

## CANADA'S GIFT FOR AUSTRALIA'S CENTENARY

Australia celebrated its 100th birthday on January 1, 2001. Exactly a century before, six British colonies adopted a constitution creating the new Commonwealth of Australia. This was the second self-governing British overseas dominion; Canada was the first to be created in 1867.

To mark the centenary, Canada decided to give a permanent reminder of the close ties linking our two countries: a 10-metre-square stone pavement inlay constructed of 5 cubic metres of granite from the Canadian Shield and weighing around 17 tonnes, in vari-

ous colours and grains. The design was officially unveiled by Canada's High Commissioner to Australia, Jean T. Fournier, at a ceremony in Canberra on December 5, 2001, which was attended by Australian government dignitaries and media. At the event Professor Geoffrey Blainey—a leading Australian historian and chair of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation—recalled Canada's Centennial in 1967 and noted that Canada had, in many ways, paved the way for Australia's development as an independent nation of federated states.

The work was then shipped to Australia, where (under the auspices of the National Capital Authority) it was installed in the new Commonwealth Place development in Canberra's Parliamentary Zone.

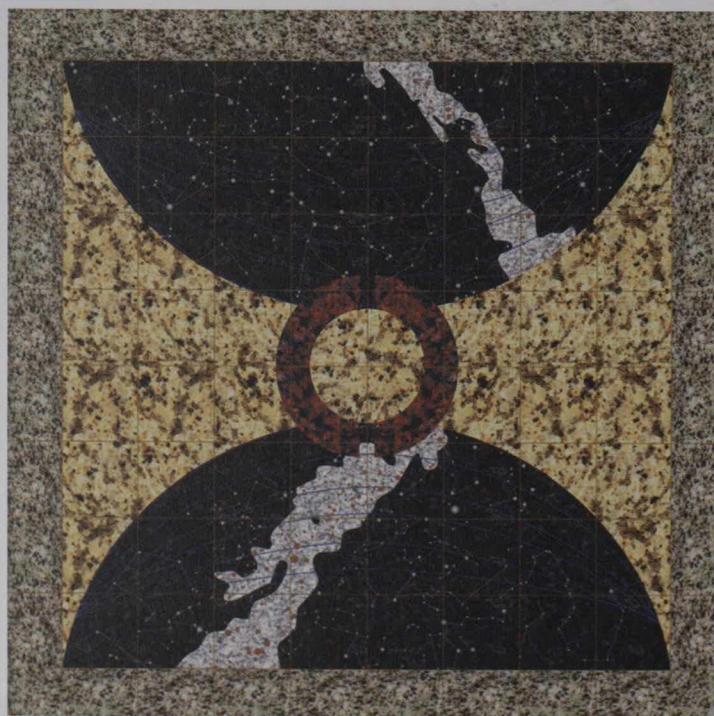
Installation was completed this past March 15.

A Canadian and Australian panel selected the design, which expresses the diversity of our shared cultural heritage. Two sections depict the night skies of the Northern and Southern hemispheres, joined by curved bands representing the friendship binding people to people and nation to nation. The pavement inlay reflects the rich diversity of our two societies and evokes the remarkably parallel

paths along which both countries have developed for more than a century. The work completes Speaker's Square, the focal point of a new amphitheatre in the Parliamentary Zone.

Canada's gift is the creation of Canadian sculptor John McEwen of Hillsdale (near Georgian Bay), Ontario, whose work can be found in museums, galleries and private collections across our country. One of Canada's leading artists, he was chosen from among 5 finalists out of the 43 Canadians who originally expressed interest in the project. Mr. McEwen's other major commissions include the RCAF Hall of Tribute in the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa, and *Search Light, Star Light, Spot Light*, a huge installation at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto. His work has been exhibited in the United States, Germany, France, Britain, and previously in Australia at the 1982 Sydney Biennale.

The Australia centenary gift project received financial support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Department of National Defence, Canadian Heritage, and the Canada Council for the Arts. ♣



Canada's gift to Australia in commemoration of its Centenary of Federation. Renowned Canadian sculptor John McEwen designed the granite pavement inlay and installed it in the new Commonwealth Place development in Canberra in March 2002. The pavement consists of 100 coloured granite slabs, each 1 metre square. The gift will be officially dedicated at the opening of Commonwealth Place later in the spring.

To learn more about Canada's centenary gift to Australia, visit: [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/australia/oz\\_gift\\_para-e.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/australia/oz_gift_para-e.asp)

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