



## AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – CANBERRA

4 to 16 July 2026

### LOCAL INFORMATION

#### About Canberra

Canberra is the capital city of Australia, located in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Situated in between Sydney and Melbourne, it is known for its national attractions, cultural institutions and natural beauty. The city is built around Lake Burley Griffin (formed by damming the Molonglo River) and is known as the "Bush Capital" due to its surrounding nature reserves and mountain ranges.

Canberra is a planned city, based on a design by Walter Burley Griffin, featuring a central land axis and a water axis. The city is structured around these axes, incorporating natural topography, with prominent hills like Black Mountain, Mount Ainslie, Mount Majura and Mugga Mugga (Red Hill). The commercial hub, known as Civic, is in the central part of Canberra. The original suburbs of Canberra are divided into North Canberra with its roads forming a grid and South Canberra where the roads are largely circular. Beyond the central area there are six 'satellite cities', each with its own town centre: Belconnen (the location of the ANC venue), Gungahlin, Woden, Weston Creek, Tuggeranong and the developing Molonglo. Across the border in NSW are Queanbeyan (to the east) and Murrumbateman (to the north-west). Both are growing rapidly as the population of Canberra spills across the border. More than half a million people live in greater Canberra.

The Ngannawal and Ngambri people are the traditional custodians of the Canberra region with a continued cultural, spiritual and historical connection to the area.

#### About Belconnen

The Belconnen district (often called Belco by locals) is one of the satellite cities of Canberra. It is about 7 km northwest of Canberra city, in the shadow of Black Mountain and stretches to the NSW border. It was first developed in 1966 and now has a population exceeding 100 000. The district surrounds Lake Ginninderra, a V-shaped artificial lake created by damming Ginninderra Creek, a tributary of the Murrumbidgee River. Belconnen lies in the Federal electorate of Fenner.

The district is named after Belconnen, one of the earliest agricultural land grants made in the area in colonial times. The land grant of 800 hectares was made to explorer Charles Sturt who eventually sold the property to Robert Campbell, owner of the nearby Duntroon Estate.

Lying on the southern shore of the lake is the town centre of Belconnen, part of the suburb of Bruce. The Canberra Labor Club, the ANC venue, is in the town centre. The centre services the Belconnen region and includes the Westfield Belconnen Mall, the recently redeveloped Capital Fresh Food Markets, government offices, medium density housing, a bus interchange and more than 80 restaurants and takeaway food outlets. Adjacent to the town centre, to the east, is the Canberra University, the Australian Institute of Sport and the Canberra Stadium.

#### Climate

With an elevation of nearly 600 metres above sea level, Canberra has a cool temperate climate with four distinct seasons. It is characterised by warm to mild summers, cold winters with frequent frosts, and low humidity. July is the coldest month of the year, with an average maximum temperature of 12°C and an average low just above zero. The mean monthly rainfall is less than 45 mm, falling on an average of ten days in the month. The typical sunny day may start with frosts but warms up quickly. Overcast days may not be frosty but can be foggy and remain cold all day. Snow is rare in Canberra but is often visible on the surrounding mountain peaks in winter. If going outdoors for an extended time in the Canberra winter, we recommend a jacket, gloves, beanie and scarf.

If you are planning to travel to or from Canberra on an early flight in winter, be aware that morning fog may cause temporary airport closures and/or flight delays.

## Accommodation

There are several accommodation options in the Belconnen district. Some offer bridge player discounts. Look on the MyABF website for accommodation details and how to access the discounts.

The Kanga Cup, a national junior soccer competition, is usually held over 4-5 days in Canberra in July. **You are advised to book your accommodation early.** Takeaway food outlets may have longer than usual queues.

## Dining

There are more than eighty places to eat within the Belconnen Town Centre. Look for a list of those restaurants on MyABF to be published in mid-2026. We hope to negotiate some discounts for bridge players.

Canberra has many other restaurants. Many are in the city centre, but one of Canberra's best-kept secrets is that there are also excellent restaurants tucked away in the suburbs. For more information, visit the Canberra 'Wine and Dine' website.

## Getting around Canberra

Canberra is a city designed for cars, but many find the circular roads in South Canberra confusing. The satellite cities are connected by multi-lane freeways. Most public carparks in Canberra require payment, but free parking for limited periods is often available in the car parks under the major shopping malls.

Major roadworks are currently occurring in Civic, where the latest stage of the light rail system is being installed. As a result, most Canberrans currently avoid driving through the city centre.

