



# Enlighten Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028



**ACT**  
Government

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Enquiries about this publication should be directed to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

GPO Box 158, Canberra City 2601

<http://www.act.gov.au/>

Telephone: Access Canberra - 13 22 81



### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and region.

First Nations Peoples who call Canberra home have held gatherings, ceremonies and events on these lands for tens of thousands of years. The ACT Government recognises the importance of these cultural traditions and their role in shaping the rich and diverse events landscape that we enjoy today.

Local, national and international visitors to events held in Canberra are also made welcome on these lands by our traditional custodians.

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## Objective and context of the strategy

First staged in 2011, Enlighten was delivered in partnership with the National Cultural Institutions with the aim of showcasing the nation's capital and bringing visitors to the ACT. Since then, it has grown to become one of Canberra's most loved events.

In its current state it attracts a comparable number of locals to that of Floriade (Enlighten 2023 was attended by 91,000 Canberrans, whilst Floriade 2022 attracted 124,000 Canberrans), yet only delivers 10-15% of the visitation and subsequent economic impact of Floriade (Enlighten 2023 drove \$3.5m in Direct Visitor Spend, whilst Floriade 2022 drove almost \$37m).

To that end, the event is at a critical point in its evolution. Whilst its local audience is well established, for it to deliver visitation akin to that of Floriade it needs to evolve and become a more compelling proposition.

As articulated throughout the document that follows, the ability to evolve into a more compelling proposition in the years ahead will depend on two key factors. Firstly, relationships and co-investment with the cultural institutions must be prioritised. Secondly, the broader event experience, particularly in the National Triangle, needs to improve.

To reflect this, the document that follows spells out an overarching strategic direction for Enlighten in the five years from 2024 to 2028. This direction and the aligned strategic priorities have been written to reflect findings from extensive industry and public consultation, coupled with guidance from event industry specialists.

The extensive industry and public consultation, carried out between July 2022 and March 2023, brought to light a range of issues and fundamentals that make the path forward for the event clear. These issues and fundamentals are articulated in the strategy that follows.

## Framing of the strategy

From its inaugural year in 2011 through until 2017, Enlighten's core content was the illumination of the National Cultural Institutions. Inclusion of an expanded food and beverage offering and ticketed programming helped grow the festival's audience over these 7 years. In 2018, several existing events were included under an 'Enlighten Festival' umbrella, with the Canberra Balloon Spectacular being the most prominent of those.

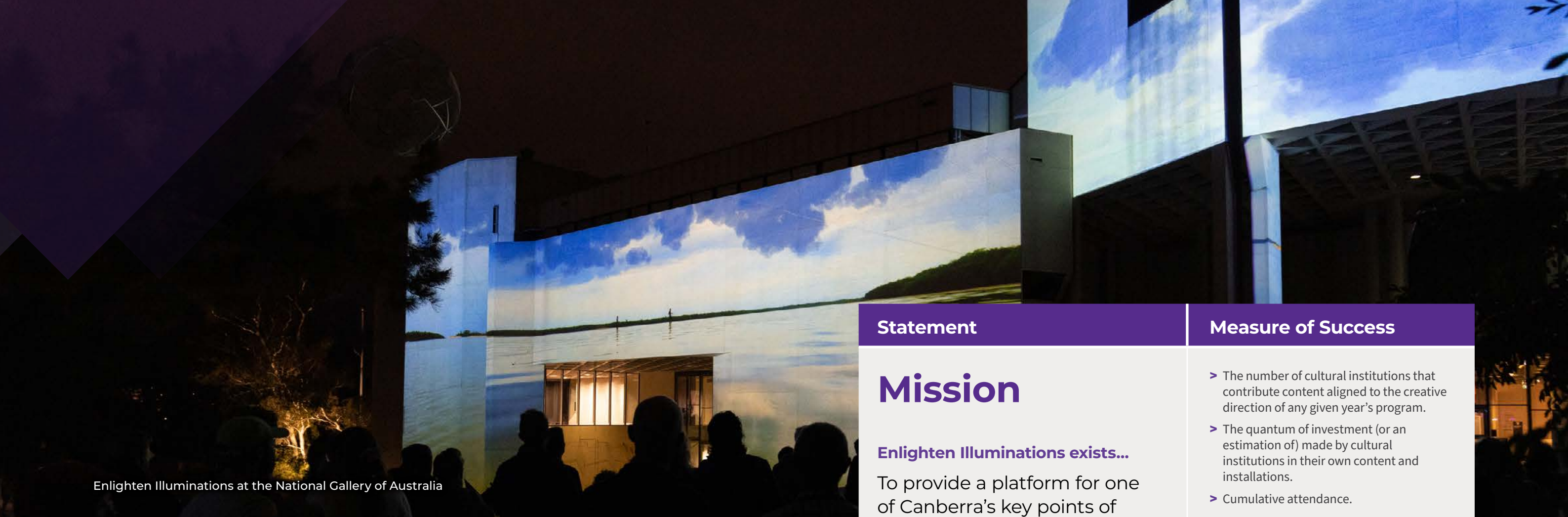
Industry and public consultation highlighted the fact that despite the Canberra Balloon Spectacular being included under the Enlighten umbrella for the past 5 years, the Enlighten Illuminations and the Canberra Balloon Spectacular were largely seen as two separate, stand-alone events.

