

Assistant Minister for Economic Development
Question Time Briefs
March 2021

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CM2021/929

Portfolio/s: Economic Development
Assistant Minister for Economic Development

Enlighten Festival 2021 (Community Events)

Talking points:

- The Enlighten Festival was staged successfully from Friday 26 February to Sunday 14 March. In addition to the Enlighten Illuminations (which sits under the Tourism portfolio), a program of high-profile community events was delivered under the Enlighten Festival banner, including:
 - Lights!Canberra!Action! on Friday 5 March
 - The Canberra Balloon Spectacular from Saturday 6 March to Sunday 14 March
 - Symphony in the Park on Sunday 7 March
 - Canberra Day activities on Monday 8 March
- Overall public feedback on the Festival has been very positive, with the Canberra community enjoying the opportunity to experience and participate in major event and festival activity again.
- According to the ACT Government's iSentia tourism media analysis for February 2021, favourable media coverage and mentions were also received for the Enlighten Festival launch and previews of Festival highlights including the Canberra Balloon Spectacular.
- The Enlighten Festival was the first large-scale, multi-day festival to be approved and delivered in Canberra under a COVID Safe exemption. It is hoped that the Festival's success and lessons learned from delivery in a COVID Safe environment will help pave the way for other similar events to be planned, approved and staged.
- Given the current public health restrictions, many of the Enlighten Festival events could not proceed in their usual format. In line with the Festival's COVID Safe exemption, this included limits on attendance and a need to pre-register for tickets to defined event precincts.
- This generated some questions and concerns from the general public in the lead up to and during the Festival. Some key themes regarding comments on the Festival's COVID Safe format, and the Festival experience more broadly, are outlined below.

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Lead Directorate: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Many ticketed/registered event precincts quickly reached full capacity

- Under the Enlighten Festival's COVID Safe exemption, the maximum ticketed attendance capacities for community events were:
 - 2,000 at Lights!Canberra!Action!
 - 2,000 at each morning of the Canberra Balloon Spectacular.
 - 2,000 at Symphony in the Park.
 - 2,000 at a special Canberra Day *Breakfast at the Balloons* event.
- Most of these sessions quickly reached their full pre-registered ticket allocation limit, indicating a high public demand that outstripped the available supply.
- Patrons that were no longer able to attend their allocated event session were encouraged to release their tickets, enabling them to be re-offered to the public via Ticketek's online registration system.
- It is acknowledged that limits on attendance caused a degree of frustration with members of the public wishing to attend their favourite events. However, these limits were in line with the Festival's COVID Safe exemption – which ensured that public health and safety of the community remained the number one priority.
- On Thursday 4 March, Events ACT submitted a request to the Office of the Chief Health Officer to increase the ticketed attendance capacity for Lights!Canberra!Action! and Symphony in the Park from 2,000 to 2,500.
- This request was approved on Friday 5 March.
- The ticketed attendance capacity for the Canberra Balloon Spectacular and the Canberra Day *Breakfast at the Balloons* event remained at 2,000, with additional public spaces available nearby to watch the balloons taking flight.

The process when capacity was not achieved for fully booked sessions

- Attendance and crowd density in ticketed event precincts was monitored regularly on each day of the Enlighten Festival through the use of ticket scanners.
- On days where the number of confirmed ticket holders present on site remained below the maximum attendance cap (e.g. due to absent ticket holders), on-the-spot ticket registrations could be enabled, accompanied by use of the Check In CBR App for contact tracing purposes.

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Adherence with COVID Safe measures

- Delivery of the Enlighten Festival occurred in strict compliance with all aspects of an approved COVID Safe Plan and the Festival's COVID Safe exemption.
- There were no instances where attendance at the Enlighten Festival's ticketed event precincts exceeded the maximum approved capacity.
- In addition to pre-registration for tickets where required, all reasonable steps were taken to ensure that patrons also verified their attendance at the Enlighten Festival using the Check In CBR App for contact tracing purposes.