There are extensive bikeways throughout Canberra. Shared e-scooters are a convenient option for short trips on their own or combined with public transport. Neuron Mobility operates e-scooter hire across Canberra. For more details see the online shared e-scooters map.

The Canberra public transport network has a 'hub and spokes' arrangement. Each town centre has a major bus interchange where you can connect with buses radiating out to the nearby suburbs, or catch a bus to another town centre. The Belconnen bus interchange is located across the road from the ANC venue. Rapid routes to the Belconnen interchange are labelled R2, R3, R4, R8 and R9.

For those planning to fly to or from Canberra, the R3 bus route operates between the Canberra Airport terminal and the Belconnen bus interchange. The bus ride takes approximately 41 minutes and operates approximately every 15-20 minutes between 6 am and 11 pm.

Canberra is in the early stages of installing a light rail system, but it currently operates only in North Canberra, mainly down the middle of Northbourne Avenue.

There are several ways of paying for public transport in Canberra. You can tap or scan your preferred option at any validator:

- Mastercard or Visa card – a physical card or digital card stored on your smart phone or watch;
- a MyWay+ digital ticket purchased through the MyWay+ app;
- a MyWay+ card, purchased at MyWay+ retail outlets;
- a printed ticket, purchased at ticket vending machines.

All seniors (including interstate residents) are entitled to free off-peak travel. On Fridays there is free public transport for everyone.

For more details of transport options in Canberra, including fares and timetables, visit the Transport Canberra website (<https://www.transport.act.gov.au/>).

## Health care

For health care for injuries and illnesses that are not life-threatening there is a free walk-in clinic at the intersection of Lathlain and Cohen Streets in Belconnen. It is open between 7.30 am and 10 pm and no appointment is required. The North Canberra Hospital (formerly known as the Calvary Hospital) is a public hospital, with a 24-hour emergency department, located 3 km from the Canberra Labor Club.

The Chemist Discount Centre at 33 Egan St Belconnen (phone 02 6251 5775) is 1.3 km from the Canberra Labor Club and is open from 7:30 am to midnight.

Packing medication for colds and flu is recommended, given the nature of the Canberra winter climate and the enclosed playing areas. The extent of respiratory infections experienced during some previous ANCs, suggests that vaccinations for flu, RSV and Covid a month before attending the 2026 ANC are a wise precaution. To minimise the spread of infection, those with persistent coughs and sneezes are asked to wear a mask and sanitise their hands frequently.

## Canberra attractions

Canberra is the nation's capital. It is well-known for its national buildings and monuments. Information about attractions in Canberra can be obtained by visiting the Canberra and Region Visitor Information Centre at Regatta Point, the information booth at Canberra Airport, or at the VisitCanberra website (<https://visitcanberra.com.au/>). Most attractions include a café and/or restaurant open to the public. Some of these restaurants are highly regarded by Canberrans, but bookings are essential.

### Outdoor attractions:

- *National Arboretum (Molonglo)*: a mosaic of living forests and gardens that also offers breathtaking views of Canberra. With over 44 000 rare and endangered trees across the 250-hectare site, the Arboretum is a place of beauty, conservation, science research, education, tourism and recreation. You can drive through or walk around the site. The Arboretum includes The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia.
- *Australian National Botanic Gardens (Acton)*: a heritage-listed botanical garden located at the foot of Black Mountain. Its mission is to "study and promote Australia's flora" and it contains the largest living collection of native Australian plants, organised in thematic sections.
- *National Carillon (Parkes)*: a gift from Britain to mark Canberra's 50th birthday, it houses 57 bronze bells, weighing a total of 32 000 kg, which are controlled from a specially designed keyboard. Recital times are Sundays 12:30 - 1:30 pm and Wednesdays 12:30 - 1:30 pm.
- *Diplomatic Missions*: Canberra hosts the diplomatic mission of more than 110 foreign governments. They facilitate relationships between their governments and the Australian Government. The various governments were encouraged to design their missions to reflect their country's national architectural style. This practice is unique and allows the embassies to be easily identified. Visit <https://www.nca.gov.au/attractions/take-tour/diplomatic-missions-self-guided-driving-tour> to download a self-guided driving tour.

