

SECTION B

Discovery and Exploration

The maps and commentaries in this section provide an overview of the European discovery, exploration and settlement of Australia as a prelude to a more detailed picture of today's population distribution presented in Section C: People.

Three map-sheets, 'Maritime Discovery', 'Land Discovery and Exploration' and 'Evolution of the States', each contain four small scale maps illustrating four different periods of activity or development.

The fourth map-sheet, 'Pastoral Occupation', contains a single map of Australia.

The visit by the Dutch ship 'Duyfken' to the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in 1606 is the earliest authenticated landing by Europeans on Australian soil. There is, however, unsubstantiated evidence suggesting that parts of the eastern and northern coasts were explored by Portuguese navigators nearly a century earlier. Moreover, it seems likely that Australian shores were visited in even earlier centuries by seamen and fishermen from lands to the north of Australia. There are clues of this in some Aboriginal artwork, and in early Chinese porcelain fragments uncovered around Darwin.

The four small maps of Australia on the accompanying map-sheet show four periods of discovery, commencing with the Dutch explorations of 1600 onwards and finishing with the charting of the remaining unexplored sections of coastline by English and French expeditions 200 years later. The dates of discovery are placed above each map. The legend, located in the centre of the map-sheet, explains the abbreviations used for the exploring nations and the line types used to represent the different stages of discovery of the Australian coastline.

1600-1630

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, trade brought Portuguese and Dutch explorers south to the Spice Islands. These islands are now part of present-day Indonesia, which is located to the NW of Western Australia. Ships sailed from Europe via the Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa, and then east with the prevailing winds. It is known that in the early 1600s some of these ships were blown off course and struck the coast of Australia, resulting in the discovery of various sections of the northern, western and southern coasts.

On the map in the top left of the page, trace the wide band representing these discoveries by Dutch navigators between 1600 and 1630. You will notice that, while there are many as-yet-uncharted sections of coastline (depicted by a broken line), it is possible to recognise the shape of south-western Western Australia and, far to the NE, part of the coast of Cape York Peninsula and Arnhem Land.

1631-1700

On the map in the top right of the page, trace the wide band denoting discoveries by later Dutch navigators. Between 1631 and 1700 these seamen charted some of the undiscovered areas left by earlier Dutch explorations. In addition, far to the SE of these discoveries, southern Tasmania was charted by Abel Tasman during this period.

Note that the coastline charted during previous discoveries is shown on the map by a fine line, while coastline yet-to-be discovered is represented by a broken line.

1770

The discoveries shown on the map in the lower left of the page are entirely those of Captain James Cook on his voyage of 1770. He first sighted land at Point Hicks in Victoria and, sailing north, charted the east coast of Australia except for a short section where he sailed outside the Great Barrier Reef in northern Queensland.

The shrinking length of undiscovered coastline is very noticeable on this map, and by the end of Cook's voyage most of Australia's coastline had been explored. Thereafter only a few short sections, mostly along the southern edge of the continent, remained to be mapped.

