

PARRTJIMA

WE ARE
GATHER



FIRST NATIONS CURATORIAL OPPORTUNITY

For the next chapter of Parrtjima Festival



SHAPE THE NEXT CHAPTER OF PARRTJIMA

Parrtjima 2027 marks an important moment of transition and renewal. Following more than a decade of curatorial leadership from Rhoda Roberts AO, the festival is entering a new chapter while remaining grounded in the values, relationships and cultural foundations that have shaped its success.

This document provides an introduction to the festival, its cultural context, core experience and the opportunity for the appointed curator/s to help shape the future direction of Parrtjima.

Welcome



ILLUMINATING THE WORLD'S OLDEST LIVING CULTURE

The Arrernte word Parrtjima, pronounced par-chee-ma, means to shine a light on something, in both the physical and enlightenment sense.

True to its name, Parrtjima shines a light on the power of the world's oldest living culture, inviting visitors to engage with installations and experiences that weave together ancient traditions and contemporary expressions.

Held over 10 nights at Alice Springs Desert Park in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), the festival brings together contemporary Aboriginal art, storytelling, music, light, workshops, food, markets and community-led experiences beneath the MacDonnell Ranges. It is a gathering place for visitors from near and far to connect with culture, Country and story under the desert sky.

What is Parrtjima?



A CULTURAL FESTIVAL ILLUMINATED BY LIGHT

Light is the medium, but story, culture, Country and connection are the purpose. Across the festival, audiences move through large-scale installations, projection works, soundscapes, music performances, workshops, speaker sessions, night markets and food experiences.

Parrtjima continues to evolve from a light festival with culture to a cultural festival illuminated by light. Every element contributes to a broader experience that encourages people to gather, listen, learn, participate and connect.

More Than Light



CONNECTED TO MPARNTWE (ALICE SPRINGS)

Parrtjima takes place on Country in Alice Springs, connected to the estates of Mparntwe, Antulye and Irlpme. The landscape, communities and cultural knowledge of Central Australia are central to the festival's identity and future.

The location is not simply a backdrop for the event. Country, place and community shape the way the festival is experienced, providing opportunities for visitors to engage with culture in a meaningful and place-led way.

Place



HONOURING WHAT HAS BEEN BUILT

For more than a decade, Rhoda Roberts AO shaped Parrtjima's curatorial vision, helping establish the festival as a nationally recognised celebration of Aboriginal culture, creativity and storytelling.

Parrtjima 2027 is not about replacing that legacy. It is about building on strong foundations while creating space for new ideas, voices and perspectives that can contribute to the festival's continued evolution.

Legacy



THE ROLE OF THE REFERENCE GROUP

The Parrtjima Festival Reference Group is central to the cultural integrity of the festival. The group provides guidance across creative concepts, cultural protocols, language, programming, community engagement and connection to Country.

The most successful outcomes occur when the Reference Group is engaged early and meaningfully throughout the creative process. Their guidance helps ensure Parrtjima remains culturally grounded, locally relevant and connected to place.

Cultural Guidance



A LAYERED JOURNEY THROUGH STORY, CULTURE AND LIGHT

Parrtjima is made up of many interconnected experiences. Major installations, the Ranges Light Show, Grounded, Sand Painting, short film program, workshops, speaker sessions, music, night markets, food and community-led projects all contribute to the broader festival journey.

The curatorial opportunity is not simply to create individual moments, but to connect these elements through a clear creative framework that creates a cohesive and meaningful visitor experience.

Festival Experience



A TRANSITION YEAR WITH LONG-TERM POTENTIAL

Parrtjima 2027 is envisioned as a transition year that provides an opportunity for the appointed curator/s to understand the festival, its stakeholders, cultural framework, production model and community context.

The appointed curator/s will help shape the creative and cultural direction of the festival while laying foundations that can continue to grow and evolve over future years.

The Opportunity



A COLLABORATIVE FESTIVAL MODEL

Parrtjima is owned and funded by Tourism and Events Northern Territory (TENT) and delivered by We Are Gather as the Festival Delivery Partner.

The appointed curator/s will work closely with the Parrtjima Festival Reference Group, TENT, We Are Gather, artists, producers, fabricators, technical suppliers and community partners.

The strongest outcomes will come from collaboration between cultural, creative and production teams from the beginning.

Working Together



CULTURALLY LED, VISUALLY AMBITIOUS AND DELIVERABLE

Parrtjima aims to present experiences that are culturally grounded, artistically ambitious, locally relevant and accessible to broad audiences. The festival should continue to celebrate First Nations creativity while creating memorable and engaging visitor experiences.

Creative ideas must also be supported by realistic timelines, budgets, technical planning and cultural guidance. The most successful concepts are those that balance ambition with deliverability.

Creative Ambition



The Language of the Stockmen by Johnny Young and David Wallace, Tapatjatjaka Art

A CLEAR PATH TO APRIL 2027

The appointed curator/s are expected to commence in August 2026, with initial curatorial direction required in early September. Concept development will continue through September and October, with fabrication and production commencing from November.

This timeline is intentionally compressed and will require focused collaboration between the curator/s, delivery team, artists and stakeholders to achieve successful outcomes ahead of the April 2027 festival.

Timeline



SUBMIT YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Applicants are invited to submit a short Expression of Interest, current CV or professional bio, and two to three relevant project examples for review.

Submissions should respond to the questions outlined in the EOI and be provided as a single PDF where possible. For full details, including submission requirements, selection criteria, key dates and contact details, please refer to the Parrtjima 2027 First Nations Curatorial Opportunity Expression of Interest document.

EOI closes: Friday 24 July 2026, 5pm AEST

Submit to: Naomi Wilson | Parrtjima | We Are Gather

Email: parrtjima@wearegather.com.au

How to apply



