



MEDIA RELEASE

The Annual General Meeting of Artback NT, the Territory's leading arts touring and development agency, has elected a new Chairperson, Chips Mackinolty, Artback Executive Officer Louise Partos announced today.

"We are continuing our strong tradition of a Board with long term ties to the arts in the Northern Territory," said Ms Partos.

"Our deputy Chair—Alan Murn—comes from the heart of the Territory in Tennant Creek; our Secretary/Treasurer Jenny Pender is an Alice Springs stalwart.

"Chips Mackinolty has been a practicing artist in the Territory for 30 years, and we look forward to his continuing contributions to Artback NT."

Mr. Mackinolty said he welcomed the chance to put something back into the Northern Territory.

"Working as the chair of Artback will be a huge challenge—not least because of the groundwork that the new Board will be building on," said Mr. Mackinolty.

"In important ways, Artback NT is the unsung hero of the Territory arts scene.

"In the last year we had audiences of more than 100,000 within the Territory for our touring shows—a number greater than the Darwin Festival, the Territory's best resourced arts organisation.

"And that doesn't count the 170,000 other Australians we have exported shows to in interstate gigs—we are a vibrant part of the Territory's cultural export industry as well."

Mr. Mackinolty said a high priority would be strengthening Artback's ties with local government in regional and remote areas of the Territory.

"As Territorians, we often romanticise about bush traditions and looking after the bush—but we are the only arts organisation that delivers to every shire in the Territory, no one else comes even close.

"And it's not just the 'growth towns': we tour to places that aren't even on the map as far as many of us are concerned.

"I know, from living and working in places across remote areas how valuable touring exhibitions and performances are to Territorians who live away from major centres.

"I look forward to working closely with LGANT, individual shires, and the Minister for Local Government."

Mr. Mackinolty thanked outgoing Board members for their work, particularly retiring Chair, Susan Congreve.

"She is moving on to work for the Territory's leading performing arts group, Tracks: our loss is their gain.

“She will be a credit to Tracks, as she has been for Artback NT.”

Ms Partos said the coming year would see an exciting year of touring the Territory, with the second year of the Government’s music touring initiative in partnership with Music NT. The program will target development and touring activities and capacity building in regional and remote areas who are greatly affected by a lack of resources.

The performing arts program features a highly anticipated musical battle when master musician Gene Peterson, goes head to head with multi-instrumentalist Adam Page, in an extraordinary musical face-off. Audiences in remote communities are also not left out as Artback NT tours Terrapin Puppet Theatre’s production of *Boats* to locations throughout the Top End.

Other highlights for the year include the highly anticipated *DanceSite* event on 3 September which will feature over 100 performers across 10 different language groups presenting a showcase of Indigenous culture as part of the Desert Harmony Festival. Last year the event drew an audience of over 2,500.

2011 will also see the launch of three new nationally touring exhibitions including *Good Strong Powerful* which opens at the National Gallery of Australia in October. *Good Strong Powerful* celebrates the excellence of inclusive best practice in the arts and sets a new benchmark for others to pursue.

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