Further, the combining of the two events did not result in a material increase in visitation and subsequent economic impact to either event or the Enlighten Festival as a whole. This, coupled with a range of other findings uncovered during the consultation, suggest that separating the two events from each other would provide them both with space and opportunity to grow in their own right – and in turn drive more benefit in the five years ahead.

To that end, this five-year strategic plan assumes that, following a transitional year in 2024, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular will likely be split out from the Enlighten Illuminations. As such, the overarching direction for 2025 to 2028 focuses on the Enlighten Illuminations, the food and beverage offering, and activations across the wider event footprint that are currently part of the Enlighten umbrella.







Enlighten Illuminations at the National Gallery of Australia

# Foundation statements

## Positioning statement

With lighting festivals becoming more and more commonplace across Australia, it is more important than ever for our festival to put our key point of difference – the cultural institutions that call Canberra home – at the heart of what we do. That competitive landscape also brings to the fore the importance of enhancing the overall event experience to deliver the advocacy required to drive our desired outcomes.

## Purpose

To spark curiosity in our attendees wherever we can.

## Defining success

These are the KPIs we'll use to measure the extent to which we deliver on our stated Mission and Vision.

Statement	Measure of Success
<div>Mission</div> <div>Enlighten Illuminations exists...</div> <div>To provide a platform for one of Canberra’s key points of difference as a destination, the cultural institutions, to unite, collaborate and showcase their collections and stories to new audiences.</div>	<div>&gt; The number of cultural institutions that contribute content aligned to the creative direction of any given year’s program.</div> <div>&gt; The quantum of investment (or an estimation of) made by cultural institutions in their own content and installations.</div> <div>&gt; Cumulative attendance.</div>
<div>Vision</div> <div>And has a primary objective...</div> <div>To be the nation’s most thought provoking, contemporary celebration of Australian culture and storytelling, raising the profile of Canberra and its cultural institutions across Australia and beyond.</div>	<div>&gt; The number of unique attendees.</div> <div>&gt; The number of visitors (and subsequent visitor spend) that come to Canberra and cite Enlighten as a major factor for doing so.</div> <div>&gt; Domestic and international reach of media coverage associated with the event.</div> <div>&gt; The percentage of Canberrans (spontaneous and prompted) that mention Enlighten as “an event that makes me proud to be from Canberra”.</div> <div>&gt; The percentage of attendees that strongly agree with key statements:<div><div>“Enlighten sparks a sense of curiosity unlike any other event”.</div><div>“Enlighten got me thinking about what it means to be Australian.”</div></div></div>





Enlighten Illuminations at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House  
Photo by: PHOTOX

Values

# Enlighten Illuminations at its best

By ensuring these values come through in how the event is delivered, we help to reinforce the foundations on which Enlighten was created, while also building on elements that have contributed to its success so far. This will serve to assure its future.

From communications with participants and stakeholders, activation of the event footprint, to our marketing, and who the event partners with, we use our values as the event’s primary decision-making filter by asking ourselves: Does this align with one or more of our values?

1

**Creative, awe-inspiring**

We aim to inspire a sense of wonder and curiosity in the way our event is staged and tells the stories of our nation

By facilitating partnerships between the community engagement teams within the cultural institutions of Canberra, our building projection partners, local creatives and local businesses, we harness a creative energy that turns parts of our city into vibrant places of wonder.

In doing so, we create an environment and deliver an event experience that inspires curiosity about the world around us – a deeply Canberran trait in itself.

2

**Entertaining, enlightening**

A curiosity-filled, fun night out, whatever your age or stage

We deliver and curate our event in a compelling way that has broad appeal, sparks interest and curiosity, and is ultimately just good fun. We want our attendees to leave knowing something they didn’t when they arrived, but without having felt like they’ve been “taught a lesson”.

3

**Nation leading**

Reflective of the nationally and internationally significant work done by some of Australia’s most important cultural institutions

Our partners at various cultural institutions, particularly those in the National Triangle, are at the forefront of shaping our national identity. By providing them with a platform to unite, collaborate and take their stories to a new audience, we have an opportunity to make a significant contribution to a “national conversation” about who we are and what it is that defines us as Australians.

## Foundational success factor

At the heart of most sustainable, place-based events lies a foundational success factor. Being clear on what that success factor is, we can focus and prioritise our energies and resources. The foundational success factor for the Enlighten Illuminations, and the explanation behind its importance, is detailed below.

