

[Mapping Australia.]

[An animation of a spinning globe in the style of an old map.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

0:07 – 0:19 For centuries, from Classical times, the Europeans believed that there must be a vast landmass in the Southern Hemisphere to balance the landmass in the north. Otherwise, the world would tip over.

[Paul Brunton, Senior Curator, Mitchell Library, in a library room, in front of a 2D version of the map.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

0:19 – 0:26 They referred to this supposed great landmass in the south as 'Terra Australis Incognita', the unknown south land.

[Animation showing Terra Australis Incognita on an old map.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

0:26 – 0:34 And so the European discovery of Australia is very much the pursuit of whether this land existed.

[Paul walks through the Mitchell Library.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

0:36 – 0:50 In the Mitchell Library, we're fortunate to hold some of the great landmark documents of our history that chart the European discovery of Australia. And gradually, over those 200 years, the map of Australia emerged through various explorations.

[Paul opens a cabinet and takes out an intricately drawn and coloured map.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

0:52 – 1:03 We begin with the great voyage of Torres in which he sailed through the Torres Strait, which was named after him. And we have the account of that, of 1606, that Don Diego de Prado kept.

[Paul carefully turns the pages of the journal.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

1:03 – 1:16 And that's the earliest journal. This begins the charting of Australia. Then, in 1642-43, Abel Tasman, the last of the great Dutch explorers.

[Animation showing the route of Tasman's 1642 voyage.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

1:16 – 1:25 He charted the southern part of Tasmania, which he named Van Diemen's Land. It was still unknown, of course, whether Tasmania was linked to the mainland.

[A graphic showing the southern tip of Tasmania. The rest of the coastline is not mapped.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

1:26 – 1:38 In 1644, in a landmark voyage, Abel Tasman charted the entire north and north-west coast, from the tip of Cape York right around to North West Cape.

[Animation showing the coastline mapped by Tasman in 1644.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

1:38 – 1:46 The Dutch were only interested in trade. They found no gold, no spices, no treasure, and so they dropped us like a hot potato and sailed away.

[Animation of ships moving away from the mapped northern coastline of 'New Holland'.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

1:48 – 2:07 Ironically, the various areas they charted in Western Australia were the areas where we now get our mineral wealth. But it was still a jigsaw puzzle - how does that all fit together? There was no interest in Australia, as a result of that, from the 1640s until James Cook, in 1770, charted the east coast of Australia.

[Animation showing the east coast of Australia, as mapped by Cook in 1770.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

2:08 – 2:30 And on board Cook's voyage was Joseph Banks. And he was instrumental in having Botany Bay chosen as the site for the convict colony. And his journal, which we hold, details that entire voyage and it's the first extensive account of Australia and, really, the single most important document in the world for our history.

[Paul turns the pages of Banks' journal.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

2:32 – 2:41 It was still unknown whether the west coast, which had been charted by the Dutch throughout the 17th century, and the east coast were, in fact, the one landmass.

[A map shows the incomplete outline of Australia. Parts of the southern and northernmost coasts are missing.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

2:43 – 3:01 The First Fleet arrived in January 1788, and we have 9 of the only 11 First Fleet journals - that is, journals written on the First Fleet and covering the first month here. One of the convicts had actually drawn a map of Sydney Cove.

[Partial map of Sydney Cove.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

3:01 – 3:09 A little bit of spin involved in it, though - he showed it as flourishing a little more than it was. But there were still questions to be answered.

[Zooming out from Sydney Cove to the outline of Sydney Harbour and surrounding coves.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

3:13 – 3:24 In the late 1790s, Matthew Flinders, with George Bass, circumnavigated Tasmania. That was another piece in the jigsaw puzzle which was the map of Australia solved, that Tasmania was actually an island.

[The original incomplete chart of Tasmania's southern tip morphs into a complete map of the island's coastline.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

3:24 – 3:35 And then, from 1801 to 1803, Flinders - without Bass this time - sailed right around the continent and proved that it was one landmass.

[The rest of Australia's coastline is filled in, forming a complete map.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

3:35 – 4:13 The west coast and the east coast were part of one landmass. And so, for the first time, we had the map of Australia. And it was Flinders who called it Australia. Flinders also gave us so many names that everyone knows. The Great Barrier Reef is Flinders. The Coral Sea is Flinders. The Great Australian Bight is Flinders. Cape Leeuwin is Flinders. Bass Strait is Flinders. And so the map of Australia is really saturated with names that Flinders bestowed, although, unlike a lot of explorers, he named nothing after himself. There are a lot of Flinders on the map but that has been named by people in Flinders' honour.

[Paul unfolds a large map from the pages of an old folio.]

[PAUL BRUNTON]

4:15 – 4:37 So, through these great documents we have at the Mitchell Library, we have 200 years - 1606 to 1803 - during which the great puzzle of the south land was solved through various explorations. And we can trace those in the Mitchell Library through these great landmark documents, which we're very fortunate to have.

[VOICEOVER]

4:38 – 4:43 One Hundred - a free exhibition at the State Library of New South Wales, until June 16.