### Indoor attractions:

- *Parliament House*: experience Australia's robust democracy in action. See some of the nation's finest historical treasures, symbolic architecture and contemporary art on display throughout the building. Guided tours are available. Parliament is not expected to be in session during the ANC.
- *Museum of Australian Democracy (Parkes)*: located in the Old Parliament House, you can discover Australia's rich democratic history. Take a tour (self-guided or guided) to learn about the individuals and events of Australian democracy, in the very building where they occurred
- *Australian War Memorial (Campbell)*: explore more than 7000 objects on display in the Memorial's galleries and exhibitions about Australia's involvement in major conflicts. They tell of Australia's continuing story of service, sacrifice and military history. New extensions to the building have recently opened. At 4:30 pm each day the Memorial farewells visitors with a moving Last Post Ceremony in the Commemorative Courtyard. The ceremony features the story behind one of the names on the Roll of Honour.
- *National Gallery and National Sculpture Gardens (Parkes)*: housing an evolving collection of over 155 000 works of art, created by more than 15 000 artists, includes the world's largest collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Featured in July is the *Know My Name: Kee, Jackson and Delaunay* exhibition that showcases two of Australia's leading fashion designers and an international, multidisciplinary artist.
- *National Portrait Gallery (Parkes)*: reflecting the face of Australia (their identity, history, culture, creativity and diversity) and telling Australian stories through the art of portraiture.
- *National Museum of Australia (Acton)*: located on a peninsular in Lake Burley Griffin, on the far side of Black Mountain from Belconnen. It brings to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia through compelling objects, ideas and events. In July 2026, the museum is holding three exhibitions: 'Variations on the Classical', 'Talking Blak to History' and 'Great Southern Land'.
- *National Archives of Australia (Barton)*: containing more than 45 million Australian Government records from Federation in 1901 to now, including those about key events and decisions that have shaped Australia. There are two permanent exhibitions highlighting stories from the collection: Connections/Mura gadi and Voices/Dhuniai.
- *National Library (Parkes)*: housing a collection of Australian publications and stories with national significance. The collection is the largest in the world that focuses on Australia and its people. By bringing together these stories, the library helps Australians to understand their past, present, and place in the world. There is a permanent display of documents, publications and artefacts of significance in Australian history.
- *National Film and Sound Archive (Acton)*: is Australia's national audiovisual cultural institution. It collects, preserves and shares Australia's audiovisual culture.
- *Sydney Nolan Collection (Civic)*: an iconic group of paintings from 1945 to 1953 by Sidney Nolan that the artist gifted to the nation in 1974. It features photographs and original text following Nolan's personal and creative journey from St Kilda lad to sophisticated artist. The Canberra Museum and Art Gallery manages the collection on behalf of the Australian Government.
- *Geoscience Australia (Symonston)*: home to the National Mineral and Fossil Collection. It includes a collection of minerals, fossils and meteorites, with around 700 items on permanent display in the foyer.

Less well known are the attractions in the Belconnen district.

- *Cockington Green (Gold Creek)*: an award-winning miniature landscape park at Gold Creek. Famous buildings around the world are depicted in small-scale. The garden is divided into two exhibition areas: English country life and world-famous buildings.
- *National Dinosaur Museum (Gold Creek)*: an interactive insight into the earth's long and dynamic history. The museum houses life-like dinosaur models, full skeletons, skulls, and animatronic dinosaurs, and visitors can navigate through millions of years of earth's ancient past.
- *Historic Hall Village*: located on the northwestern side of the ACT near the NSW border. Proclaimed in 1882, the village is surrounded by open country and has a rural appearance while retaining its village character. The heritage-listed town features historic buildings that existed before the establishment of Canberra. A self-guided 'heritage walk' around the village takes about 90 minutes. There is a market in Hall from 9 am to 2 pm on the first Sunday of each month (including 5 July 2026).
- *Black Mountain*: is visible throughout Belconnen. The venue for the ANC Presentation Dinner has panoramic views of the mountain. The road up the mountain starts on the southeastern side of the mountain (in Clunies Ross St, Acton) and a walking trail starts on the northwestern side in Aranda. On a clear day, the summit allows spectacular views of Canberra in all directions. The Black Mountain tower, closed for many years, is undergoing refurbishment prior to reopening.

### Local products

*Cold country wines*: Canberra is famed for its cold-country wines. There are 140 vineyards within 35 minutes' drive of the city. Take a self-guided tour of the local wineries or a one-day commercial tour, details available online at <https://www.canberrawines.com.au/tours/>.

*Truffles*: there is a developing truffle industry around Canberra. June to August is the harvest season. Visit the 'Truffle Farm' for one of their three signature truffle experiences (on Saturdays or Sundays in winter - book online first). Alternatively, look for local truffles in dishes in Canberra restaurants.