The timing for advice on whether hot air balloons would fly each morning at the Canberra Balloon Spectacular

- Pilot flight briefings took place on each morning of the Canberra Balloon Spectacular at 6.00am.
- This was the first instance each day where pilots and Events ACT's media team heard if balloons would be able to fly.
- The Canberra Balloon Spectacular's Flight Director made the final decision on flight status based on many factors, including the prevailing weather conditions (particularly wind) and consideration of safety for pilots, flight crew and spectators.
- This information was shared as soon as possible through the Enlighten Festival and Events ACT websites and social channels, along with Access Canberra and local media. This usually occurred from 6.15 am onwards.
- When balloons were unable to fly, some were still inflated and tethered for the enjoyment of spectators – provided it was safe to do so.
- If the balloons were unable to inflate and tether, registered patrons were still encouraged to come along and enjoy a hot breakfast.

Complaints about noise during the Enlighten Festival

- In line with the provisions outlined under an Environmental Authorisation issued for the Enlighten Festival, independent noise monitoring was carried out on site to ensure that sound/noise levels in event precincts did not exceed prescribed noise limits.
- Noise measurements collected during this year's Enlighten Festival were in full compliance with the Environmental Authorisation.

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Dogs not being permitted inside Enlighten Festival ticketed event precincts

- The Enlighten Festival can be busy, noisy at times and full of unfamiliar faces, which some pets can find stressful.
- Pets were not permitted to attend the enclosed/ticketed event precincts at the Enlighten Festival, with the exception of service animals.
- Pets could still accompany attendees at the Enlighten Festival in public spaces outside of the enclosed/ticketed event precincts.

Marketing under the Enlighten Festival banner

- Since 2018, the Enlighten Festival program has been extended beyond the Enlighten Illuminations to incorporate community events including Lights!Canberra!Action!, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, Symphony in the Park and Canberra Day celebrations.
- Each of these Festival components and their specific event dates were promoted to the public as part of the broader Enlighten Festival marketing strategy.

Included below are some other relevant points of note related to the Enlighten Festival:

Enlighten Festival outcomes and results

- Final post-event reporting, event debriefs with key stakeholders, and post-event research with a sample of Festival attendees will now be undertaken.
- Final attendance data for the Enlighten Festival will relate to ticketed/registered event attendees only.
- Given the additional resourcing requirements for delivery of a COVID Safe event, it was not possible to undertake crowd density counts outside of the Festival's ticketed event precincts.

Question taken on notice at the recent Annual Report Public Hearings

- A question was asked at the Public Hearings by Leanne Castley MLA regarding attendance at Canberra Day celebrations in 2020.
 - Crowds at the Canberra Day 2020 event between 11.00am and 4.00pm were low compared to previous years, with approximately 500 people in attendance during this period. However, the programmed activity in the Enlighten precinct from 4.00pm onwards (taking in the final night of Illuminations) had a high estimated attendance of 11,206, with the Canberra Balloon Spectacular attendance estimated as 16,500 in the morning. This provided a total estimated attendance of 28,206 for Canberra Day activities. The \$60,000 budget for Canberra Day funded both the daytime and the evening programming.

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- In 2021, the Canberra Day program was headlined by a special *Breakfast at the Balloons* event – featuring Skywhale and Skywhale Papa.
- Since 2019, the Enlighten Illuminations have also been extended by a day to take in the Canberra Day public holiday.
- Final outcomes and event attendances for the Enlighten Festival in 2021 will be provided upon completion of post-event reporting and analysis.

Key Information

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government has sought to develop innovative methods for connecting Canberrans through events in a COVID Safe manner. This planning work has been supported by the release of the ACT's COVID Safe Event Protocol, and has also involved consultation with a wide range of key stakeholders – including the Office of the Chief Health Officer.
- A primary objective has been to continue delivering the benefits of events – but in new ways – while also contributing to the economic security of artists, vendors, suppliers and contractors.
- The ACT's COVID Safe Event Protocol was released on 22 September 2020. The Protocol was developed to provide further information for event organisers on the types of events that can take place while COVID-19 restrictions remain in place.
- The Protocol document continues to be updated and reissued when public health directions allow.

