

# 2020 Replica Mace Project

## History of replicas at OPH and case for new replica

Learning Team

### Where is the Mace project up to?

- Documenting the history of the replica maces – completed
- Scoping potential methods and providers dependent on budget and need for detail.
- Presenting a business case for renewal

### Contents

The Current Mace .....	2
Need for Replica Mace for Old Parliament House .....	3
Formal Replica - 2004 .....	3
Subsequent Chamber Replicas .....	5
Model for Chamber Replicas.....	5
Post 2004 - pre 2008 Chamber Replica.....	6
2008 Chamber Replica .....	7
2013 Chamber Replica .....	9
Crown Jewels Replica – not used in the Chamber.....	11
2020 Condition of 2013 Replica .....	12
Options for Repair or Replacement .....	12
Case for new replica Mace in the House of Representatives .....	13
Scoping potential methods .....	15
Scoping potential suppliers.....	15

## The Current Mace

The current Mace of the House of Representatives was presented by a delegation of the House of Commons in 1951 after King George VI had directed 'that a Mace, a symbol of the Royal authority, should be presented, on behalf of the Commons House of the Parliament of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia to mark the Jubilee year of the Commonwealth's foundation'.

It is made of silver gilt and weighs approximately 7.8 kg.

From the first sitting on 9 May 1901 until the presentation of the new Mace in 1951 the House used a Mace borrowed from the Victorian Legislative Assembly. <sup>1</sup>



Parliamentary Education Office replica  
'yellow brass' plating on steel – little  
adornment. The PEO also use a timber  
simulacrum for daily programs.



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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.aph.gov.au/About Parliament/House of Representatives/Serjeant-at-Arms/History and role of the Mace](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Serjeant-at-Arms/History_and_role_of_the_Mace)

## Need for Replica Mace for Old Parliament House

Old Parliament House is a nationally listed heritage building and the House of Representatives is a key space within the building. A replica mace occupies a prominent position on the central table of this chamber. A replica of the 'true' mace at Australian Parliament House was seen as important to the formation of the Old Parliament House Collection, when the building was first opened again to the public. This was before the establishment of the Museum of Australian Democracy.

In this paper, replicas on display in the chamber will be referred to as chamber replicas. The chamber replica is used as a display piece and for Learning programs, and it is regularly handled by MEOs and visitors.

### Formal Replica - 2004

There is a formal 2004 replica locked in a wall cabinet in the Speaker's Office of Old Parliament House. This was the first replica first commissioned for interpretive and educational activities, and as a hands-on interpretive tool by groups such as school visitors. It was a high priority for collection development for Old Parliament House.

A file note from 2004 by Kate Cowie, General Manager, Old Parliament House, states that the Speaker was consulted as part of the procurement process:

All relevant parties have also been consulted to ensure that the design of the work is acceptable and appropriate. The replica will be clearly differentiated from the original through a range of design elements. This has been required by the Speaker in giving permission for production of the replica.<sup>2</sup>

It is understood this differentiation is to avoid any confusion about the authority bestowed by the true mace, and to avoid the potential for substitution. It is also understood that the level of detail on the formal replica is somewhat simplified and altered from the detail on the true mace. These changes may be described as:

- A simplifying of some aspects of the design, such as not using the elaborate chasing around the shaft and the beads.
- Modelling the OPH façade on the crown.
- Engraving the words 'Representation of the Mace of the House of Representatives' on the top of the crown.
- Deletion of the Royal Cipher of George VI, leaving two Australian coat of arms only. It was seen as inappropriate to use the royal symbol on a mace which was not a royal gift.

Kate Cowie also noted that:

The replica represents a substantial investment of some 82,000 British Pounds Sterling... The price reflects the highly skilled, and scarce, craftsmanship required in a range of disciplines in

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Cowie, General Manager, Old Parliament House, "Mace Backgrounder" 14 April 2004; G:\Content\04 Interpretation\Interpreted spaces and places\Speaker's Suite\Replica Mace

order to produce a fully detailed and accurate copy of this very complex and unusual item, estimated to require more than 1,000 hours of detailed work; the cost of materials (gold-plated sterling silver); and the strength of the British currency (Pounds Sterling) against the Australian Dollar... The manufacturer is Garrard & Co. of London, a firm with extensive experience in this field. They are the Crown jewellers and were the manufacturers of the original mace in 1951 as well as a copy made for the NSW Parliament in the 1970s<sup>3</sup>

This mace was received on 8 April 2004, after first being envisaged in 2001.<sup>4</sup> It cost some AU \$235,000 including GST and has a similar weight to the true mace of some 7 – 8 kilos. The procurement of the formal replica in 2004 is detailed in G:\Content\04 Interpretation\Interpreted spaces and places\Speaker's Suite\Replica Mace.



