



This torch is perhaps the most compelling object of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. It signifies the precise moment when the Games officially opened, and when the world focussed its attentions upon Sydney and Australian culture as a whole.

This Olympic torch was used by Cathy Freeman on 15 September 2000 to ignite the Olympic cauldron during the Opening Ceremony. It was designed by Sydney company, Blue Sky Design, and manufactured by G.A. & L. Harrington in anodised and textured aluminium. Its tiered rim emulates the sail-like roofline of the Sydney Opera House, its curving body reflects the shape of a boomerang, and its blue aluminium surface symbolises the waters of Sydney Harbour.

As the Sydney Olympic Torch Relay drew to a close to the stadium, speculation surrounding the lighting of the Olympic cauldron rapidly intensified. The media and general public alike debated who would light the Olympic cauldron, and most speculations leant towards one

of several celebrated Australian women. The final leg of the torch

relay, around Olympic stadium and to the Olympic cauldron, did in fact feature six celebrated female athletes - a gesture that honoured women's contribution to Australian sport and acknowledged 2000 as the Olympic Year of Women.

From the entrance to Olympic stadium, Raelene Boyle, a former track and field medallist, (1968, 1972 and 1976 Olympic Games) and Betty Cuthbert, a former gold medallist in 100 and 200-metre sprints, (1956 and 1960 Olympic Games) carried the Olympic flame in tandem. (Cuthbert, now suffering from multiple sclerosis, was pushed in a wheelchair by Boyle.) Dawn Fraser, swimming champion, (1956, 1960 and 1964 Olympic Games) then carried the flame to Shirley Strickland de la Hunty, a former track and field icon (1948, 1952 and 1956 Olympic Games). Shane Gould, who had a brief though successful career in swimming (1972 Olympic Games), carried the torch to Debbie Flintoff-King, gold medal hurdler at the 1988 Olympic Games. The flame then passed to the final torchbearer to complete the Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch Relay.

Emerging from the darkness in a white, flameproof bodysuit, Cathy Freeman, indigenous champion of track and field, ascended a staircase and stood within a reflective pool. Here, above the audience, she immersed the flame in the liquid surrounding her feet and ignited the Olympic cauldron. Rising upwards on a concealed machine, the cauldron became stuck for a few moments before reaching its final position above the stadium. Ric Birch, ceremony organiser, envisioned this climax in Monaco in 1993, immediately after Sydney won its bid to host the Olympic Games.

The selection of Freeman to light the Olympic cauldron seemed highly appropriate to most Australians - she excelled in her sport, protested against injustices to Aboriginal people, and spoke proudly of her Aboriginal heritage. These qualities stirred a nation that was debating reconciliation with its indigenous people. Perceptively, a columnist for the Los Angeles Times wrote during the Olympics: 'Freeman has emerged at the Sydney 2000 Games as the most potent symbol of a nation's hopes both for Olympic glory and reconciliation for sins of the past' (as quoted by Paul Sheehan in "Cathy who? Condoms and controversy make a world of difference", Sydney Morning Herald, 27 Sep. 2000, p.2). Moreover, Freeman's prominence at the opening ceremony encapsulated the Olympic ideals of promoting sport and celebrating the history and culture of the host country.

Catherine Reade, 2001

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Summary

Object No.	2001/84/267
Object Statement	Olympic torch, metal / plastic, designed by Blue Sky Design, c. 1998, made by G A & L Harrington, used by Cathy Freeman, opening ceremony, Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, c. 2000
Physical Description	Olympic torch used by Cathy Freeman. The torch is made from shaped steel with pivoting cover sleeve for access to the fuel cylinder. It has an internal burner and valve mechanism. The torch tapers towards the base. The main body of the torch is polished steel. The cover is made up of two shells; the first shell is anodised blue steel and contains a space for the fuel cylinder. The second shell has a white powder coating with a silver Sydney 2000 logo

on either side. Inside the torch is an empty fuel cylinder.

Short URL <https://ma.as/10767> (<https://ma.as/10767>)

Dimensions

Height 790 mm

Width 40 mm

Depth 100 mm

Production

Notes Designed by Blue Sky Design. Design submitted to SOCOG on 28 February 1998.

Manufactured by G.A. & L. Harrington, Padstow NSW, c.2000

Made [G A & L Harrington Pty Ltd](#) ([/search?people\[0\]=G%20A%20%26%20L%20Harrington%20Pty%20Ltd](#)) [Sydney](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=Sydney](#)), [New South Wales](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=New%20South%20Wales](#)), [Australia](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=Australia](#))

Designed [Blue Sky Design Group](#) ([/search?people\[0\]=Blue%20Sky%20Design%20Group](#)) [Sydney](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=Sydney](#)), [New South Wales](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=New%20South%20Wales](#)), [Australia](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=Australia](#)) 1998

History

Notes Used by Cathy Freeman to light the Olympic cauldron on 15 September 2000. Made for and owned by the Olympic Coordination Authority/Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, and donated to the Powerhouse Museum after use in the Games. The Sydney 2000 Olympic torch received an Australian Design Award and the Powerhouse Museum Selection in 2000.

Used [Freeman, Cathy](#) ([/search?people\[0\]=Freeman%20Cathy](#)) [Sydney](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=Sydney](#)), [New South Wales](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=New%20South%20Wales](#)), [Australia](#) ([/search?places\[0\]=Australia](#)) 2000

Source

Credit Line Part of the Sydney 2000 Games Collection Gift of the New South Wales Government, 2001

Acquisition Date 5 October 2001

Cite this Object

Harvard *Sydney 2000 Olympic Games torch used by Cathy Freeman* 2019, Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, accessed 22 October 2019, <<https://ma.as/10767>>

Wikipedia `{{cite web |url=https://ma.as/10767 |title=Sydney 2000 Olympic Games torch used by Cathy Freeman |author=Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences |access-date=22 October 2019 |publisher=Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, Australia}}`

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Related Objects



Banners, Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch Relay, polyester, made by Selby's Flags and Banners, Sydney c.2000

(/object/502902)



Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games torch prototypes

(/object/502624)



Olympic torch, modified for space flight, Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, chrome/

<https://collection.maas.museum/object/10767>



Firestick used in the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Torch Relay

anodised aluminium/ plastic, designed by Blue Sky, Sydney, made by G A & L Harrington Pty Ltd, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1999, flown on space shuttle flight STS-101

(/object/342920)

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