1771-1803

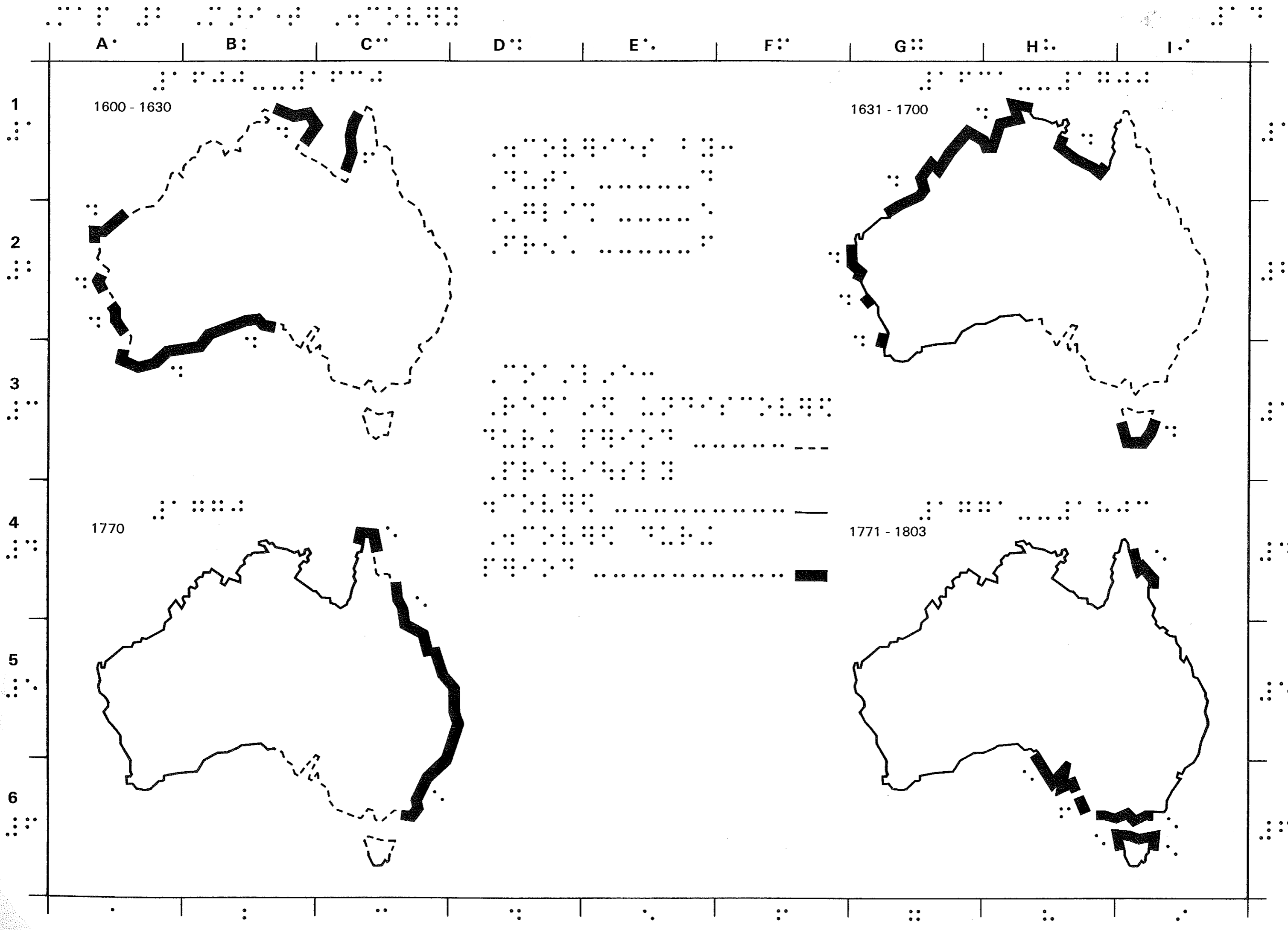
Examine the map in the lower right of the page. In the last years of this period the charting of the Australian coastline was completed. Towards the close of this period Matthew Flinders charted that part of the Queensland coast missed by Cook in 1770. Then the remaining unknown sections of the Victorian, Tasmanian and South Australian coasts were variously charted by Flinders, who partially circumnavigated the continent between 1801 and 1803, by the English navigators George Bass, James Grant and John Murray, and by the French explorer Nicolas Baudin.

Discoveries by :

- Dutch ::
- English
- French ::

Coastline :

- Remained undiscovered during period - - - -
- Previously discovered ———
- Discovered during period ■■■■



Land exploration began shortly after the first settlers arrived at Port Jackson in 1788. The earliest explorers went in search of good farming land to support an expanding population. Later explorers, curious about what lay beyond the confines of the immediate colony initiated more ambitious exploration. Once a route through the Blue Mountains was established in 1813, exploration proceeded rapidly.