Background Information

- Events ACT is responsible for delivering celebrations for the Enlighten Festival (incorporating Illuminations, Lights!Canberra!Action!, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, Symphony in the Park and Canberra Day celebrations).
- Events make a strong contribution to the ACT economy, have social and community benefits, enhance Canberra's image and reputation, and assist with realising the ACT's tourism potential.

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Portfolio/s: Economic Development

cc to Assistant Minister for Economic Development

PRIORITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Talking points:

- Talent, knowledge and infrastructure within the ACT's tertiary education and research sector are primary drivers attracting investment into Canberra.
- The Priority Investment Program (PIP) provided \$9.75 million over three years in the 2018-19 budget to facilitate collaboration and, through matched funding, activate these assets to create long term wealth and wellbeing through economic diversification and growth in jobs.
- In 2018-19, \$5.2 million was committed to five projects across agri-technology, renewable energy, space and cybersecurity sectors.
- In 2019-20, \$2.1 million was committed to three projects across the space and biodiversity and biosecurity sectors.
- Considering the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the economy, the 2020-21 PIP funding round, which is the third round, is focused on jobs and economic recovery. A total of \$1 million is available in this round to support projects that will contribute to economic recovery and creation of jobs in the priority sectors of the ACT's economy.
- The ACT Government has established the Future Jobs Fund. This fund is designed to implement the Government's election and policy commitments to support economic recovery in the ACT, with a focus on the higher education and research sector and creating future jobs in growth industries.
 - \$2.165 million was allocated in the 2020-21 budget to achieve these commitments, prioritising projects that protect or create new jobs in our universities and private sector.

Key Information

- 22 expressions of interest were received under the 2020-21 Priority Investment Program Jobs and Economic Recovery round with six being shortlisted and invited to submit a detailed business case. Business case submissions closed at midnight on Tuesday 16 February 2021 and are currently being assessed for funding suitability.

Projects funded under the 2019-20 round include:

Biodiversity and Biosecurity

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- Announced on 28 January 2021, the **\$1.2 million** grant is to enable DART Pty Ltd, collaborate with ANU and UC to establish a cloud-based biodiversity and biosecurity data storage and analysis platform to enable wider research and commercial applications.

Space

- **\$300,000** to establish the Spacecraft Detector Characterisation Facility, which will enhance the ANU Space Testing Facility and secure the ANU and Canberra businesses opportunities in the supply chain of the global infrared detector industry for space applications. The new capability has a wide application in defence, agriculture, mineralogical surveys, health (pollen and air quality monitoring) and natural hazard management (bushfire and water quality).

Space Innovation Lab (Not public - Under contract negotiation)

- **\$600,000** to enable UNSW Canberra start-up, Space Services Australia, to develop software capability address the main cause of failure in miniature space systems (ranging from a 10 per cent dead-on-arrival and up to 50 per cent partial systems failure). This approach complements the physical systems testing capability at Mt Stromlo's Advanced Instrumentation Testing Centre which tests physical, structural and environmental integrity of space hardware.

The 2018-19 PIP projects :

Renewable energy sector

- **\$1.5 million** to fund the establishment of the Distributed Energy Resources Laboratory at the ANU. This Lab will provide industry and researchers with an interface with the energy grid to test devices, get data about how energy networks function and enable training and teaching. It will also test distributed energy resources such as solar panels, batteries, wind generating units, smart meters and model and measure demand loads on each through a real time network.

Space and Spatial Technology

- **\$800,000** to establish the Quantum Optical Ground Station at Mt Stromlo. The high speed, encrypted, optical communications capability will enable the Territory's participation in global communications networks and attract international business and world leading research groups for quantum optical communications to space.
- **\$1 million** to support Skykraft, a UNSW Canberra spin off, to collaborate with multinational space companies to develop and launch smallsat constellations for space-based global services, a capability of considerable global export potential.

