

Australian Capital Territory

# Major Events (Summernats 37) Declaration 2024

**Disallowable instrument DI2024-312**

made under the

**Major Events Act 2014, section 6 (Major event - declaration)**

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

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Division 2.1 of the *Major Events Act 2014* (the Act) permits the Executive to declare that an event is major event if satisfied—

- (a) that the event is a major event at an international, national, State or Territory level; and
- (b) it is in the public interest to do so; and
- (c) on reasonable grounds it is necessary and appropriate to do so.

The Executive is satisfied the events listed in the instrument meet these criteria.

The Summernats 37 car festival will run from 2-5 January 2025 at Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC). It is one of the largest events in the ACT and welcomes significant numbers and a majority of visitors from interstate to the ACT. Summernats 36 in 2024 attracted 132,000 spectators over 5 days, with interstate visitors comprising over 70 per cent of spectators and entrants. It also has a significant positive economic impact, with Summernats 36 resulting in direct expenditure of over \$36 million in the ACT.

Summernats 37 requires high degree of professional management and coordination between the organisers, ACT Government and ACT Policing. It will also attract national media attention.

This declaration applies the provisions of the *Major Events Act 2014* (the Act) to Summernats 37. This notice is a disallowable instrument.

The effect of this declaration is to enliven powers and offences under the Act, Part 3 (Crowd Management) for police officers. Crowd management in Part 3 of the Act includes offences in relation to the possession of prohibited items and interference with the events. Part 3 also provides crowd management powers including the power to search personal property, to conduct scanning searches and frisk searches.

While Summernats has previously been hosted without a major event declaration, over the past two years, safety and crowd control incidents have resulted in harm to some spectators and required additional policing resources to respond. A safe and secure event is of paramount importance to spectators and entrants.

While a major event declaration enlivens extraordinary powers for police officers, these additional crowd control powers will provide for the safe conduct of the event in 2025, considering the significant numbers of spectators and entrants. Extraordinary powers enlivened under a major event declaration are strictly time-bound and limited to the event venue, EPIC.

Alcohol and petrol have been excluded from the meaning of prohibited items in s12(1)(a) of the Act, as alcohol will be sold by authorised licenced vendors during the event and petrol will be available for refuelling within the event venue.

The powers enlivened under this declaration have appropriate limitations on the duration and scope of their application to provide for the safe and secure conduct of Summernats 37.

A major events declaration does not restrict peaceful assembly or gatherings, and the restrictions in the *Major Events Act 2014* do not apply to public protests.