Each of the accompanying 4 small maps shows the routes of 2 major journeys of exploration. Areas previously explored at the time of each map are indicated by a line pattern. The legend above each map gives the names of the explorers and the dates of their journeys. To appreciate the scope of the journeys, scan each map, trace the routes and relate them to the outline of Australia.

The first map, in the upper left of the page, features exploration of the interior of south-eastern Australia.

In 1824 Hamilton Hume and William Hovell travelled SW from Sydney with the aim of reaching the southern coast of Australia where Western Port was marked on existing marine charts. They crossed the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers and recorded numerous other rivers flowing westwards from snow-covered mountains - the Australian Alps. They ended their journey on the coast near today's Geelong, having discovered abundant, rich grazing lands along the way.

Hume and Hovell erroneously believed that they had arrived at Western Port and, when settlement was attempted in 1826, their miscalculated longitude was relied upon. Consequently, instead of the Port Phillip district, the settlers found themselves in the swampy, difficult country around Western Port which they soon abandoned. The result was a delay in the settlement of Port Phillip for nearly a decade.

Hume and Hovell's journey was followed several years later by the explorations of Charles Sturt, who set out to trace the unknown westward-flowing rivers inland of the Great Dividing Range. In 1829-30 he led an expedition by boat down the Murrumbidgee River from Jugiong (upstream from Wagga Wagga), into the Murray River and downstream to the mouth of the Murray on the South Australian coast. His journey paved the way for settlers pushing south into southern New South Wales and northern Victoria, and by 1838 livestock were being driven overland to Adelaide following this route.

Map 2 in the upper right of the page traces major exploration routes westward in both the south and north of the continent.

In 1841 Edward Eyre, after an attempt to penetrate the inland of Australia from the south the previous year (not mapped), journeyed westwards along the coast from Port Lincoln in South Australia. He finally reached Albany on the SW coast of Western Australia after an extraordinarily difficult crossing of the dry, barren Nullarbor Plain. He proved that there were no major south-flowing rivers issuing from the long stretch of coast between Port Lincoln and Albany.

The second expedition shown on this map was made by Ludwig Leichhardt. He explored north-eastern Australia in 1844-45, travelling NW from the Darling Downs in Queensland to the military establishment of Port Essington on Cobourg Peninsula in the Northern Territory. The expedition made significant discoveries of rivers, ranges and pastoral lands. Several years

later Leichhardt was to perish without trace while attempting to cross from the east to the west coast. His expedition was not seen again after setting out from a point just NW of Roma.

Map 3, in the lower left of the page, traces two notable expeditions, the first undertaken by Charles Sturt and the second by Robert Burke and William Wills. Both aimed to cross Australia from south to north.

Sturt left Adelaide in 1844, travelled to Menindee on the Darling River and then NW to the Barrier Range near Broken Hill. The expedition continued NW, crossing Strzelecki Creek, Cooper Creek, the Diamantina River and Eyre Creek, but diminishing supplies and extreme heat forced Sturt to turn back from an area now known as the Simpson Desert. Many of these features are shown on maps in Volume 1 of the Tactual Atlas.

In 1860-61 Burke and Wills' ill-fated expedition travelled north from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria, via the Darling River and Cooper Creek. On the return journey both explorers perished near Cooper Creek. Although they discovered little of value, the parties which were sent in search of them passed through good grazing land and through country subsequently found to be rich in minerals.

In 1861-62, after 2 earlier attempts, John McDouall Stuart crossed the continent from Adelaide to what is now Point Stuart (near Darwin). His journey is depicted on map 4 in the lower right of the page. His favourable account of this northern area encouraged South Australia to seek control over it, which was granted in 1863. Palmerston, later renamed Darwin, was chosen as the site of a permanent settlement on the north coast and was surveyed in 1869. The Overland Telegraph Line, constructed in the period 1870-72 between Port Augusta and Port Darwin, essentially follows Stuart's route.

