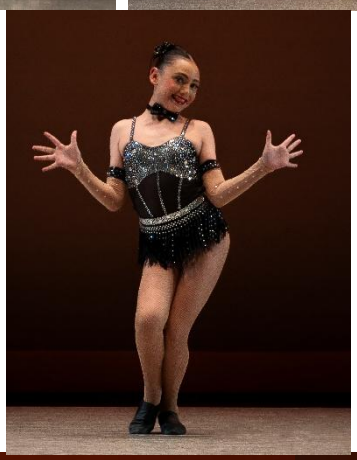


















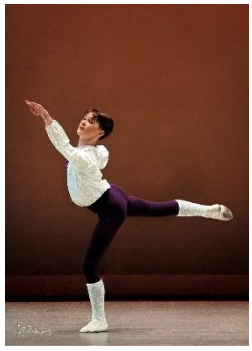


2025 Gala Evening










2026 Senior Ballet Championship

1.Lina Peachey

2.Hayley Xu

3.Azaziah BatachEl





2026 PACANZ Nominees
National Young Performer Awards



Pacanz Tap Nomination 2026
Oliver Swan (PNDA)
Tamara Pickering (PNDA)
Sophie Meikle (DanceNZMade gifted)





Pacanz Ballet Nomination 2026
Azaziah BatachEl (PNDA)
Chloe Crawford (PNDA)
Leticia Coombe (DanceNZMade gifted)











Pacanz PNDA Tap Troupe Nomination 2026

Sweet Studios performing Happy (PNDA)







Pacanz PNDA Troupe Nomination 2026

Elite Dance Company performing Moulin Rouge (PNDA)

In Motion performing Vortex (PNDA)

Step Out Dance Company performing Make a Move (PNDA)









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.

2026 Monical Skinner awards for 2026 are on hold

Previous Recipients Are

2025 No Scholarship Awarded. Excellence Awards: Jessica Redman, Charlotte Wenman, Annalyssa Turia
2024 Jake Maskill. Excellence Awards Abby-Rose Bailey, Kyla Forsyth, Piper Woods
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



2025 Monica Skinner Scholarship

Monica Skinner Excellence Award 2025—Jessica Redman



My first year attending Ev and Bow and moving to Sydney has been filled with so many amazing opportunities, experiences, and memories. One of the highlights for me has been getting to meet and work with so many incredible teachers and creatives.

I have also loved the opportunity to perform at and attend events such as the Victorian Dance Festival and the Light the Way Dance Convention.

Another highlight has been being a part of our New Wave and Mid-Year Shows, where I had the opportunity to work alongside some amazing choreographers and be involved in creating and performing some great contemporary pieces.



I am incredibly grateful to the Palmerston North Dance Association for their support of my dance journey. I am looking forward to another year of learning, new experiences, and opportunities to grow as a dancer.

Regards
Jessica

ev&Bow
FULL TIME DANCE TRAINING CENTRE

Monica Skinner Excellence Award 2025—Charlotte Wenman



My years I far
This year has been a huge learning experience for me, especially moving from New Zealand to Australia to pursue dance full-time.

Being away from home and adjusting to a new environment has definitely come with challenges, but it has also helped me grow in confidence and independence.

One of the biggest highlights of my year so far was our mid-year concert. We had just five weeks to learn over 20 dances, which was definitely challenging, but it was also such a rewarding experience. The busy rehearsal period pushed me both physically and mentally and getting to perform everything on stage made all the hard work worth it. Being surrounded by my classmates and seeing everything come together was definitely my favourite part of the year so far.

Although there is still a long way to go, I am proud of how far I have come already. I am excited to continue pushing myself, learning from my teachers and taking every opportunity that comes my way.



I am so grateful to CPAC and to the Monica Skinner scholarship for being part of this journey and helping me take this step towards the career I hope to build in dance

Warm regards,
Charlotte Wenman

CPAC
CONROY PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE



2025 Monica Skinner Scholarship

PNDA Dance Excellence Award 2025— Annalyssa Turia



"This year has been such an amazing experience for me, and I'm so grateful to the Monica Skinner Scholarship for helping make it possible.

Moving to Melbourne and training at Transit Dance has been a huge step for me. I've learnt so much and feel like my dancing has improved massively, especially my technical skills. The training has definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone, but it has also made me more confident and motivated to keep working towards a career in dance.

One of my biggest highlights was receiving two awards at Transit's end of year prize giving. I was really proud of this because I had worked so hard throughout the year and could see how much I had grown.

Another really exciting moment was getting my first paid gig at the Melbourne Cup! I t was such a cool experience to actually be working as a professional dancer and something I'll never forget.
I'm also currently in rehearsals for a really exciting performance in front of around 100,000 people. I can't say too much about it yet because it's still under embargo, but I'm so excited to be involved and it's an opportunity I never imagined I would get this early in my dance journey.

