



COSPLAY COMPETITION INFORMATION PACK

Prepared by
Events ACT | Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate



ACT
Government



Event Overview

The Canberra Nara Candle Festival celebrates the Sister City relationship shared between Canberra and Nara, Japan. The celebration will be held at the Canberra Nara Peace Park, Lennox Gardens, Yarralumla.

This year marks the 32nd Anniversary of the sister city relationship between Canberra and Nara. The Canberra Nara Candle Festival has been held annually in Canberra Nara Park since 2003. The main features of the festival include 2,000 lit candles in the dry riverbed that runs between two large ornamental stone lanterns, and a lantern procession that journeys through the festival space.

The candles will be complemented by live Japanese and Australian entertainment, cultural activities, displays and a variety of Japanese and Australian cuisine food stalls.

Cosplay appeared more than 30 years ago and has become an element of the everyday popular culture landscape in Japan. Since the early 2000s, cosplay has also been a vibrant part of Australian popular culture!! Cosplay (short for 'costume play') is the act of dressing up as your favourite manga, anime, or video game character.

Some cosplayers will even take on the mannerisms and personality of the character they are dressed as! Whether you are a well-rounded cosplayer, or a total beginner, you are invited to enter the Canberra Nara Candle Festival Cosplay competition.

Location	Lennox Garden – Canberra Nara Candle Festival Main Stage
Event Date and Time	Saturday 25 October 2025
Registration Closes	4:15pm Saturday 25 October 2025
Marshalling time/Be at the main stage	4:45pm Saturday 25 October 2025
Event Start	5:15pm
Award Ceremony	6pm – 6:15pm

**Times are subject to change without notice*

Hosted by Emerald L King, Lecturer in Humanities (UTAS), Cosplayer and recent Australian representative at the World Cosplay Summit held in Japan (August 2024), is a friendly competition that aims to bring the Canberra Cosplay community together to share their costumes in a fun and family-friendly environment, while enjoying a festival celebrating the Canberra – Nara sister city relationship and Japanese culture.

Categories

- **Best Constructed** – Must be of Japanese origin (anime, manga, tokusatsu, - ie. Power Rangers or Godzilla – or games). Must be 60% constructed by the wearer. Entries will be judged higher in respect to the quality and percentage of handmade elements throughout their cosplay. Competitors will be judged on costume, presentation, character accuracy and execution.
- **Best Compiled**– Must be of Japanese origin (anime, manga, tokuatsu – ie. Power Rangers or Godzilla – or games). Costumes must be compiled from bought elements and altered by the wearer. Bought costumes may be allowed – please contact the event organisers. Competitors will be judged on costume, presentation and character accuracy.
- **Fan Favourite** - May be from any series (Japanese origin encouraged). Costume may be Constructed or Compiled. Will be awarded by audience response. (Competitors may choose not to participate)

Costume Guidelines and Rules

Rules:

Canberra Nara Candle Festival is a family-friendly event. If your costume is deemed to be inappropriate or not suitable for a family-friendly event you will be asked to change or alter your costume. You may also be removed from the site.

Costumes:

- 1) Your costume must celebrate Japanese culture and should be from a Japanese-origin anime, manga, game or *tokusatsu*.
- 2) In line with the nature of the Canberra Nara Candle Festival, your costume must not be too revealing. It is recommended that your costume should cover all of the areas covered by standard swimwear. If your costume is delicate, make sure that you take all necessary precautions so that you do not expose yourself. If you are unsure, please email the event organiser.
- 3) If you are wearing a large costume or one with poor visibility, you must ensure that you have someone with you at all times to act as a guide/helper. Please be aware that the stairs to the stage may be very steep.
- 4) Large, bulky, or fur-lined suits must be properly ventilated with fans or be easily removable in case of emergency.
- 5) Make sure that there are no sharp edges on your costume.
- 6) Make sure that anybody paint is properly sealed. Some blood or fake gore is allowed but this must not be extreme or offensive and must not be wet or sticky.
- 7) While face taping is allowed to alter the shape of your face, you must not alter the shape of your eyes (fox eye). Race bounding and black/yellow/red/Asian faces are absolutely not allowed.
- 8) Costumes must not be offensive or discriminatory. Any imagery or symbols related to hate groups (including historical figures – eg. Swastikas, Nazi uniforms etc) are not permitted at the event. It is recommended that you do not wear realistic military or first responder uniforms or costumes that would be easily confused for these by the general public.

Props:

- 1) Props must not be longer than 180cm.
- 2) Props must not be too heavy for the cosplayer to safely carry or manipulate by themselves.
- 3) Zero tolerance for realistic, sharp, or dangerous weapons. This includes Nerf weapons that still have their firing mechanism.
- 4) Realistic-looking firearms are not allowed. This includes orange/red-tipped realistic-looking firearms. If you are unsure, please email the event organiser.
- 5) Non-realistic weapons in plastic/wood/foam/cardboard etc are allowed so long as they comply with the above restrictions. Fantasy firearms must have an orange/red tip.
- 6) Absolutely no pyrotechnics and/or explosives.

Play:

- No offensive cosplays (contact us if you have questions).
- Please respect the boundaries of audience members and other cosplayers.
- If handling a weapon or playing a dangerous character, keep in mind some audience members are not used to cosplay and may feel frightened/uncomfortable. We encourage you to play mostly with other cosplayers unless approached by an audience member.

Specific Category Guidelines:

- 1) To be eligible for the Best Constructed category, competitions must be 60% constructed or heavily altered by the wearer. Pre-made pieces such as wigs, shoes, and commissioned 3D-printed elements are allowed.
- 2) All other costumes will be automatically entered into the Best Compiled and Fan Favourite categories.
- 3) Fan Favourite will be conducted by 'Scream-o-metre' as judged by the competition MC. If at any time you are uncomfortable or do not want to be considered for Fan Favourite you are more than welcome to step away from the competition without penalty. You will still be eligible for Best Compiled and Best Constructed (if applicable).

On the Day Requirements

- 1) While preregistration is encouraged, on the day registration will be open until 4:15pm.
- 2) All entrants are required to assemble half an hour before the competition for marshalling. There is no timetabled pre-judging, but this time will also be used for you to chat with the MC and judges about your work.
- 3) Judging will be conducted LIVE on stage by a panel of Canberra Nara Candle Festival guests.
- 4) You will be guided on stage by the event staff. The MC will announce you using your Cosplay Name as you walk on. You should then go to the front of the stage and pose. Try to have two or three poses that show off your hard work! While you are posing the MC will give any information about the costume that you have supplied.
- 5) You will be guided off-stage by the event staff. Please wait by the side of the stage until everyone is called back on for the Fan Favourite judging.
- 6) Prizes will be announced later in the evening. Please assemble 15 minutes before the announcement time to go on stage as a group for award announcements.

Judging Panel

- 1) The Judging Panel will be headed by the Cosplay MC. It will consist of a panel made up of guests of the Canberra Nara Candle Festival as well as other community members.
- 2) Judges will be given access to the information supplied on the Entry Form.
- 3) Competitors entered in Best Compiled and Best Constructed will be judged on their costume, character accuracy and stage presence.
- 4) Judging will be conducted live as you walk on stage.
- 5) The Judge's decision is final and no discussion will be entered into.



Arrival and Parking

Regular buses from the city will also still be available, please see the Transport Canberra Website for more information on which busses will be best for you. [Timetables - Transport Canberra \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au/transport-canberra/timetables)

