

Enlighten Canberra is a popular annual festival in early March that transforms Canberra into a vibrant hub of light, art, and culture. This ACT Government initiative features stunning light installations, live music, film screenings, and after-hours tours of iconic buildings like Parliament House and the National Gallery. It attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year who enjoy a unique perspective of Canberra's cultural institutions and the city itself. ■

### **== History of the event ==**

Enlighten Canberra is a free, annual event held in early March that showcases Canberra's cultural institutions in a dazzling new light. This government-sponsored festival features vibrant light displays, live music, film screenings, and even hot air balloon flights. Since its launch, Enlighten has grown into a major event, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. ■

### **=== 2008–11: Lead-up to the first Enlighten ===**

Enlighten Canberra is an annual art and cultural festival held in early March that celebrates Canberra's cultural institutions with stunning light displays and performances. The festival was born out of a 2008 election promise to create a new autumn event for Canberra. In 2011, the ACT government launched Enlighten as a major annual event, featuring illuminated landmarks like Parliament House and the National Gallery of Australia, along with ticketed concerts and other events. Since then, Enlighten has become a popular event, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. ■

### **=== 2011: The first Enlighten ===**

Enlighten Canberra is a free, annual festival held in early March that uses light installations and projections to transform Canberra's iconic buildings into art. The festival also features live music, film screenings, and balloon flights. The festival was initiated in 2008 as a way to bring new life to Canberra's autumn season. In its first year, the festival featured international acts like INXS and George Benson but had low attendance. However, the festival has grown in popularity in recent years, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. ■

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

Enlighten Canberra, a free annual festival held in early March, aims to showcase Canberra's cultural institutions with spectacular light displays and performances. The festival was launched in 2011, promising to illuminate iconic landmarks like Parliament House and the National Gallery. Despite high-profile

performances in its first year, including INXS, the event attracted limited local interest. In its second year, Enlighten merged with the Canberra Festival and shifted focus to local artists, lighting new landmarks, and reducing costs. The festival has since become increasingly popular, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. ■■■

### **=== 2013–14: the spiegeltent joins Enlighten ===**

Enlighten Canberra is a free, annual festival held in early March that showcases Canberra's cultural institutions in a dazzling new light. The festival was launched in 2011 as a major event, featuring illuminated landmarks like Parliament House and the National Gallery of Australia. Despite a high-profile first year, including acts like INXS and George Benson, the festival struggled to attract local interest. In its second year, Enlighten merged with the Canberra Festival and shifted its focus to local artists, added new illuminated buildings, and reduced costs. The festival has since become increasingly popular, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, and has added new attractions like a spiegeltent and a pop-up picnic. ■■■

### **=== 2015–16: Enlighten debuts the Night Noodle Markets in Canberra ===**

Enlighten Canberra is an annual festival held in early March that celebrates Canberra's cultural institutions with stunning light displays and performances. This free event, initiated by the ACT Government in 2011, features illuminated landmarks, live music, film screenings, and balloon flights. While its initial years focused on attracting international acts, Enlighten has since shifted towards local talent and added unique attractions like a spiegeltent, pop-up picnics, and Asian-themed night markets. The festival has grown immensely in popularity, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. ■

### **=== 2020–21: Pandemic ===**

Enlighten Canberra is an annual, free festival held in early March that transforms Canberra's cultural institutions with light installations and performances. Originally launched in 2011, the festival has evolved from a focus on big-name concerts to a celebration of local artists and diverse experiences. It now features illuminated landmarks, live music, film screenings, a spiegeltent, a pop-up picnic, and a popular night market. While the festival faced initial challenges, it has grown significantly in popularity, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. It has continued to adapt, most recently incorporating safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **== Criticism ==**

Enlighten Canberra is an annual festival held in early March that transforms Canberra into a vibrant hub of light, art, and culture. Initially launched in 2011 as a major event featuring illuminated landmarks and international acts, Enlighten has evolved over the years. It now embraces local artists, diverse cultural experiences, and a range of attractions, including food markets, pop-up picnics, and a spiegeltent. Despite initial struggles and recent criticism for its funding practices, Enlighten has become a beloved and popular event, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. The festival has also shown resilience in adapting to challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

## **== Projections ==**

Enlighten Canberra is a free, annual festival held in early March that uses light displays and performances to highlight Canberra's cultural institutions. Originally launched in 2011 as a major event with big-name acts, Enlighten has evolved to embrace local artists and offer a diverse range of experiences. The festival attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors and features illuminated landmarks, live music, film screenings, a spiegeltent, pop-up picnics, and food markets. Despite facing initial challenges and criticism, Enlighten has become a popular event in Canberra and has shown resilience in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

## **== Budget, attendance and visitor expenditure ==**

Enlighten Canberra is a free, annual festival held in early March that transforms Canberra into a vibrant hub of light, art, and culture. The event, initiated in 2011 as a major festival with illuminated landmarks and big-name concerts, has evolved over the years, embracing local artists, diverse cultural experiences, and unique attractions like food markets, pop-up picnics, and a spiegeltent. While facing initial challenges and recent criticism regarding its funding practices, Enlighten has become a beloved and popular event, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. The festival has also shown resilience in adapting to challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

## **== Energy usage ==**

Enlighten Canberra is a free, annual festival held in early March that transforms Canberra's cultural institutions with stunning light displays and performances. This government-sponsored event, launched in 2011, has evolved from its initial focus on big-name acts to embracing local talent and offering diverse experiences, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

While facing challenges, including criticism for its funding practices, Enlighten has become a beloved event in Canberra, offering a unique perspective of the city's cultural landscape. It has also demonstrated resilience in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite its popularity and government funding, the festival has been criticized for its environmental impact, particularly the use of diesel generators for its projections in earlier years.

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### **== See also ==**

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### **== References ==**