I've also met so many amazing people this year. I've made some really good industry connections and friendships that I hope will last for a very long time. Being around people who are just as passionate about dance as I am has been really inspiring.

I honestly don't think I would have been able to have all of these experiences without the support of the Monica Skinner Scholarship. The funding has given me the opportunity to train at Transit Dance, grow as a dancer, meet incredible people and take my first steps into the industry.

Thank you so much for believing in me and helping me achieve goals that once felt so far away. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity and can't wait to see what comes next!"

Regards
Annalyssa

Message from New Zealand School of Dance Student – Nicola Sutherland-Smith.



It means a lot to me to have such lovely support from home. I have been busy with rehearsals underway for my spring performances at NZSD.
Recently, I performed with the Wellington Opera during their production of Manon. Four completely sold out shows at the St James Theatre. Such an awesome experience. Here's a photo by Stephen A'Court.

Kind regards,
Nicola

Dance 2026 ~ 21st June
Regent on Broadway

Dance 2026 is a series of concerts that began in 2000 celebrating dance in its many and varied forms.
The event is a significant event for the Dance Association, bringing together our member dance schools from Palmerston North and the wider Manawatu and Horowhenua areas.
We are very grateful for the PNCC Creative Communities grant to help with the costs of this event.
The Talent of performers supporting Dance 2026 were

MAXIMUM dance

Maxene Jeffares
www.maximumdance.co.nz


Trolley Song, Awake my Soul


Crows Feet DANCE COLLECTIVE

Journey to a New Life
www.facebook.com/TaniaCrowsFeetDance/






Spring Chicken Dance Company
Lyn.sheehan@xtra.co.nz



Peter Gun, Razzle Dazzle



Freyberg HIGH SCHOOL

Electric Idol, Everybody Talks




Cailin Traditional
Irish Dancing School
of Palmerston North.

Lanigan's Ball, Bridging the Beats





Palmerston North
Highland Dancers



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Wonderful World , Jungla

Chantel Pinguet
www.levinthemovement.co.nz

RED STAR DANCE

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www.tararuaschoolofdance.com



Jazz Mega Mix, Acro Mega Mix









Hair in the Air, Promises Broken



DW STUDIOS

admin@danceworks

MR MICHELLE ROBINSON DANCE STUDIO

Studio 100 Campbell Street

info@michelledance.co.nz



Baby I'm a Star, Come Alive



Dance 2026 Finale



The year in pictures Ballet

2025 Junior Ballet Championship
1. Isabella Mercado
2. Ella Rowland
3. Georgia Sage







2025 Intermediate Ballet Championship
1. Niyah Henare-Pearson
2. Mercedes Brooks
3. Piper Golds




2025 Senior Ballet Championship
1. Lina Peachey
2. Hayley Xu
3. Azaziah BatachEl







The year in pictures Modern



2025 Junior Jazz Championship
1. Laila Moore
2. Lucia Hawker
3. Adaire Lawrence





2025 Intermediate Jazz Championship
1. Matilda Down
2. Addison Troy
3. Lakeesha Broughton













2025 Senior Jazz Championship
1. Mackenzie Waters
2. Abbie Soper
3. Georgie Farley









The year in pictures Tap

2025 Junior Tap Championship
1. Lucia Hawker
2. Milla Bason
3. Adalyn Minty

Adjudicator—Alana Tod







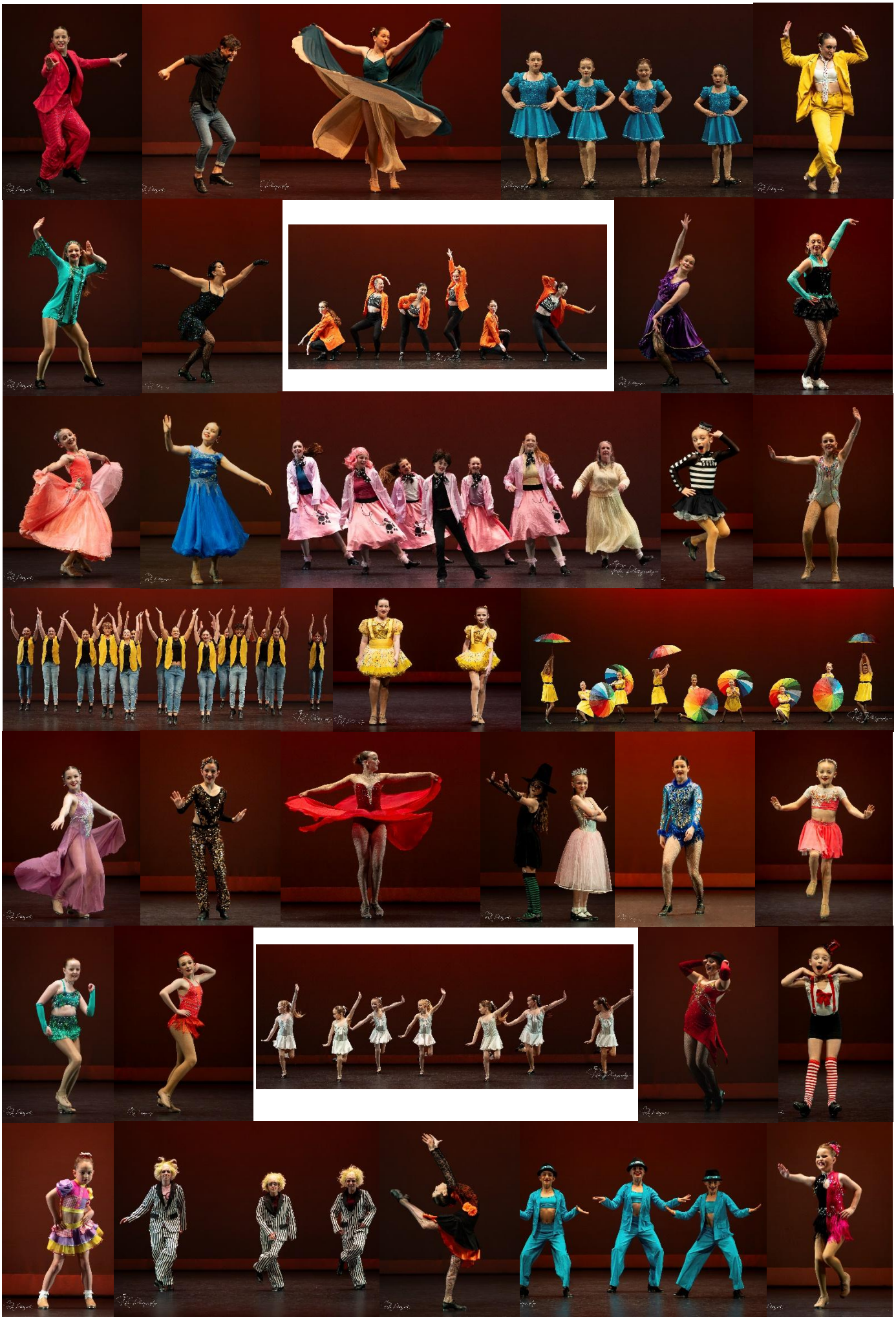
2025 Senior Tap Championship
1. Emily Pitham
2. Peyton Waters
3. Ava Duncan

Adjudicator—Alana Tod









The year in pictures Groups

















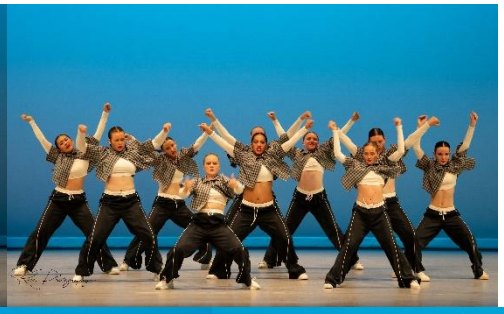








The year in pictures Hip Hop
















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 Palmerston North Dance Association Inc 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 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.



2026

PNDA Annual Dance Competitions & Gala Evening

25th September —1st October 2026 Regent on Broadway

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

23rd—26th October 2026. Regent on Broadway. Hosted by PNDA and MPACS

Monica Skinner Memorial Scholarship: Applications close— This has been put on hold for 2026

PNDA AGM - 6th December 2026

2027

PNDA Restricted and open Tap Competition and Open Impromptus + PACANZ

Tap Troupe Nomination offered

19th—21st February 2027 Globe Theatre

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

12th—14th March 2027 Regent on Broadway

PNDA 50th Anniversary Dance Workshop 2027

1st August 2027 – Globe Theatre

PNDA Annual Dance Competitions & Gala Event Celebrating 50 years

24th – 30th September2027 Regent on Broadway

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

23rd—26th October 2027. Regent on Broadway. Hosted by PNDA and MPACS

Monica Skinner Memorial Scholarship: Applications Close – 7th November 2027 – 5pm to be notified or confirmed.

PNDA AGM – 5th December 2027

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,

Tracy Horman, Lisa Procter, Katrina Rose, Rosemary Sutherland-Smith

Facebook: Palmerston North Dance Association

Website : PNDA.nz

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nzct COMMUNITY TRUST

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THE PRINTERY

Thanks to Katrina and Dion for photos used in this newsletter