**Foundational success factor:** Engaging, uniting and collaborating with the community engagement and executive teams within each of the National Cultural Institutions, our local cultural organisations, partners and local businesses to maximise their investment and in turn broaden the event’s content and footprint.

**Rationale:** The National Cultural Institutions and our civic-based partners at the Cultural Facilities Corporation (CFC) and City Renewal Authority (CRA) all want to grow their audience in one way or another. To that end, they have teams dedicated to engaging with the public by creating exhibitions, attractions and initiatives that are ultimately aimed at bringing more people through their respective footprints.

By engaging and providing them with direction well in advance we can provide them with the time to share ideas, collaborate and deliver.

Doing so will mean we can fully harness the capacity, resources and relationships each of these institutions and organisations have at their disposal to create content and leveraging opportunities. This will be at the heart of improving the quantity and quality of Enlighten’s program and in turn delivering to our primary objective.

The uplift in attendance driven primarily by the food and beverage offering in recent years presents the cultural institutions with a new audience to leverage. To ensure the institutions capitalise on that audience, and the event in turn highlights the institutions as our key point of difference, it is critical that we continue developing the activation of the entire event footprint.

To that end, we will prioritise building and maintaining our relationships with each of the National Cultural Institutions along with the CFC and CRA, while also exploring new ways to connect the content and stories of these institutions and partners with the captive audience at the Enlighten hub.



# Alignment to The Canberra Story and the ACT Tourism Strategy 2023-2030

By aligning the way in which we drive Enlighten Illuminations with aspects of the Canberra Story and the ACT Tourism Strategy 2023-2030 (T2030), we will:

- > Increase the level of civic pride and connection that our event inspires among Canberrans, in turn increasing advocacy and attendance via word of mouth;
- > Grow interstate and international visitation and attendance by delivering and facilitating a compelling, high-quality cultural event experience; and
- > Align ourselves with industry-wide direction, maximising the opportunities for collaboration with our numerous stakeholders.

## Alignment with The Canberra Story

By putting the stories held within the cultural institutions of Canberra at the heart of our event, we directly speak to the Canberran trait of “Being interested”. Defined by a sense of curiosity, open-mindedness, and a search for the “new”, the Enlighten Illuminations has the potential to be a key driver and proof-point of this trait.

## Alignment with T2030

The first destination strength listed under T2030 is Canberra’s place as the “Home of national attractions and holder of the nation’s stories”.

By clearly aligning Enlighten’s purpose and foundational statements with this strength, it ensures we put one of Canberra’s genuine points of difference at the heart of our event.

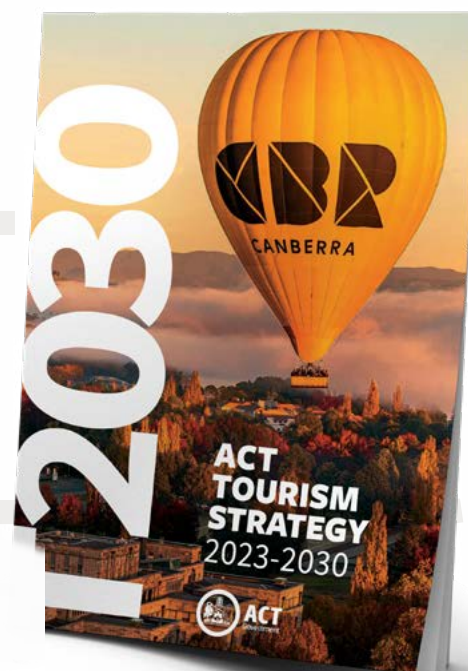
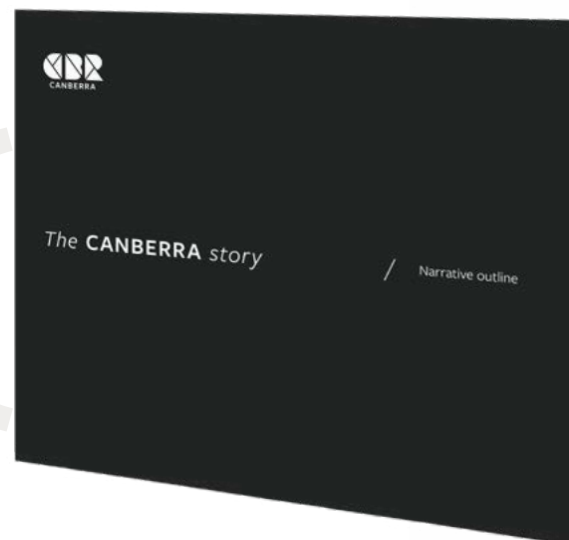
Aligning to this strength and raising the profile of our national attractions will help deliver Mission 2 within T2030, which seeks to “Promote Canberra’s strengths and celebrate our distinct character – Embrace the destination’s owned strengths to create new opportunities”.

Further, within this Mission is the stated priority to support the development of local arts and cultural experiences.