The other journey featured on this map is one of several made by John Forrest who, in 1870, was the first European to cross the continent eastwards. In 1874, using the route shown on the map, he trekked inland from Geraldton on the west coast. He soon penetrated desert country, and relying on several lifesaving freshwater springs, he finally reached the Overland Telegraph Line in northern South Australia.

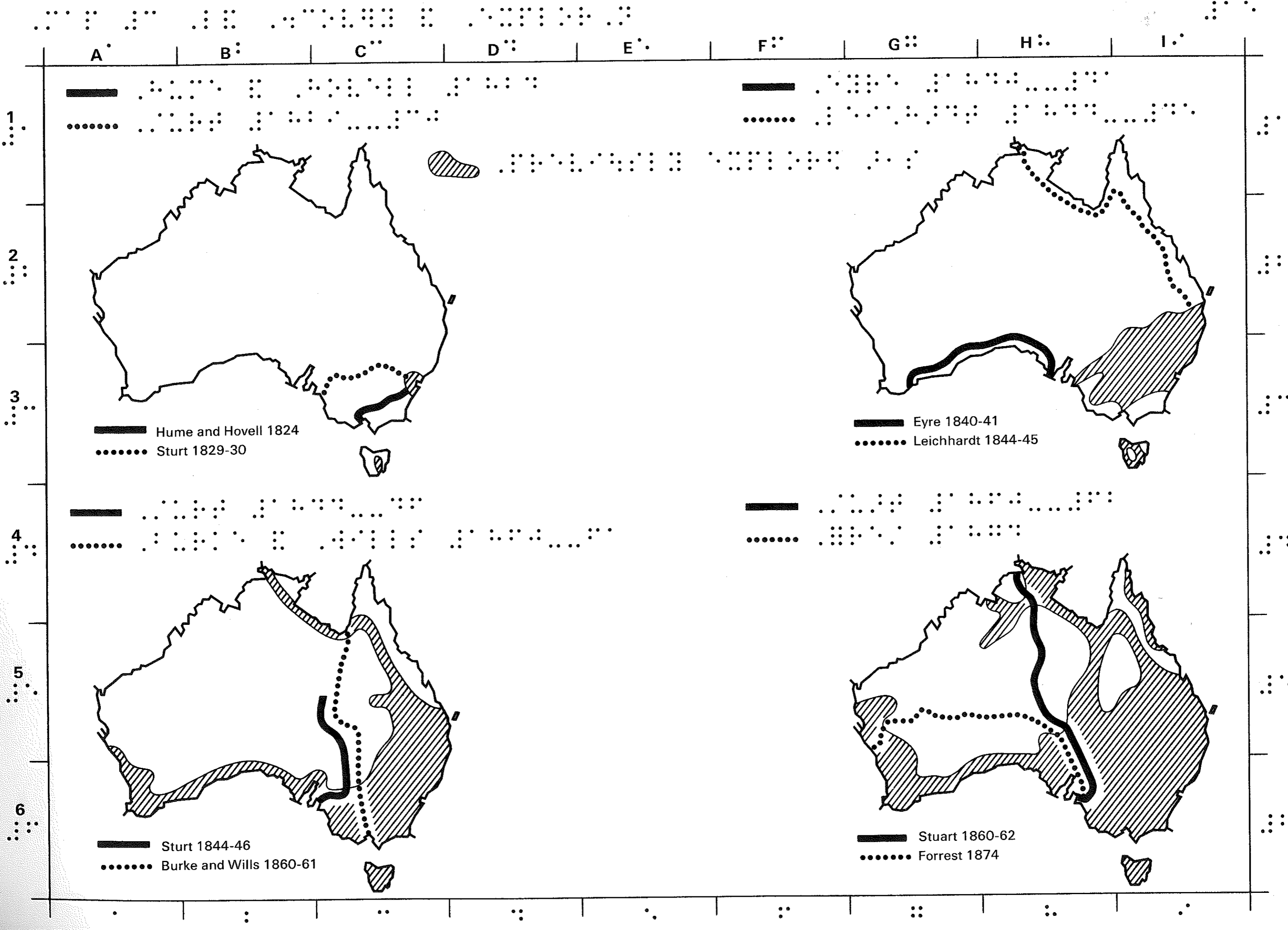
The main contribution of Forrest, like that of the other desert explorers, was to shatter the early visions of a well-watered inland with the truth about the harsh, arid nature of Australia's interior.