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<sup>4</sup> Kate Cowie, General Manager, old Parliament House, "Mace Backgrounder" 14 April 2004; G:\Content\04 Interpretation\Interpreted spaces and places\Speaker's Suite\Replica Mace

## Subsequent Chamber Replicas

Subsequent analysis of the staff and security cost of usage, and the heritage requirements of usage, appeared to indicate that a less precious replica was needed for day-to-day chamber display.<sup>5</sup> It can safely be assumed that a number of subsequent chamber replicas pre-2008, in 2008, and in 2013 were sourced for these reasons.

There have been a number of subsequent chamber replicas after the acquisition of the 2004 formal replica:

- There is a mention of a chamber replica after 2004 but before 2008 in a file note about the 2008 replica. This would appear to be Prop15-0037, with a KE Emu image.
- A chamber replica was sourced in 2008 which is now held in a travel case with which it was supplied. By 2012 this chamber replica had been handled sufficiently for the paint to be worn and chipped in places, with the underlying material showing, and the gold lustre was lacking. This was registered as Prop15-0036, with a KE Emu image.
- The current chamber replica was sourced in 2013.<sup>6</sup> After some seven years of handling, this chamber replica is also worn and chipped and the gold lustre is lacking. This was registered as Prop14-0009, with a KE Emu image.

For each chamber replica the materials are different and the level of detail has been reduced from the formal replica.

## Model for Chamber Replicas

Photographs of the 2004 formal replica in the Speaker's Office have been used for modelling chamber replicas.

According to a 2008 file note, the 2008 chamber replica may have "the coats of arms actual cast off the plaster copies education has". It is still to be determined if these still exist, how they originated, and if they do exist, where they might be.

### Measurements

The formal replica in the Speaker's Office measures as follows (approximately):

- Length 1400mm
- Width of staff unadorned section 45mm
- Two round 'sectioners' 180mm
- Rounded end 210mm
- 'Barrel' below crown 250mm
- Crown maximum width 310mm

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<sup>5</sup> Jenny Anderson, First Assistant Secretary, Old Parliament House, "Minute re Review of Use of Mace"; G:\Content\04 Interpretation\Interpreted spaces and places\Speaker's Suite\Replica Mace

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.moadoph.gov.au/blog/a-new-mace-for-the-old-house-of-representatives/>

## Post 2004 - pre 2008 Chamber Replica

The file note in OPH2013/0357 about the 2008 and 2013 chamber replicas refers to an original prop mace which had been repaired by Lance Fox of GrindFX, prior to the commissioning of the 2008 chamber replica from GrindFX.

This chamber mace is wrapped in bubble wrap and is in the Learning store room. It appears to have been made from high density modelling foam, plastic sheet and plywood, covered with gold paint. A repair appears to have been to the cross on the top of the crown, which is missing. The prop number Prop15-0037 is written twice on the flat top of the crown. KE Emu image as Prop15-0037, Prop15-0037 04-05-2015~Top.JPG.



KE Emu image Prop15-0037 04-05-2015~Top.JPG

## 2008 Chamber Replica

An undated and unsigned file note details the 2008 mace. According to the file note, the 2008 chamber replica has a simplified design. It uses steel for the crown, with fibreglass moulds on the shaft. The file note states this replica was made by theatrical makers GrindFX in Fyshwick.

It was constructed around a wooden shaft, with the head, staff and 3 mouldings. The crown at the top was made from flat steel strips bent into shape. The decorative small cross and supporting brackets below the head are aluminium. The lions on the decorative loops were made by removing the heads of toy rubber lions and attaching them to the aluminium brackets. Raised features were made from moulded resin cast off plaster copies held by Education. The beading detail on the shaft was hand woven from wire and nylon. It was covered in multiple resin coats with a gold pigment dissolved into the resin for durability, in a shade commonly known as Ford Falcon Gold.

According to the file note the 2008 mace cost \$2,000 including a timber travelling case. Handles were fitted to the case after it was delivered to OPH. The 2008 chamber replica was registered as Prop15-0036, in KE Emu Prop15-0036 04-05-2015~Front.JPG. The prop number is on the inside of the floor of the crown.

Files for the procurement of the 2008 chamber replica are in filing cabinet 1 in the file OPH2013/0357. This file also contains paperwork for the 2013 chamber replica. This chamber mace is stored in the original travelling case in the Learning store room. The travelling case has the prop number written on the outside.