**To ensure we align ourselves with these two key documents, we will ask ourselves the following questions when making key decisions about the Enlighten Illuminations:**

- > Does what we’re doing:
  - ◉ Align with the Canberran quality of “Being Interested”? Does this spark curiosity and provide an outlet for people to find “the new”? (See page 8 of The Canberra Story)
- > Does what we’re doing:
  - ◉ Strengthen Canberra’s place as the home of national attractions and holder of the nation’s stories? (See page 14 of T2030)
  - ◉ Support the development and promotion of a quality event? (See page 25 of T2030)
  - ◉ Raise the profile of our national attractions? (See page 33 of T2030)
  - ◉ Support development of local arts and cultural experiences? (See page 25 of T2030)
  - ◉ Enhance the vibrancy and liveability of our city? (see page 43 of T2030)

The platform provided by the Enlighten Illuminations also presents the opportunity to work more collaboratively with the ACT Government’s broader Economic Development division. This includes assistance in realising some of the key objectives and actions outlined in the ACT Small Business Strategy 2023-2026, the Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022-2026, and the work of the ACT Better Regulation Taskforce to support Canberra’s night-time economy.



Enlighten Illuminations at the National Portrait Gallery

Photo by: Hcreations

# Strategic priorities

The Enlighten Illuminations has continued to grow in overall attendance, yet in parallel, economic impact via visitation has remained relatively stagnant in comparison. The addition of the food and beverage offering at the Enlighten hub in the National Triangle – first added to the program in 2015 – has been the primary driver of the increases in overall event attendance and vibrancy. However, the stagnation in visitation growth indicates that the event has come to an important crossroad in its evolution.

To drive visitation, the event must elevate the quality and quantity of its content. Doing that will require a renewed focus on two fronts. Firstly, over the next five years the Enlighten Illuminations will be about establishing better partnerships with our event’s key point of difference: the cultural institutions. Secondly, responding to feedback about clear gaps in the event footprint, it will be about delivering a more complete and compelling attendee experience across the entire event footprint.

We see separating the Enlighten Illuminations from the Canberra Balloon Spectacular (and the other community events staged across the Canberra Day long weekend) as an important step in ensuring the cultural institutions are the major focus of the event.

This separation of the two key events could mean a change of date up to six weeks later than the time of year the Enlighten Illuminations has been traditionally staged (i.e.: the first two weekends of March).

Given the significant goodwill the Enlighten Illuminations already enjoys, that separation represents a risk that needs to be managed.

To that end, our four strategic priorities over the life of this strategy focus on protecting the event’s existing brand equity through clear communications, growing that equity by providing each year of the festival with creative direction, and increasing the level of investment in programming and activation to further enhance the attendee experience – all of which will be aimed at fostering a sense of ownership in the event’s future amongst stakeholders and the general public.

Strategic priority	Separate Enlighten Illuminations from other existing content under the Enlighten banner	Foster a sense of collective ownership in the event amongst our key stakeholders	Protect and grow the existing brand equity the event enjoys with Canberrans	Elevate the overall attendee experience
Our Actions	Use the 2024 edition of the Enlighten Festival to prepare stakeholders and the broader public for the launch of a completely refreshed positioning for all events (Lights! Canberra! Action!, Symphony in the Park, Canberra Day etc) currently under the Enlighten banner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Write, resource and execute on a stakeholder engagement plan that includes a clear calendar of events and occasions at which intelligence such as creative direction, ideas, marketing plans, research and insights can be shared.</li><li>&gt; Lead the event’s creative direction. In doing so, ensure key stakeholders including indigenous representatives are engaged regularly from creation through to execution.</li><li>&gt; Create a role – ideally external and contracted to Events ACT – focused on providing creative direction and relationship building with key stakeholders.</li><li>&gt; Engage with the National Cultural Institutions earlier. We will commence engagement for the 2025 event in January of 2024. See engagement timeline for proposed timings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Write, resource and execute on a community engagement and communications plan that ensures the reasons behind any proposed changes to the event are fully explained.</li><li>&gt; Engage and collaborate with local businesses, providers and hospitality vendors to use and showcase local expertise, content, and produce.</li><li>&gt; Remain cognisant of the strength the event enjoys as an “end of autumn” celebration when deciding on a potential date change for the event. Look to err on the side of the event ending no later than Anzac Day.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Should additional investment be forthcoming:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the time and resource we dedicate to building relationships with the cultural institutions, and</li><li>• Increase investment in programming that supports new and enhanced experiences for attendees and generates greater vibrancy and engagement across the entire event precinct, including city-based activations.</li></ul></li><li>&gt; Work to better connect the lighting projections, cultural institutions content, food and beverage, entertainment and other activations and installations (including city-based content) under the festival’s creative direction.</li><li>&gt; Explore commercial opportunities including sponsorship, paid programming, and other partnerships.</li></ul>
Desired Outcomes	Provide the Enlighten Illuminations and the Canberra Balloon Spectacular with space – both physical and in a branding sense – to provide them with clarity and maximise their chances for growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Grow the value proposition the Enlighten Illuminations represents for the National Cultural Institutions. Evolve the event in a manner that ensures it becomes an integral part of their business.</li><li>&gt; Increase the time and resource the National Cultural Institutions are willing to put towards the event.</li><li>&gt; Improve the attendee experience in line with our key purpose statements and values.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Mitigate the risk of changing the format and timing of the event by ensuring our existing audience is at worst, informed and understands the rationale behind any changes, and at best, is an advocate for the changes.</li><li>&gt; Illustrate Events ACT and the ACT Government are taking a long-term view and basing decision making on robust research and engagement with industry and the broader public.</li><li>&gt; Build advocacy for the event from local businesses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Address core weaknesses in the attendee experience as identified in both the community and event research.</li><li>&gt; Increase the number of attendees that leave as advocates for our event.</li><li>&gt; Maximise repeat visitation and attendance year on year.</li><li>&gt; Diversify income streams and increase investment in programming from other sources.</li></ul>





# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)

## Strengths

### 1. Existing goodwill amongst Canberrans who see potential for the event to grow

Attracting well over 100,000 Canberrans every year, the Enlighten Festival registers comparable levels of awareness, local attendance, and community pride as Floriade and the National Multicultural Festival – events that have an additional 20+ years of history behind them. Further, Canberrans clearly see the potential the Enlighten Illuminations has to continue growing and would likely be supportive of changes that are designed to deliver that growth.

To that end, to ensure that significant existing brand equity amongst locals is protected, it is critical that Canberrans feel included and informed of any significant changes in the event moving forward.

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Write, resource and execute on a community engagement and communications plan that ensures the reasons behind any proposed changes to the event are fully explained.
- > Work to better connect the lighting projections, cultural institution content, food and beverage, entertainment and other activations and installations (including city-based content) under the festival's creative direction.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- > Protect and grow the existing brand equity the event enjoys with Canberrans
- > Elevate the overall attendee experience

### 2. The event's current timing

Autumn is seen by many as Canberra's most spectacular time of year. As such, it provides the ideal backdrop for an event to drive significant visitation. Further, many Canberrans see Enlighten as a "last hurrah" for outdoor activities before the cooler weather sets in.

#### OUR ACTION

Remain cognisant of this strength when deciding on a potential date change for the event. Look to err on the side of the event ending no later than Anzac Day, the time that urban folklore says is the moment Canberrans turn on their heaters for the winter ahead.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- > Protect and grow the existing brand equity the event enjoys with Canberrans

## Weaknesses

### 1. Limited planning and lead time

At present, the engagement with the National Cultural Institutions commences, at most, four months out from the event itself. That leaves these institutions with somewhere between 2 to 3 months to conceive what they will do, apply for the funding support for projections, and execute it in partnership with the contracted projectionist.

Amongst other things, this lead time minimises the resource invested in the creative process, whilst also not allowing suitable time for collaboration between institutions and other event stakeholders. Ultimately, this limited planning and lead time impacts on the attendee experience.

By building more lead time into each event's delivery, we will enhance the extent to which we deliver on our three core values of "Creative, Awe Inspiring", "Entertaining, Enlightening", and "Nation Leading".

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Engage with the National Cultural Institutions earlier. By 2024, we will engage with the cultural institutions and other event stakeholders at least 14 months, ideally 18 months in advance of the next iteration of the event. See proposed timeline on Page 18-19.
- > Should additional investment be forthcoming:
  - Increase the time and resource we dedicate to building relationships with the cultural institutions, and
  - Increase investment in programming that supports new and enhanced experiences for attendees and generates greater vibrancy and engagement across the entire event precinct, including city-based activations.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- > Foster a sense of collective ownership in the event amongst our key stakeholders
- > Elevate the overall attendee experience

### 2. A lack of overarching creative direction

Our event partners, particularly the National Cultural Institutions, see significant value in the Enlighten Illuminations being delivered to an overarching creative theme or vision. Providing creative direction to the institutions will allow them to explore their collections, in turn providing them with creative inspiration. Working towards a clear, singular creative direction will open up opportunities for collaboration and creation across all stakeholder groups.

Doing so will positively impact upon the attendee experience, making each year's attendance different, more memorable, and ensure our event's existing brand equity continues to build.

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Lead the event's creative direction. In doing so, ensure key stakeholders, including indigenous representatives, are engaged regularly from creation through to execution.
- > Create a role – ideally external and contracted to Events ACT – focused on providing creative direction and relationship building with key stakeholders.
- > Work to better connect the lighting projections, cultural institution content, food and beverage, entertainment and other activations and installations (including city-based content) under the festival's creative direction.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- > Foster a sense of collective ownership in the event amongst our key stakeholders
- > Elevate the overall attendee experience





Enlighten Illuminations at Questacon

### 3. Event stakeholder relationships

Primarily due to a lack of time and resource, the relationships between Events ACT and key stakeholders, particularly the National Cultural Institutions, are not as strong as they could be.

