

Media Release



NSW State Library launches major rare maps exhibition

12/11/2021

The Tasman Map, one of the State Library's most irreplaceable objects, underwent a 380-hour operation to look as good as it did over 300 years ago for its first public outing in 10 years.

Abel Tasman's hand-drawn 1642-44 map joins close to 100 rare and priceless maps, charts, atlases and globes in the State Library's major new exhibition, *Maps of the Pacific, 1500-1860*, opening this **Saturday 13 November**.

According to State Librarian John Vallance: "12 months of intense conservation work - with state-of-the-art techniques never attempted before at the Library - went into preparing the Tasman map for exhibition. The work revealed previously obscured details which were hidden under a thick layer of yellow varnish."

"After a few false starts due to Covid, at long last we can welcome visitors to our *Maps of the Pacific* exhibition and show off some of the largest and most spectacular objects in the Library's important collection of maps."

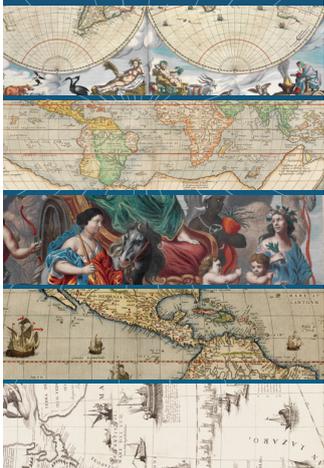
This major exhibition invites visitors to explore the beauty, art and science of mapping across three centuries.

"On a deeper level, the exhibition gets us thinking in unexpected ways about how we got here and why," added Dr Vallance.

Curator Maggie Patton said: "While this exhibition traces the European mapping of the Pacific using western viewpoints and cartographic traditions, the Library acknowledges that Pacific First Nations people navigated the Pacific using their shared knowledge of ocean paths, prevailing winds and rising stars for millennia."

"The exhibition gave us an opportunity to display items never or rarely placed on display, as well as important items from private and public collections, including a Marshalls Islands stick chart on loan from the National Library of Australia. You'll be amazed."

MAPS OF THE
PACIFIC



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Exhibition highlights include:

- a beautiful hand-coloured map of the world by Dutch cartographer, Ioannes de Ram from the 1690s - **on public display for the first time**
- a detailed pencil sketch of Tahiti by Samuel Wallis, 1767, documenting the first arrival of Europeans to Tahiti - **on public display for the first time**
- a unique manuscript chart of the Magellan Straits by English explorer, Philip Carteret, 1765 - **on public display for the first time**
- 16th century silver medal commemorating Sir Francis Drake's voyage around the world, 1577-1580
- rare manuscript charts of New Zealand produced following Cook's first voyage across the Pacific in 1770
- an exquisite hand-coloured chart of the Pacific by Arrowsmith from 1798, measuring almost 2 x 2.5 metres - **one of the largest maps in the Library's collection**

A key feature of the exhibition is the Globe Room where visitors can view wondrous pocket globes through to spectacular floor globes, including two **recently acquired** celestial and terrestrial floor globes from 1816, as well as rare celestial charts including the first printed chart of the Southern Hemisphere, 1515.

Visitors can also listen to commentaries from subject experts on important themes within the exhibition, including Pacific First Nation navigation and voyages and the role of Tupii on Cook's first voyage.

Maps of the Pacific, 1500-1860 is a free exhibition at the State Library of NSW, from 13 November 2021 until 24 April 2022. The exhibition is supported by a dynamic events program. Learn more: sl.nsw.gov.au/maps-of-the-pacific

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