



An invitation by the Government of Victoria to a conversazione in the Exhibition Building on the evening of Tuesday, 7 May 1901, in connection with the celebrations for the Opening of the Commonwealth Parliament. Austin, GBH; Melbourne: Sands & McDougall, 1901. Photo: courtesy of the State Library of South Australia.

Historic Mace for Centenary sitting

It will be *déjà vu* when the House of Representatives meets in Melbourne on 9 and 10 May to commemorate the Centenary of the Australian Parliament. The historic Mace used at the very first sittings of the Federal Parliament in 1901 will again be used in the House.

As the symbol of authority for the House of Representatives and the Speaker, the Mace is always present in the House whenever it meets. During its first 50 years, the House used a Mace that was loaned to it by the Victorian Legislative Assembly. It was only in 1951 that the House of Representatives acquired its very own Mace (pictured below) as a gift from the British House of Commons to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The use of the historic Mace is a special feature of the celebrations that will see the House of Representatives and the

Senate return to their original home in the Victorian Parliament Building. The ceremonial sittings on 10 May will be one highlight in a week of festivities commemorating 100 years of Australian parliamentary history. Other key events will include:

- a commemoration of the opening of the first Federal Parliament in 1901, to be held in Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building on 9 May before 7,000 Australian and overseas guests;
- a Federation parade through the streets of Melbourne on 6 May;
- Federation AFL Football and Netball games on 5 and 6 May;
- a multi-faith celebration on 7 May;
- a celebration of the achievements of Australian women to be held on 7 May at the Victorian Parliament; and
- the 100th anniversary meeting of the Australian Labor Party also on 7 May.

The ceremony in the Royal Exhibition Building will be televised live by the ABC on 9 May. It will feature music composed specifically for the occasion by Peter Sculthorpe.

On 9 and 10 May, the historic Mace used during the first 50 years of the House will temporarily replace the current Mace (pictured left). Photo: AUSPIC