In simple terms, the more time and information that is shared between the event's various stakeholders, the better the event will be. Further, the event's growth in the years ahead will almost wholly depend on increased input from our stakeholders. This is particularly pertinent in light of likely budgetary constraints over the five-year life of this strategy.

#### OUR ACTION

Write, resource, and execute on a stakeholder engagement plan that includes a clear calendar of events and occasions at which intelligence such as creative direction, ideas, marketing plans, research and insights can be shared.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- > Foster a sense of collective ownership in the event amongst our key stakeholders

### 4. The size of the event footprint and associated lack of budget to deliver optimal attendee experience

The Enlighten event footprint is vast, extending throughout the National Triangle and into the city. While the current Enlighten event hub in the heart of the National Triangle serves as a focal point for activity, attendee research indicates there are significant gaps both physical and experiential in the attendee experience. Since 2011, with the event budget holding steady and event delivery and compliance costs increasing, our available budget for programming, wayfinding, signage and lighting has fallen in real terms by 27%.

As such, the current event budget provides limited scope to build on existing programming in a way that creates a vibrant attendee experience spanning the entire event footprint.

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Should additional investment be forthcoming:
  - Increase the time and resource we dedicate to building relationships with the cultural institutions, and
  - increase investment in programming that supports new and enhanced experiences for attendees and generates greater vibrancy and engagement across the entire event precinct, including city-based activations.
- > Work to better connect the lighting projections, cultural institution content, food and beverage, entertainment and other activations and installations (including city-based content) under the festival's creative direction.
- > Explore commercial opportunities including sponsorship, paid programming, and other partnerships.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- > Elevate the overall attendee experience

## Opportunities

### 1. Separating the Illuminations out from other Enlighten content to accelerate growth

At the heart of all long-term sustainable, place-based events is a point of difference. This is particularly relevant when seeking to grow visitation and economic impact.

In its current form, Enlighten incorporates a range of events, that whilst successful in their own rights, have different purposes. That grouping of events with disparate purposes makes them harder to market, and indeed, has created confusion amongst some.

By providing Enlighten Illuminations and our key point of difference – the cultural institutions – with space, we will be able to market the event with clarity, maximising the limited marketing and communications budget we have at our disposal.

Further, this clarity will provide us with the opportunity to put forward a clearer, more compelling value proposition to sponsors and commercial content providers. This in turn will open up the opportunity to add to the event program in a way that is of net zero cost to the underlying event budget, or better.

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Use the 2024 edition of the Enlighten Festival to prepare stakeholders and the broader public for the launch of a completely refreshed positioning for all events (Lights! Canberra! Action!, Symphony in the Park, Canberra Day etc) currently under the Enlighten banner.
- > Write, resource and execute on a community engagement and communications plan that ensures the reasons behind any proposed changes to the event are fully explained.
- > Explore commercial opportunities including sponsorship, paid programming, and other partnerships.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- > Separate Enlighten Illuminations from the other existing content under the Enlighten banner
- > Protect and grow the existing brand equity the event enjoys with Canberrans
- > Elevate the overall attendee experience

### 2. Develop stronger relationships within National Cultural Institutions

For a couple of key reasons, the relationship Events ACT enjoys with the cultural institutions isn't as strong as it has been in previous years.

Firstly, a lack of resource both human and financial has meant that regular, ongoing engagement with the cultural institutions hasn't been possible. This lack of resource has also inhibited the extent to which Events ACT has been able to "co-invest" with the institutions in the projections and activations.

Secondly, the introduction of the Night Noodle Markets in 2015 (and subsequent iterations of an expanded food and beverage offering in the National Triangle), whilst being the primary driver of the event's growth in attendance, has for some institutions, not translated into a lift in attendance for them. To a certain extent, this has created almost two events within the Enlighten Illuminations. The food and beverage offering, and the Illuminations.

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Write and execute on a stakeholder engagement plan that includes a clear calendar of events and occasions at which intelligence such as creative direction, ideas, marketing plans, research and insights can be shared.
- > Lead the event's creative direction. In doing so, ensure key stakeholders including indigenous representatives are engaged regularly from creation through to execution.
- > Create a role – ideally external and contracted to Events ACT – focused on providing creative direction and stakeholder relationship building
- > Engage with the National Cultural Institutions earlier. We will commence engagement for the 2025 event in January of 2024. See engagement timeline for proposed timings.
- > Should additional investment be forthcoming:
  - Increase the time and resource we dedicate to building relationships with the cultural institutions, and
  - increase investment in programming that supports new and enhanced experiences for attendees and generates greater vibrancy and engagement across the entire event precinct, including city-based activations.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- > Foster a sense of collective ownership in the event amongst our key stakeholders
- > Elevate the overall attendee experience



### 3. Provide a platform for Canberra providers and hospitality vendors

Our direction to deliver an event of national significance opens up the opportunity for Canberra's local businesses, producers and hospitality providers to showcase themselves to a broader audience. To that end, in alignment with our values, we will look to partner with local providers.

