

= Enlighten Canberra =

Enlighten Canberra is an outdoor annual art and cultural festival held in Canberra , Australia featuring illuminating light installations and projections , performances from local and interstate musicians , dining and film events .

The festival is an Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government initiative held annually in early March , encouraging people to " See Canberra in a whole new light . " The centrepiece of Enlighten Canberra is the illuminating of Canberra 's cultural institutions after dark , including Old Parliament House , Parliament House and the National Gallery of Australia (since the 2011 event) as well as the National Portrait Gallery and Questacon (since the 2012 event) . There is also live music , film screenings and after @-@ hours tours .

Since its inception , Enlighten has become increasingly popular , attracting 115 @,@ 000 visitors in 2013 and 131 @,@ 500 in 2014 . Attendance rose again in 2015 , to 287 @,@ 874 visitors .

= = History of the event = =

= = = 2008 ? 11 : Lead @-@ up to the first Enlighten = = =

In 2008 ACT Labor made an election promise to deliver a new autumn event for Canberra , Australia ? this was the beginnings of Enlighten Canberra . In December 2010 , Andrew Barr , then Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Minister for Tourism , Sport and Recreation , announced the ACT Government Enlighten would be a major annual event , commencing in March 2011 . He said national attractions that would participate with lit facades after dark included the National Gallery of Australia , Parliament House and Old Parliament House . Ticketed events were also announced , including headline international acts in concert .

= = = 2011 : The first Enlighten = = =

In its first year , along with other events , Enlighten hosted rock band INXS , jazz guitarist George Benson , and world @-@ music supergroup Afro Celt Sound System . To help promote Enlighten , INXS arrived in Canberra in a helicopter , landing on the lawns of Old Parliament House two weeks before their concert appearance . INXS band member Kirk Pengilly told reporters that the show planned for Enlighten 2011 was " probably the biggest production that we 've put on at any show in Australia . " As part of the festival , cultural institutions in the Parliamentary triangle were illuminated after dark , including Old Parliament House , Parliament House and the National Gallery of Australia .

Despite the big @-@ ticket performances and media stunts , the inaugural festival cost \$ 2 @.@ 4 million , and there was poor community interest , with just 8600 visitors . The first Enlighten did however attract 2400 visitors from interstate or overseas who came to Canberra specifically for Enlighten or extended their stay because of it .

The slogan for Enlighten , announced in December 2010 , is " See Canberra in a whole new light "

= = = 2012 : Enlighten made a part of the Canberra Festival = = =

In its second year , Enlighten was made a part of the Canberra Festival . The merging of the festivals was met with criticism from the Canberra branch of the Liberal Party of Australia , with Canberra Liberal Brendan Smyth describing the Labor Government 's attempt to create a new festival as " embarrassing " . The Enlighten entertainment lineup featured in the 2012 event was scaled back significantly from the 2011 event to instead feature local Canberra artists including Owen Campbell . Of the nearly 100 artists contracted to perform in the 2012 festival , 53 per cent were local artists , paid 11 @.@ 5 per cent of the Enlighten programming budget that year . In 2012 Questacon and the National Portrait Gallery became canvasses for projection for the first time ? they

had not been lit in the 2011 Enlighten festival .

== 2013 ? 14 : the spiegel tent joins Enlighten ==

In 2013 , along with the large @-@ scale building illuminations featured in the previous two events , Enlighten hosted a spiegel tent for the first time . The tent put on dozens of shows featuring comics , acrobats and musicians . The festival also included Canberra 's first Dîner en Blanc , a pop @-@ up picnic in which all guests dress in white and bring their own food , table , table @-@ setting and chair . More than 700 people attended the picnic , the third Dîner en Blanc to be held in Australia . Dîner en Blanc was repeated in 2014 , with over 800 people attending , but the dinner was not included as part of Enlighten 2015 . Film screenings and after hours tours were also offered , and American soul singer Charles Bradley performed as part of the 2014 festival .

== 2015 ? 16 : Enlighten debuts the Night Noodle Markets in Canberra ==

In November 2014 , the ACT Government announced the Night Noodle Markets would be coming to Canberra during the Enlighten Festival in 2015 . The Night Noodle Markets feature Asian @-@ themed street @-@ food vendors . ACT Tourism Minister Andrew Barr told media that Canberra 's Night Noodle Markets were expected to host up to 25 hawker style food stalls , and that the ACT Government had committed \$ 200 @, @ 000 to bring the 2015 noodle markets to the city . Around 156 @, @ 000 peoples visited the inaugural Enlighten Night Noodle Markets ? of whom 24 @, @ 000 visited on the opening night , far exceeding expectations .

In 2016 , alongside the Night Noodle Markets , Enlighten featured an installation by Amanda Parer of five illuminated white rabbits standing at 7 metres (23 ft) . Parer described the rabbits as metaphors for the mismanagement of the environment . Free concerts held over the consecutive weekends featured indie rock Australian band Augie March and American alternative country musical group Caexico .

== Projections ==

For its first six years , the large @-@ scale projections for Enlighten were coordinated by Electric Canvas . Electric Canvas 's managing director Peter Milne has also worked on the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games .

== Budget , attendance and visitor expenditure ==

Since its inception , Enlighten has become increasingly popular , attracting 115 @, @ 000 visitors in 2013 and 131 @, @ 500 in 2014 . Attendance rose again in 2015 , to 287 @, @ 874 visitors .

== Energy usage ==

In 2012 , projections for Enlighten were predominantly powered using diesel generators and consumed 2423 litres of diesel , resulting in an estimated 7 @. @ 0 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions .