



National Cultural Policy Consultation Tracks Dance Submission

22 May 2026

Tracks Dance is a multi-award-winning community dance organisation based in Darwin. Since the late 1980s, we have created original, site-specific performances that celebrate the unique landscapes, cultures and diverse communities of the NT. Our work is grounded in long-term, trusted community collaborations and reflects both the traditional and contemporary life of our region. Darwin's extraordinary mix of more than 100 nationalities, strong First Nations cultures and vibrant multicultural communities is central to our practice and the stories we share.

As part of the new National Cultural Policy consultation, Tracks Dance strongly urges the Australian Government to recognise Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) as essential cultural infrastructure and to commit to significantly greater investment in regional and remote arts practice.

Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) as essential cultural infrastructure

Tracks supports the submission of the National Alliance for Community Arts and Cultural Development and calls for CACD to be formally embedded within the National Cultural Policy and future funding frameworks. CACD is not a single artform; it is a methodology built on equity, access, participation and community-led practice. It values lived experience, cultural democracy and long-term relationship building. CACD creates meaningful opportunities for people to participate in cultural life as active collaborators rather than passive audiences.

This work directly advances all pillars of REVIVE. CACD strengthens First Nations self-determination, elevates underrepresented voices, supports artists as essential workers and builds stronger cultural infrastructure and social cohesion. Yet despite its broad impact across arts, health, education, justice and community wellbeing, CACD remains significantly under-recognised and underfunded within current national policy settings.

We call on the Government to:

- Formally recognise CACD as essential national cultural infrastructure;
- Increase long-term operational funding for community-based arts organisations;
- Create funding models that value relationship-building, co-creation and intergenerational practice rather than short-term project outcomes;
- Ensure CACD investment is visible and measurable within national arts funding frameworks.

Tracks Dance Company

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Greater investment in regional and remote arts practice

Tracks also urges far greater investment in regional and remote Australia. For many Northern Territory communities, barriers to cultural participation remain immense. Geographic isolation, high travel costs, limited internet access and language differences all impact access to arts programs and funding opportunities. In many communities, English is a third or fourth language, making standard grant processes inaccessible without tailored support and culturally responsive approaches.

If Australia is serious about equitable cultural participation and self-determination, policy and funding structures must reflect the realities of remote practice. Community engagement in remote contexts requires time, trust and continuity. Dance and storytelling are powerful tools in this work because they can transcend language barriers and connect people across cultures and generations.

We also call for targeted workforce development strategies for regional and remote arts workers. Touring across the Northern Territory can be equivalent to touring across Europe and should be resourced accordingly. Remote communities experience major inequities in access to arts education and professional pathways, particularly outside regional centres.

Tracks Dance asks the Government to:

- Increase dedicated funding for regional and remote arts practice;
- Support locally led workforce development and arts training pathways;
- Ensure touring and remote engagement funding properly reflects the true scale and cost of working across the Northern Territory.

Conclusion

Participation in culture is a whole-of-life activity. Sustainable investment in community-led arts practice is essential to ensuring all Australians can create, share and experience culture, regardless of geography or background.