According to a Learning Facilitator who started with the Learning team in 2011, an additional 'foam' replica mace was also sourced sometime around 2010 or 2011 as the 2008 replica had fallen on a visitor's foot causing an injury. This 'foam' replica mace apparently did not last long.



The 2008 chamber replica, registered in 2015.

KE Emu image Prop15-0036 04-05-2015~Front.JPG



The 2008 chamber replica showing wear in 2012.

This replica was painted an automotive gold which appears quite dull in 2020.



## 2013 Chamber Replica

In 2012, the 2008 chamber replica was assessed as 'worn and dented', and a replacement was seen as necessary. This new replica was to be:

- WHS compliant for weight and handling
- Have an air of gravitas
- Have a high quality finish
- 'Resilient' i.e. able to be handled without damage to appearance
- A little weighty but not as heavy as the original - ideally about 4 - 5 kg (complements gravitas)
- Similar to, but not needed to be an exact copy of the mace made by Garrards: should include the crown and orb and some detail on the shaft and base, but does not need to be identical.

The procurement process identified Ewin Wood of Natural History Productions

<https://naturalhistoryproductions.com.au/>. The 2013 replica appears to be true to the dimensions of the formal replica in the Speaker's Office and a more sophisticated build.

The 2013 replica was constructed in the following manner (from the quote supplied by Ewin Wood):

A new replica of the mace will be produced by making a mold and cast of the current [2008] replica as seen in the images supplied in this document. This new replica will be cast in reinforced and integrally pigmented polyester resin, with special attention given to fine structures such as the flattened crosses, which will be cast in high density polyurethane or metal. The materials used will provide a robust and durable object. The new replica will be made to weigh approximately 5 kilograms allowing for safe handling by its audience. The mace will be finished in a composite gold leaf and protected by several coats of clear acrylic lacquer. The finish of the mace will be brilliant and have a highly durable protective coating that will endure and continue to reflect the dignity of the chamber and the original mace.

There were some early issues with the 2013 replica, as in 2014 it was noted that the composite gold leaf finish was flaking off on clothing. It appears the clear acrylic lacquer coats were not either not adequately applied, or were not sufficient to protect the composite gold leaf finish. This issue was resolved by Ewin Wood under the 'resilience' requirement of the procurement contract. The 2013 procurement process is detailed in G:\LEARNING\SCHOOLS LEARNING\Costumes and props\Replica Maces. This chamber replica is recorded in KE Emu as Prop14-0009 04-03-2014~Mace.JPG. The prop number appears not to be recorded on the prop.



2013 chamber replica new in 2013.

This replica used a composite gold leaf to add lustre, with a clear acrylic lacquer.

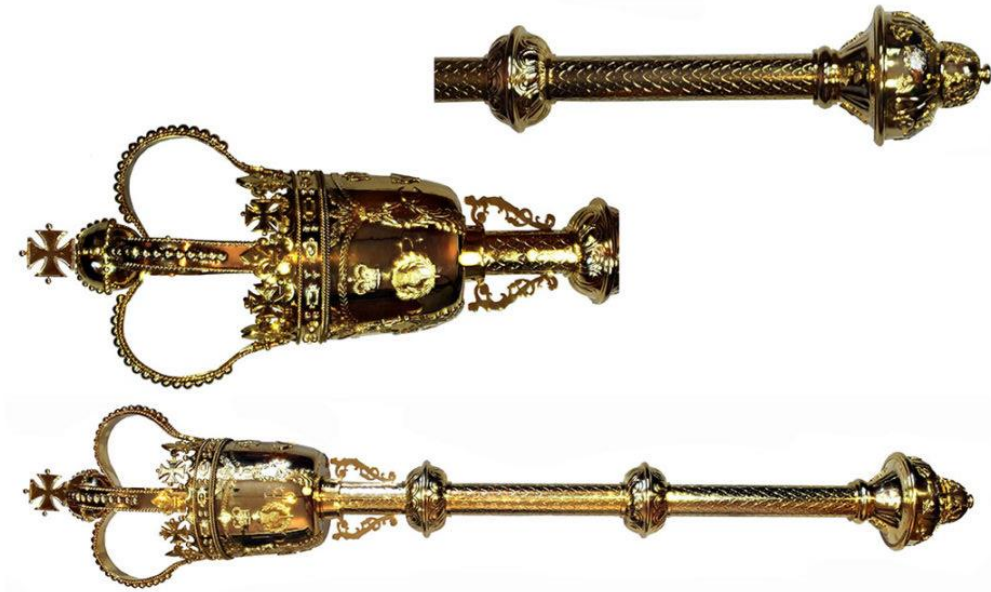
## Crown Jewels Replica – not used in the Chamber



This is a replica of the Royal Mace, although the replica is considerably simplified. This replica came with the replica crown jewels on display in the Happy and Glorious exhibition in the President of the Senate Suite. It is not on display as part of the Happy and Glorious exhibition. The mace and jewels were commissioned by the restorers of the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney, and then donated to Old Parliament House.