#### OUR ACTION

Engage and collaborate with local businesses, providers and hospitality vendors to use and showcase local expertise, content and produce.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- > Protect and grow the existing brand equity the event enjoys with Canberrans

## Threats

### 1. Damage to existing "brand equity" and love for the event

Separating out the Enlighten Illuminations from the other events currently under the Enlighten umbrella carries with it inherent risk. In its current form, the Enlighten Illuminations is attended by over 100,000 locals, and up to 10,000 visitors. By those measures, particularly considering its modest budget, it is a success as it stands today.

In looking to make changes to the event (and in particular its timing), clear, broad communications that explains the rationale behind the separation of the event is critical.

#### OUR ACTIONS

- > Write, resource and execute on a community engagement and communications plan that ensures the reasons behind any proposed changes to the event are fully explained.
- > Should additional investment be forthcoming:
  - Increase the time and resource we dedicate to building relationships with the cultural institutions, and
  - increase investment in programming that supports new and enhanced experiences for attendees and generates greater vibrancy and engagement across the entire event precinct, including city-based activations.
- > Work to better connect the lighting projections, cultural institution content, food and beverage, entertainment and other activations and installations (including city-based content) under the festival's creative direction. This provides the opportunity for the National Cultural Institutions and other event partners and stakeholders to access and attract new audiences.

#### ALIGNED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- > Protect and grow the existing brand equity the event enjoys with Canberrans
- > Elevate the overall attendee experience

## Events ACT'S core roles

- > Unite all event stakeholders in a way that has them all contribute towards our vision and primary objective *"To be the nation's most thought provoking, contemporary celebration of Australian culture and storytelling, raising the profile of Canberra and its cultural institutions across Australia and beyond."*
  - We will do this by:
    - Leading an overarching creative direction for each festival, and
    - Writing and executing on a stakeholder engagement plan.
  - > Facilitate the involvement of as many cultural institutions in the event as possible.
  - > Facilitate introductions of event stakeholders to maximise collaboration.
- > Deliver a food and beverage experience that draws an audience in its own right, and showcases the best of local producers and hospitality vendors. Curate the experience in line with our primary objective, our values and in a manner that maximises the chances of attendees going on to engage in the offering from the cultural institutions.
- > Wherever possible, increase investment in programming that supports "co-investment" in activation of cultural institutions, as well as new and enhanced experiences for attendees that generate greater vibrancy and engagement across the entire event precinct, including city-based activations.
- > Lead and deliver an overarching marketing and communications plan for the event that is developed in consultation with the National Cultural Institutions, local cultural organisations and partners.



Enlighten Precinct as seen from Mount Ainslie Summit



Priority activities

Five-year overview

- In writing the timeline below, we aim to achieve two primary objectives:
1. Provide the event and its stakeholders with creative direction, and

2. Provide the event stakeholders with the time to execute on that creative direction in a manner that suits their business in alignment the event’s purpose and values.

