

ALUMINIUM SHOWS US THE COSMOS

The largest ground-based optical telescopes of today use mirrors that are 10m (33ft) diameter. The next generation of optical telescopes could be up to 100m diameter (330ft), the size of a sports stadium. This "quantum leap" in size has important implications, since astronomers want to capture every photon of light that comes their way. A 100m mirror has a collecting area up to 100times greater than existing instruments.

The reflective coatings used on the astronomical telescope mirrors feature a base layer of pure Aluminium deposited by evaporation/condensation – chosen because of its highly reflective properties. The Aluminium coating is critical to the development of larger and ever more complex instruments.