Agri-technology

- **\$1.3 million** to enable the ANU/CSIRO Centre for Entrepreneurial Agri-Technology to broaden the scope of its industry engagement and research translation and become fully self-sufficient within a three-year period. The Centre's vision is to strengthen, transform and diversify Canberra into a regional, national and global hub for transformational agriculture.

Cybersecurity

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- **\$600,000** to support the Canberra node of Austcyber to advance ACT's cyber security industry capabilities.

Background Information

- **\$9.75 million** was allocated to the PIP in the 2018-19 budget. Most of this funding was committed or expended over two rounds. A total of \$8.3 million was committed to nine projects across the space, renewable energy, cybersecurity, agri-technology and biosecurity and biodiversity sectors.
- A total of \$1 million is available for the 2020-21 PIP Jobs and Economic Recovery round. From a total of 22 expressions of interest received in the first stage of the process, six were shortlisted to prepare full business cases. The independent assessment panel is being convened to assess the business cases before making recommendations for approval of successful respondents.

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Portfolio/s: Assistant Minister for Economic Development

Issue: **Blacklight Canberra Production**

Recent Media:

- The production attracted positive local and national media coverage, with this 15 February ABC article demonstrating, through an interview with Screen Canberra CEO Monica Penders, that Canberra could benefit from the COVID-safe influenced surge in interest in shooting films in Australia. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-13/is-canberra-becoming-a-moviemaking-destination/13147952>

Talking points:

- The highly technical car chase scene of major international film *Blacklight* took place in Canberra from 14 to 19 January 2021. The film has an estimated production budget of US\$34.7 million.
- The production spend in Canberra over the period exceeded A\$2 million. Screen Canberra reports that approximately 100 locals were employed for each day of the production across a wide range of roles with approximately 35 of these getting valuable production assistant experience.
- The production company reported that they were impressed with Canberra as a surprising and easy place in which to film, helped by the co-ordination of approvals through a single layer of government.
- ACT Government worked closely with residents, local businesses, and the production company to ensure that disruptions were minimised. As a result, delays were kept to a minimum and community feedback was positive.
- On the back of *Blacklight's* success, ACT Government is continuing discussions with the production company and Screen Canberra to attract further productions to the ACT. This will both support more local jobs in the creative industries, as well as drive wider economic activity.

Key Information

- The Territory did not incur direct costs associated with the filming, which were met by the production company. Indirect costs to the Territory were related to the time of staff involved in a whole of government approach to support the *Blacklight* production both in advance of and during the film's production.
- Officers from Economic Development, Access Canberra, Health, TCCS and Emergency Services supported the cross Government work that included ensuring compliance with all COVID health protocols, issuing permits, traffic management, and the facilitation of community engagement with affected businesses and residents.

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- The production provided a proof of concept for Canberra as the leading Australian location for car scenes, creating a compelling offer to other productions.
- Concerns had previously been raised by some local residents about the pre-production shoot on 5 December 2020.
- Engagement and coordination work was undertaken with the production company, residents and businesses to minimise inconvenience to residents and businesses during the production shoot.

Background Information

- Facilitating the *Blacklight* production to come to Canberra aligned with the Government's policy of developing the local screen industry.
- The screen sector plays a significant role in the economy in terms of its contribution to direct employment, as well as its economic contribution to downstream industries such as exhibition and retail, and to ancillary sectors such as tourism and hospitality.
- Through Screen Canberra the ACT is able to collaborate with, and compete against other states and territories to share the benefits of a growing Australian screen industry. Australia's success at containing the COVID pandemic relative to key competitors has created opportunities for the Australian film industry.
- In addition to economic benefits, film and television have a unique capability to showcase Canberra domestically and internationally and that makes it a powerful medium for enhancing Canberra's branding.
- There has been a steady growth of the local screen industry in recent years. The industry has increasingly demonstrated potential in the television series and feature film productions, with successes like *Secret City*, *The Code*, *Rip Tide*, *The Furies* and *Total Control*.

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