It is understood this replica has not been used in the chamber.

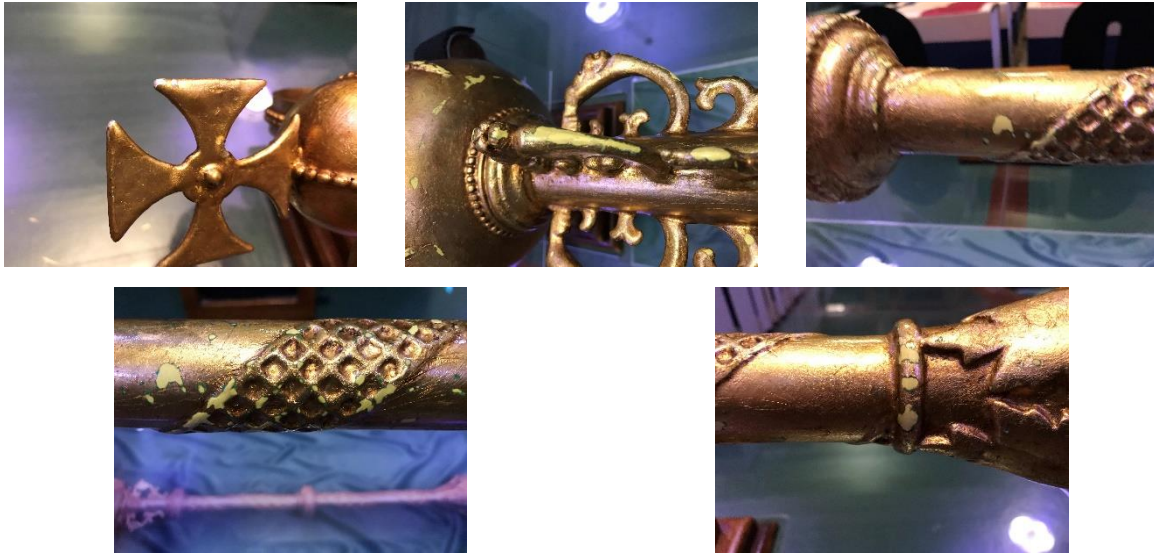
KE Emu image Prop11-0074.JPG



The Royal Mace, one of the most important pieces in the Crown Jewels.

## 2020 Condition of 2013 Replica

In 2020 the 2013 chamber replica is noticeably worn, with the underlying resin and fibreglass showing, and it is lacking the gold lustre of the actual mace. The gold lustre may have faded over time from 2013, or the clear acrylic lacquer may have discoloured, or both. Wear is also noticeable with areas worn down to the resin, especially on areas that are handled or protruding.



## Options for Repair or Replacement

There are a number of options for an improved chamber mace:

1. Refurbishing the 2013 replica using the original maker, who is still trading;
2. Refurbishing the 2013 replica using a different maker;
3. Refurbishing the 2008 mace, which is modelled slightly differently, and which is coloured with a commercial gold automotive paint (possible a shade generally known as 'Ford Falcon Gold');
4. Creating a new replica from the 2013 maker with the same materials;
5. Creating a new replica from the 2013 maker with different materials, for an improved and more lustrous finish; or
6. Or seeking a new replica from a different supplier with different materials, for a different finish, for an improved and more lustrous finish.

# Case for new replica Mace in the House of Representatives

## **Original Need**

Old Parliament House is a nationally listed heritage building and the House of Representatives is a key space within the building. A replica mace occupies a prominent position on the central table of this chamber. When the building was first opened again to the public, a replica of the actual mace at Australian Parliament House was seen as important to the formation of the Old Parliament House Collection. Such a replica was agreed to by the Speaker in 2003, and the Speaker approved an appropriate design with some detail necessarily varied from the actual mace such as the deletion of the Royal Ciphers of George VI. This design includes an outline of Old Parliament House on the rim of the crown. This replica was funded by the federal government as a formal replica for the cost of some \$235,000 and created by the makers of the actual mace. It was delivered in 2004 and is now secured in the Speaker's Office in Old Parliament House.

