

Craggily handsome addition to National Rock Garden

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This week's rain added a glistening lustre to a strong, silent, 10-tonne new Canberran, the great block of Moruya granite now plonked in place at the National Rock Garden.

A stonemason has been working (until the deluge interrupted him) on the installation of this craggy monster among the other Federation Rocks of the Garden at Barrenjoey Drive, Yarramundi Reach.

Moruya granite (and the 10-tonne behemoth is accompanied by a smaller piece taken from the same quarry) is historically important, National Rock Garden chairman, Professor Brad Pillans, explains. It is a grand, celebrated, glitteringly grey granite famously used as the facing on the pylons of the Harbour Bridge after it was shipped to Sydney from Moruya on the South Coast.

More than 200 Australian, Scottish and Italian stonemasons and their families went to to live at Moruya where they quarried, cut and dressed great blocks of this granite for the bridge. The stone was shipped to Sydney on three vessels specifically built for this task.

As well as at the bridge, the handsome Moruya granite, some 370 million years old, is much employed around Sydney. It is the base for the Captain Cook statue in Hyde Park. It is used for the plinths and columns of the Sydney GPO and gets important architectural guernseys with those celebrity edifices of St Mary's Cathedral and the Cenotaph in Martin Place.

"It is an iconic Australian rock and a 'must-have' for the National Rock Garden," Professor Pillans enthuses.



A giant Moruya granite rock with 'wow' factor is delivered to the National Rock Garden.

It was donated by the NSW Government and Eurobodalla Shire Council and has been placed adjacent to the existing Federation Rocks display. The Federation Rocks are eight terrific rocks (sensitive visitors, like this report-

er, go "Wow!" at them) installed in 2013, donated by the governments of each state and territory to commemorate Federation and the foundation of Canberra. The Federation Rocks were specially chosen to celebrate Australia's rich

geological heritage in a parkland setting, to reflect significant aspects of the history of each state and territory, and with their varied and striking appearances to have a craggy "wow" factor.

The Moruya granite display -

the smaller rock is given added character by marks made on it during its quarrying and by oyster shells attached to it by its immersion in Moruya waters - will look on impassively at its official opening on Sunday, October 9.