

Media Release



Major new exhibition dedicated to *Finding Antarctica*

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The myths, misadventures and heroic efforts to map the last continent on earth will be revealed in a new landmark exhibition opening at the State Library of NSW from 3 December 2011.

Finding Antarctica showcases over 100 extraordinarily rare and contemporary maps from 15th to 20th century, as well as photographs, sledging diaries, sketchbooks, oral histories, films and relics, selected from the State Library's unrivalled collections.

"This major exhibition on the mapping of Antarctica will reveal amazing stories of exploration and discovery," says *Finding Antarctica* curator, Maggie Patton. "It will also showcase the tremendous versatility and value of maps, not just as navigation aids or historical documents, but as beautiful works of art."

Commencing with Greek theories around the existence of a great southern continent, the exhibition highlights the first circumnavigation of Antarctica by Captain Cook in 1775 and the scientific and commercial expeditions in the late 1800s, through to the heroic period of the 20th century mapping of the interior and the race to the South Pole. It concludes with the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959 and contemporary satellite images.

The exhibition also celebrates the centenary of the historic Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) 1911-14, an ambitious quest made by Douglas Mawson and his largely inexperienced team which initiated Australia's territorial claim to 42% of the Antarctica Territory.

Exhibition visitors can view previously unseen AAE maps and photographs, the sketchbook of expeditioner Charles Turnball Harrison, photographer Frank Hurley's diary and one of the original sledging flags.

The oral history of AAE member Morton Henry Moyes, who was part of the little-known western party team based on the Shackleton Ice Shelf, can be heard for the first time, and provides amazing insight into daily life in Antarctica and the hardships endured.

Finding Antarctica is a free exhibition at the State Library of NSW, from 3 December 2011 to 19 February 2012. All items in the exhibition will be digitised and available online at www.sl.nsw.gov.au

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