There were many more exploratory journeys than those outlined here; in all they amounted to narrow threads of knowledge criss-crossing a vast landscape. As the country was developed, pastoralists, surveyors, missionaries, prospectors and stockmen alike contributed to filling in the details, and by 1900 the exploration of Australia was virtually complete.

Exploration in the 20th century has been primarily to fill in the few remaining gaps in extremely remote areas, or for biological, anthropological and mineral exploration. However, it was not until 1968 that the first topographic map coverage of Australia, using systematic aerial photography, was completed, at 1:250 000 scale. Since then, remote sensing by satellite has played an increasing role in mapping the continent. Such surveys have reduced the need for, or at least preceded, overland exploration.



Previously explored areas



Australia's earliest pastoral activity was primarily to provide the first settlers with meat from sheep and cattle brought out with the First Fleet. The successful introduction of the Merino sheep around 1800 meant that pastoral occupation quickly became synonymous with sheep grazing to produce wool. With regular shipments of wool to Britain and elsewhere from the 1820s onwards, this sector of the pastoral industry quickly became a keystone of the Australian export economy. Wool is still one of the country's most valuable exports.

The profitability of the pastoral industry in the early years of settlement encouraged exploration for suitable pastures beyond the immediate settled area. Once the Blue Mountains were crossed in 1813, flocks spread rapidly into the newly explored country. This pattern of occupation was maintained throughout the 19th and into the 20th century so that today the area of land devoted to livestock grazing is high, although carrying capacity in the arid inland is very low.

The accompanying map traces the opening up of pastoral land across Australia from the earliest European settlement up to 1980. Scan the legend in the top left corner of the map-sheet. The 3 symbols shown in the legend indicate the areas occupied for pastoral use in the 3 successive periods shown on the map: from settlement up to 1850, 1851-1890 and 1891-1980. The unpatterned areas have never been occupied for pastoral use. Where possible, parts of State borders have been included on the map. This is to assist you in gauging the extent of pastoral occupation and in locating areas mentioned in the text.

Study the map and locate the pastoral areas of the earliest period. Expansion took place around the original colonial settlements and closely followed the first journeys of exploration. Thus, south-eastern Australia (including the Murray River valley), eastern Queensland, the Swan River area (in Western Australia), the strip of land between Launceston and Hobart (in Tasmania), and much of the land adjacent to St Vincent and Spencer gulfs in South Australia were all occupied for pastoral use during the first 60 or so years of settlement. Unoccupied pockets along the east coast in this period included the scrub country in north-eastern New South Wales and southern Queensland, where dense vegetation and rugged terrain delayed clearing and pasture establishment until the following period.

As shown on the map, by far the largest area of country was settled in the next period. 1851-1890 saw a rapid expansion of pastoral activity to keep pace with the increasing overseas demand for wool. Expansion depended not only upon the further discovery of suitable new land but also upon the availability of transport routes to markets. Of great importance at this time were the paddle steamers which plied the Murray-Darling waterways in south-eastern Australia, moving wool, skins and tallow down river to ports and markets.

You will find that by the end of this period more than half of Australia was occupied pastorally. Expansion had occurred outwards from previously settled areas to include all of Queensland except Cape York Peninsula, much of northern Australia, the land north of Spencer Gulf to central Northern Territory and an area along the coastal strip of the Nullarbor Plain. Expansion in Western Australia was mainly into the sw corner and northward towards the Kimberley region.