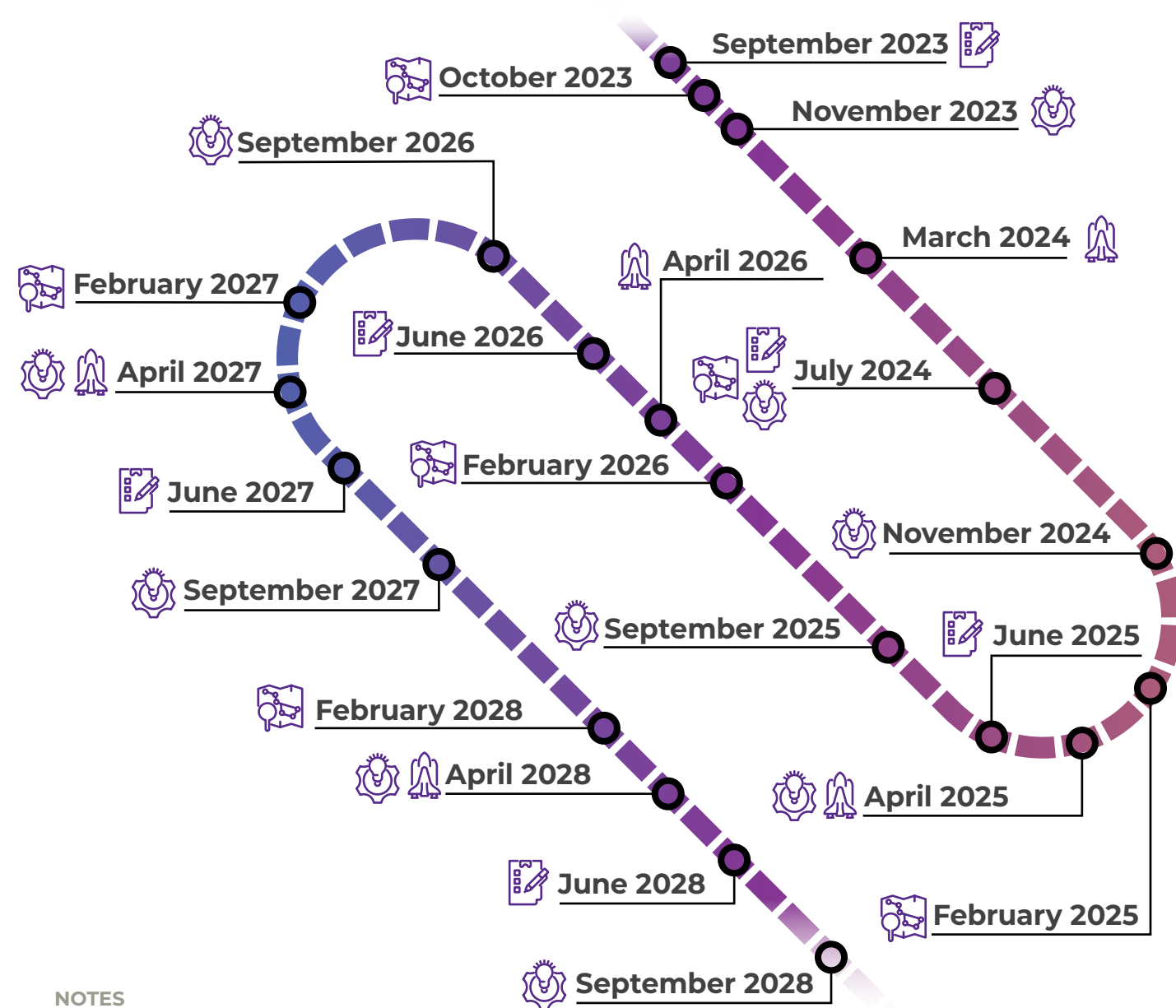
2023 Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Present research, learnings, direction												
Creative direction for 2024												
Sharing ideas, proposed content & Events ACT update (general and comms)												
2023 Event												

2024 Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Present research, learnings, direction												
Creative direction for 2025												
Sharing ideas, proposed content & Events ACT update (general and comms)												
2024 Event												

2025 – 2028 Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Present research, learnings, and direction												
Creative direction for following year												
Sharing ideas, proposed content & Events ACT update (general and comms)												
2025 – 2028 Event												

2023–2028

Event Timeline



NOTES

1. Lead times provided from point creative direction is presented:
- i. 2024 event: 5 months

ii. 2025 event: 8 months

iii. 2026-2028 events: 14 months.
2. Presentation of research results, learnings and direction to be done two months after event from 2025 onwards.
3. Sharing of ideas for following year to be done during that year’s event from 2025 onwards, with follow up session in September.
4. Connecting with the team leading the development of Ngurra will be critical in the lead up to its opening in 2027-28. Establish a contact in 2025 to start building the relationship.

LEGEND

- Present research, learnings, direction
- Creative direction for the following year
- Sharing ideas, proposed content & Events ACT update (general and comms)
- Event Launch



# Core activities

## 2023-2024

- > Write community engagement and communications plan and stakeholder engagement plan, key inclusions in both being:
  - The new dates for Enlighten Illuminations, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, Symphony in the Park, Lights! Canberra! Action! and their alignment with Canberra Day.
  - The rationale behind the split – Primary reasons being to provide each of the two key events with space to grow and deliver to newly written visions. In the case of Illuminations, amongst other factors was the fact that moving it in to the first week of daylight savings opens up the opportunity to diversify and increase the event's audience by opening it up to families.
  - The industry and public consultation and strategic planning process.
- > Recruit for / allocate provision of creative direction and stakeholder relations.
- > Present findings of research and strategic planning to stakeholders in September of 2023.
- > Present any creative direction / theme (noting a public theme will not be implemented until 2025) for 2024 to stakeholders in October of 2023.
- > Present creative direction / theme for 2025 to stakeholders in June of 2024 (at the same time as the presentation of research from 2024 event).

## 2025

- > Decide on timing of event by June 2024. Present to stakeholders, then to general public.
- > Dedicate resources to communications and relationships with stakeholders in the 6 months leading up to the event.
- > Establish relationship with Ngurra.
- > Present creative vision for 2026 event in February 2025.
- > Deliver on Enlighten Illuminations in April for first time as a stand-alone event.
- > Conduct qualitative research and ethnography in addition to existing quantitative research.

## 2026-2028

- > Adjust event to reflect key findings from research program in 2025, share with stakeholders.



Enlighten's BentSpoke Beer Garden in the National Triangle



Enlighten visitors enjoying installations

Photo by: David Beach





Photo by: PHOTOX