

## **EXPERT PANEL PICKS AUSTRALIA'S TOP 10 CONCRETE PUBLIC ARCHITECTURAL WORKS– AND TWO OF THEM ARE IN CANBERRA**

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The Australian Academy of Science's famous "Martian Embassy" and the High Court of Australia have been selected by an expert panel as among the top 10 most outstanding concrete public architectural works in Australia of the past nine decades.

The panel, comprising some of Australia's best-known architects and building experts, today unveiled the first ever list of the 10 most outstanding concrete public buildings in the country.

The publication of the Top 10 List marks the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the organisation that represents the heavy construction materials industry, Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia (CCAA).

The other structures in the Top 10 List are: the Sydney Opera House, in Sydney; Australia Square in Sydney, which was the country's first "round" skyscraper; the Gladesville Bridge in Sydney; James Cook University Library in Townsville; the Melbourne University carpark; Victorian State Offices, also in Melbourne; Punchbowl Mosque in Sydney; and the Queensland Art Gallery, in Brisbane.

The chair of the judging panel, Peter Poulet, a former Government Architect, said the Australian Academy of Science's Shine Dome, which was dubbed the "Martin Embassy" when it was officially unveiled 60 years ago, was a classic futuristic structure conceived and built during the Space Age of the 1950s.

"The Shine Dome is a testament not only to an optimistic view of the future but also an example of how building materials were being reconceived to represent a dynamic and exciting world," Mr Poulet said.

Referring to the High Court of Australia – the second of the Canberra structures on the Top 10 List – Mr Poulet said: "The High Court building is a beautifully crafted monolithic structure imbued with the dignity and status of the highest Court in the land. Built of reinforced concrete, it exemplified the robust and enduring nature of the institution it contains and represents."

The Chief Executive Officer of CCAA, Ken Slattery, said the Top 10 List highlighted the aesthetic, environmental, and social contribution concrete has made, and continues to make, to Australia's urban landscapes since the organisation began 90 years ago.

"Since 1929, Cement, Concrete & Aggregates Australia has promoted the inherent qualities, flexibility and sustainability of concrete as a building and construction material," Mr Slattery said.

“To mark our 90th year, we embarked on a quest to find Australia’s most important and distinctive concrete public architectural landmarks, highlighting the central role that concrete has played in Australia’s urban landscape throughout the past nine decades.

“Some of the Top 10 structures sit in harmony with the landscape, while others are proudly uncompromising; some have Brutalist, geometric composition while others have continuous free-flowing forms, but collectively, this list captures the limitless potential of concrete.”

Mr Poulet said the judging panel had whittled down a long list of 45 nominations to 23 finalists, before reaching a consensus on the Top 10.

He said the selection was based on three criteria: Architectural Merit (the form, function and structure of the building); Innovation in the use of concrete as a material, as a structure, and aesthetically; and finally, Exemplar of the time, which determined whether the project redefined and expanded concrete’s potential.

“These buildings and structures remind us of the resilient, enduring beauty of concrete - and it is this durability that makes it a key enabling material to put society on a sustainable transition path,” he added.

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