*Poachers Pantry*: just over the border from Belconnen in NSW, is one of the finest smokehouses in Australia. Their products are prepared using traditional hand-crafted techniques by a team dedicated to making exceptional quality products. They regularly win medals at the Royal Fine Food Show. Visit the farm shop and stay for lunch or look for their products in local gourmet shops and market stalls.

*Three Mills Bakery*: a local company that specializes in sourdough products and pastries. Visit their outlet at the Capital Food Markets in Belconnen or look for their products in local stores.

*Lychee Gold*: a refreshing sweet cider made with lychees, in two strengths: Premium (8% alcohol) and Low Alcohol (1.15% alcohol). It is made in Spring Range just across the NSW border NSW near Murrumbateman.

The *Capital Region Farmers Market*: is the largest farmers market in the Southern Tablelands. It is held at Exhibition Park near Watson. It is a local favourite and Saturday morning must-do in Canberra (7 am to 11:30 am). More than 100 stallholders sell everything from honey to vegetables and smallgoods.

### Winter festivals and celebrations

Canberrans celebrate the winter season with a variety of festivals and cold climate events. They include the following:

- Civic comes alive with the *Winter in the City* festival. For 15 days in July, CityWalk becomes a winter stage for a range of lively family-friendly and free entertainment and performances every afternoon and evening. Enjoy the hot chocolate bars and try your hand at ice-skating. The Festival of Winter culminates on Sat 18 July with *The Forage*, an event that brings together the Canberra region's best food trucks, restaurants and mobile food and beverage vendors for a celebration of gourmet street food. For more information, visit <https://www.act.gov.au/cityrenewal>.
- From July 2 to 5, *Christmas in July* occurs at the Patrick White Lawns, in between the National Library of Australia and Lake Burley Griffin. Be transported to the wintry wonderland of eastern France, where the magic of the holiday season is brought to life through twinkling fairy lights, bubbling pots of melted cheese, cozy fire pits, and steaming mugs of mulled wine, and much more. For details, visit <https://christmasinjuly.com.au>.
- Also during the winter season is the *Winter Festival*, an exciting celebration of the best of the cold climate produce of the Canberra Region. It will feature premium and rare goods from the region, including fine foods such as truffles, wine, garlic, olives and much more, the Cellar Door wine market, and delicious ready-to-eat goodies. There will also be fire and entertainment for all ages. For more information visit [Winter Festival – Southern Harvest](#).

Don't forget to rug up well for these outdoor events.

### Local shopping

There is a *Woolworths Metro* in Graziers Lane, about 300 metres from the Canberra Labor Club. It is open until 9 pm each day.

The *Westfield Belconnen Mall* is one of the major retail centres in Canberra, located just 900 metres from the Canberra Labor Club. It is open from 9 am to 5:30 most days, except Fridays when it does not close until 9 pm and Sundays when



it opens from 10 am to 4 pm. Spread over three levels, the centre contains a food court, three major supermarkets, several department stores, a cinema and over 270 specialty stores or restaurants. Free undercover parking is available. The *Capital Food Market* in Belconnen is just over 1 km from the Canberra Labor Club. Recently redeveloped, it claims to be the city's leading fresh food and casual dining experience, all under one roof. This is the place to stock up with goodies for your fridge. Retail outlets are open from Wed to Sun from 8 am to 6 pm, but restaurants are open for lunch and dinner seven days a week.

## Exercise

For those seeking outdoor exercise, try walking, running or cycling around Lake Ginninderra. The shortest loop is 5 km on compacted or paved paths, rated as 'easy', and the walk takes about 90 minutes. The entire loop around the lake is 30 km. Bicycle hire is available. A walk to, and around, the Belconnen Mall is an option for a colder day. Further afield, a walk through the Botanic Gardens at the foot of Black Mountain is interesting. The very energetic may consider the climb up Black Mountain.

## Hitting the slopes

Corin Forest is Canberra's closest snow destination and an ideal spot for first-timers to see snow, without a long drive from the city centre. It offers gentle beginner slopes for skiing and snowboarding. Alternatively, build snowmen and make snow angels before feasting on woodfired pizza and hot chocolate before the open fire in indoor café.

Further afield, experience the enchanting Snowy Mountains region with a snow trip departing from Canberra. Choose from a range of packages, from 1 to 3 days duration, tailored to suit your preferences. Snow tour packages provide a hassle-free experience, with seamless transportation and comfortable accommodation. Alternatively, drive yourself – it takes just over two hours to reach Jindabyne. For more details, visit the SnowSearch Australia website at <https://snowsearch.com.au/snow-tours-from-canberra>.

## Map of the Belconnen town centre

