

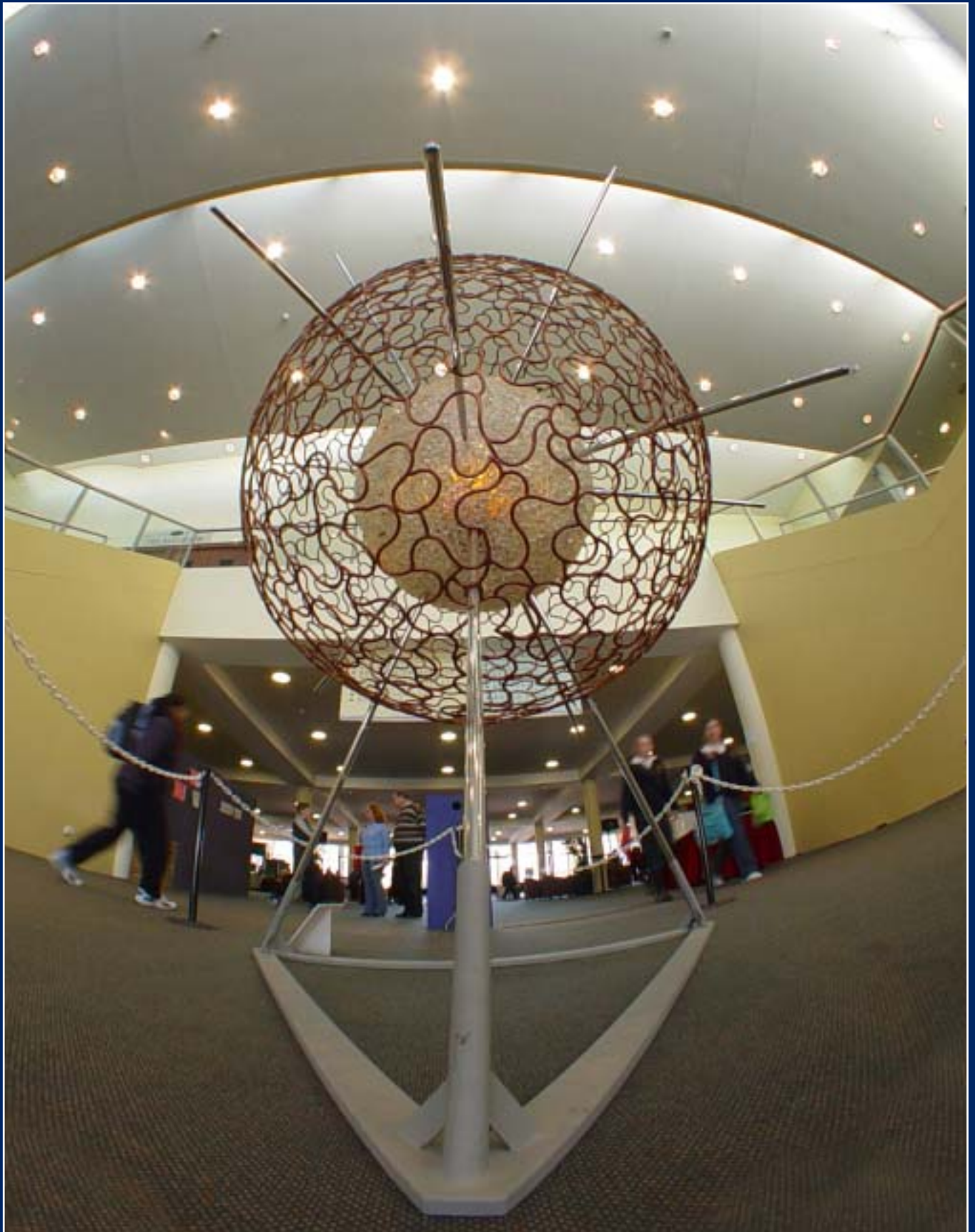
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL SCIENCES

The Stromlo Orrery Progress Report - October 2004



ANU

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY





AWOS 2004



*ANU Green -
Footprints on
Campus*



Art/Sci 2004

Using phase 1 of the Orrery Project as a direct promotion tool for the University

Phase one of the orrery project was completed on schedule and used for a variety of promotional purposes. With the two spheres concentrically configured, and supported by chrome poles the work has a very “sciencey” feel and was used to promote the Australian Science Festival and ANU involvement in that event. The work in this form was exhibited in the Canberra Centre between 25 July and 16 August as part of Art/Sci 2004. It was moved to the foyer of the National Convention Centre for the ACTEW Amazing World of Science expo between 17 August and 22 August.

Used in this way, the work provided a nice centrepiece for AWOS and since every visitor to the exhibition had to walk right past both it and the ANU signage, also gave good publicity for our sponsor - The National Institute of Physical Sciences.

The outer sphere alone was also used as a centrepiece for the ANU Green, Footprints on Campus exhibition at the School of Art between 31 August and 4 September.

A movie promoting alternative energy research at the ANU was screened at all venues where the sculpture was displayed.



Moving on to Phase 2

Phase 2 of the project involves the construction of a large steel sculpture from the remains of the Yale Columbia telescope. The Yale Columbia was a 26 inch refractor built by Masson lab at Yale University in 1925. It spent time in Johannesburg before being relocated to Canberra in 1952. Until its destruction, it was the fifteenth largest refractor ever built. As recently as 1998, the Yale Columbia was used in a long term project measuring stellar parallaxes to calculate distances and proper motions of nearby stars. Over its lifetime, it provided much valuable information about the structure of the southern skys.

The proposal is to use the great setting circles from the Yale Columbia to create a large outdoor sculpture that encapsulates something of the feel of the telescope and also to preserve part of the instrument essentially intact. This sculpture will pick up on elements of the Yale Columbia's form and materiality and use them to create an artwork with an early twentieth century industrial flavour. Outwardly, the work will have a sense of a great classical measuring instrument which of course, is precisely what this telescope was.

Before committing ourselves to the exact form of the work we wanted to recover the actual parts so that the design could be based on the reality of what was actually recoverable rather than a wish list. This turns out to have been a prudent step since on removal, some parts were more fire damaged than was originally thought. However, with a lot of much appreciated help from Habka Demolition, the major circles are now safely off site and work is progressing on the design of the sculpture.

Questacon have expressed an interest in having the completed work on medium term loan (5 years) and all interested parties within the University have been enthusiastic about this idea. A planing application is currently underway with the National Capital Authority, and we are optimistic that the site will be made available.



Recovering the setting circles from the Yale Columbia