## **Use**

A replica mace for display on the central table of the House of Representatives is a symbol of a Parliament chosen by a free people, to echo the words of Sir Robert Menzies. It is a key and highly relevant Learning object and visually it may be the most important item in the Chamber, as it strikes the eye on entry, followed by the Speaker's Chair. As a Learning tool it allows for a description of the history of Parliament, for the role of the head of state, and as the anchor piece for chamber interpretation. The replica has also been handled by members of the Museum Engagement team.

## **Authenticity**

Subsequent use of the formal 2004 replica showed that, due to security requirements, it was too expensive for day to day display in the House of Representatives. Accordingly, since 2004 there have been three subsequent replicas on display in the House of Representatives, secured perhaps in 2005, then 2008, then 2013. The 2008 and 2013 were slight improvements on the 2005 version. None of these replicas use enough detail to show the outline of the façade of Old Parliament House on the rim of the crown or other such features of the formal replica. The 2005 and 2008 versions are held in storage by Learning and the 2013 is still on display in the Chamber.

The 2005 replica was very generalised in shape, sprayed with automotive gold paint, minimised detail, and did not convey an air of authority.

The 2008 replica was created by theatrical prop company GrindFX. It resembles the shape of the formal 2004 replica in a general sense, but completely lacks detail, and in fact uses convenient substitute elements to save detailed work. For example, the finely molded lion's heads on the formal replica appear much smaller on the 2008 replica because this detail was not modelled or molded, but obtained by using the heads from rubber toy lions found in a toy shop.

The 2013 replica used the 2008 replica as a model, with the addition of gold leaf, so it had a much improved appearance but still lacked detail. It was made of Ewin Wood of Natural History Productions, a professional maker of museum quality work.

None of these replicas pay due homage to the actual mace, to the design decisions by the Speaker of the House, or to the mace's role as a symbol of the authority of the Head of State or the people.

### **Current Need**

The 2013 replica is very worn after seven years of handling. Areas have worn down to the underlying resin and it has lost most of the gold leaf lustre. It no longer functions well as the centre-piece of the chamber. Its generalised form, modelled on a theatrical prop interpretation of the formal replica, will not serve an improved display of the central table of the chamber. Even a casual inspection shows the lack of detail. Any interpretation of this replica as containing the approved design variations such as the outline of Old Parliament House will be flawed.

### **A New Replica Mace**

A new replica to fulfil the promise of the central display can be created by the maker of the 2013 replica, Ewin Wood of Natural History Productions. Since 2013, this maker has created Learning replicas of the maces of the Parliaments of New South Wales and South Australia. For these replicas, he has pioneered new cold-molding non-invasive techniques using flexible silicone modelling that allows for the accurate capture of detail before gold leaf is applied. A much more accurate and detailed replica is now possible to fulfil the promise of the chamber, to capture the eye, and to accurately serve interpretation.

As part of research for supplying this need, a number of Australian museum and prop makers were contacted, but Ewin Wood is the only maker to have responded positively and appropriately. His quote includes a site visit to capture the detail of the formal replica using the cold-molding non-invasive techniques described.

## Scoping potential methods

- Current method of fibreglass and resin moldings
- Metal work
- 3D printing

## Scoping potential suppliers

Maker	Initial interest email sent	Any response
Natural History Productions, a museum provider of displays from Castlemaine in regional Victoria. The principal, Ewin Wood, made the 2013 replica. <a href="https://naturalhistoryproductions.com.au/">https://naturalhistoryproductions.com.au/</a>	16/4/2020	Positive
Thylacine Productions, a Canberra-based production house for the museum sector. Thylacine was asked for a quote for the 2013 replica <a href="http://www.thylacine.com.au/">http://www.thylacine.com.au/</a>	24/2/2020	nil
Spirits Dancing, which is Hilary Talbot, a Canberra model maker and artist <a href="https://spiritsdancing.com">https://spiritsdancing.com</a>	24/2/20	Declined; no longer works with the appropriate media
Opera Australia (Props Manufacturing) Sydney <a href="https://opera.org.au/aboutus/hires/props">https://opera.org.au/aboutus/hires/props</a>	-	
Custom Elements prop makers Sydney <a href="https://customelements.com.au/">https://customelements.com.au/</a>	-	
Sydney Props Sydney <a href="https://www.sydneyprops.com.au/props">https://www.sydneyprops.com.au/props</a>	-	
Craig W Bannan, gold, silver and brass metal smith QLD <a href="http://cwbsilver.com/">http://cwbsilver.com/</a>	-	
Ricky Vuckovic, 3d scanner and modeller Canberra, <a href="http://rickyvuckovic.com">rickyvuckovic.com</a>	-	