Spectacular Indigenous artworks and a 300-million-year-old canvas illuminated to brighten the desert sky are just some of the highlights of Parrtjima – A Festival in Light, taking place in Alice Springs over 10 nights from Friday, 23 September to Sunday, 2 October 2016.

New program details released today reveal the free public event will be officially opened on Friday, 23 September. Parrtjima is a breathtaking showcase of contemporary and traditional Indigenous art, culture and stories using light and sound, created by the Northern Territory Government in collaboration with AGB Events (known for their award-winning work for Vivid Sydney) and local Aboriginal artists, students and community.

Andrew Hopper, General Manager, Northern Territory Major Events Company, said: “Parrtjima offers visitors from around Australia and the world the unique chance to experience the oldest continuous culture on earth in a totally new and exciting way.

“We are extremely proud to present the first authentic Indigenous light festival of its kind in the world as we illuminate 2.5km of the Northern Territory’s majestic MacDonnell Ranges in celebration of Central Australia’s rich Aboriginal culture.”

In addition to the multi-coloured projections on the MacDonnell Ranges, a series of installations will be on show at Alice Springs Desert Park. These include: - Range of Expression: Visitors to Partijima can play a part in illuminating the magnificent MacDonnell Ranges! Step into the interactive glass booth and take control of the panels to choose which colours you want to use to light the vast landscape, and watch your creation come to life before your eyes. - Yeperenyre Tales (Caterpillars): A series of three large, light-filled caterpillar installations featuring colourful illustrations by students from Amoonguna School in Alice Springs, based on their interpretation of the Yeperenyre (Caterpillar) Dreamtime story. The story of the Caterpillar is folklore in Central Australia, considered by the local Indigenous Arrernte community to be one of the major creation forces of Alice Springs, the heart of the Australian outback. Illuminated from the inside, the vibrantly lit caterpillars will be accompanied by an audio soundscape and narration by local Indigenous Elder to bring the story to life. - Grounded: A sequence of artworks by Indigenous artists from Alice Springs will be projected onto the desert sands with their own atmospheric soundscape. The projections merge art with the landscape, symbolising the return of Indigenous art to the Country – the common thread of all selected paintings. Artworks featured include Mervyn Rubuntja, Wenton Rubuntja, Myra Ah Chee, Gloria Pananka and Hubert Pareroultja. The series was created with curatorial assistance from the Araluen Arts Centre (Araluen Cultural Precinct) and Ilitja Nijarra Many Hands Art Centre in Alice Springs. - Inti Ljapa Ljapa Irapakalam (Butterfly Going Round and Round): A series of five large, illuminated skirts feature the circular watercolour landscape paintings of five Alice Springs artists including Lenie Namatjira (granddaughter of one of Australia’s best known Aboriginal painters, Albert Namatjira), Reinhold Inkamala, Ivy Pareroultja, Therese Ryder and Hubert Pareroultja. Presented in collaboration with Ilitja Nijarra Many Hands Art Centre and The Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, the installation was inspired by the Namatjira Collection of circular skirts, which were exhibited as part of the Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts at the Art Gallery of South Australia. The colourful 1950s-style skirts celebrate the landscape of Ntaria country and the era in which Albert Namatjira was celebrated, and are accompanied by an original soundscape of the artists’ narration. The steel frames supporting the skirts are made by the Centre for Appropriate Technology Ltd in Alice Springs.

The skirts feature circular illustrations of the West MacDonnell Ranges with an endless horizon that leads to one central sky. As audiences move around the skirts they will follow the unbroken horizon and take on the flying path of the emerging butterflies that populate the Arrernte songlines.

Anthony Bastic, Director, AGB Events, said Parrtjima is set to become a popular fixture on Australia’s events calendar.

“The sheer scale of the lighting on the MacDonnell Ranges is beyond imaginable, and will tell a layered, interactive and personal story from artists, Elders and the local Indigenous community. It will set this authentic and contemporary experience apart from anything we’ve ever seen before.”

During the festival visitors will be able to gather in the Festival Hub and enjoy an array of non-alcoholic beverages and family friendly fare, with local food from Reality Bites Catering and Yona Lisa Catering while taking in the beautiful surrounds of Alice Springs Desert Park.

Visitors can access the event via the Larapinta bike track or the free event shuttle bus, which will collect passengers every 10 minutes from 6:00pm daily from six locations around Alice Springs.

Pick-up and drop-off locations include Star of Alice bus stop, Lasseters Convention Centre/Casino, Council Chambers, Araluen Cultural Precinct, Albrecht Oval Carpark and Desert Park bus stop.

Gates will open to the public at Alice Springs Desert Park for two sessions each night from 6:30pm-8:30pm and 8:30pm-10:30pm. Join the conversation with #Parrtjima #ParrtjimaAustralia #NTaustralia. For more information and to register to attend, please visit www.ParrtjimaAustralia.com.au.

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About Northern Territory Major Events Company  Northern Territory Major Events Company (NTMEC) is a dynamic organisation that delivers and
supports significant events across the Territory. Owned by the Northern Territory Government, NTMEC was established in 1999 with the responsibility of identifying, attracting and facilitating significant community entertainment, sporting and cultural events.

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