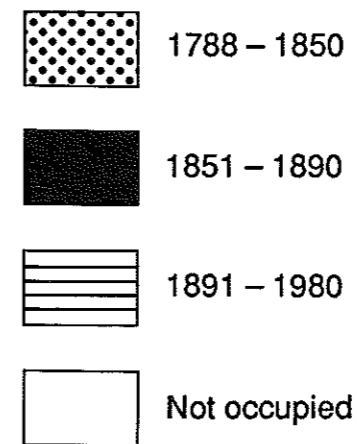
From the time of initial settlement up until the first decade of this period, sheep grazing for wool was the main pastoral activity, especially in the south. However, the establishment of freezing works in Sydney in 1861 and the first successful overseas shipment of frozen meat in 1880 led to the development of a meat export industry. As a result, the area used for beef cattle grazing expanded rapidly, especially in newly opened areas of Queensland, as well as in central and northern Australia.

Further study of the map will show that in the third period, between 1891 and 1980, the major new areas of pastoral occupation were in Western Australia (the Kimberley region) and in northern Australia (around the Gulf of Carpentaria and on Cape York Peninsula). Much of the new land opened up in Western Australia was for wool production, while expansion in central and northern Australia was mainly for beef.

In recent years the cross breeding of European and tropical cattle has improved the beef cattle industry in the Australian tropics. Indeed, the number of beef cattle in Australia increased by nearly 80% between 1950 and 1980. Pasture improvement, through the introduction of grasses and subterranean clover and the use of superphosphate, as well as the application of trace elements to correct specific soil deficiencies, have enhanced the expansion of the pastoral industry.

From early this century many areas of high fertility, high rainfall, and in proximity to urban markets have shifted from pastoral use to more intensive forms of agriculture. In other areas livestock grazing has been combined with cereal growing, in a rotation system designed to increase productivity.

The main areas which continue to remain unoccupied for pastoral use are the desert regions of central Australia, the most rugged parts of the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia, and the west coast of Tasmania. It is likely that pastoral activity has now expanded to the limits of the Australian environment, and is even in areas where the land may not be able to support it in the long term.



Proclamations of colonial boundaries were made as successive colonies were established around Australia. The great distances between the original settlements, the uncertainty of what lay in between and difficulties in communication meant that each colony developed separately. Their boundaries changed over time as more colonies were created, and the major changes are featured on the 4 accompanying small maps. When Federation took place in 1901 the boundaries existing then were adopted as the State borders.

Initially, the whole continent was referred to as Terra Australis. Then, following the visit by the Dutch seaman Abel Tasman in 1644, the country became known as New Holland. In 1770 Cook claimed the east coast of New Holland for Great Britain, calling it New South Wales. The name New Holland was retained until Matthew Flinders suggested the name 'Australia' in 1814 and it was promoted to the British Government in 1817 by Governor Macquarie. Within a few years it became the accepted name.

Scan the whole map-sheet, noting the dates associated with each map as well as the symbol for State borders shown near the centre of the sheet.

The map in the top left shows the earliest boundaries of New South Wales. Governor Phillip's commissions from the British Crown defined the Colony as lying between Cape York (in present day Queensland) and South Cape (in Tasmania) with a western boundary at 135°E (the broken line). Two major changes occurred in 1825: the western limit of New South Wales was moved further west to the longitude 129°E (the present border of Western Australia) to include a new settlement on Melville Island (mv); and Van Diemen's Land (vdl) was officially separated from New South Wales and defined by lines of longitude and latitude.

The map in the top right of the sheet reflects the next phase of boundary changes up until 1836. In 1829 Perth was established on the Swan River, and in 1831 the eastern boundary of Western Australia was fixed as the western boundary of New South Wales. Then, in 1836, the Colony of South Australia was proclaimed, and the boundaries depicted on the map were adopted. An examination of these boundaries shows that New South Wales then surrounded South Australia to the west, north and east.

The map in the lower left of the sheet depicts the next group of boundary changes up to 1861. These boundaries closely follow their present location. The boundaries of Victoria were proclaimed in 1851, separating that Colony from New South Wales along a line connecting Cape Howe to the nearest source of the Murray River and then along the river to the South Australian border.

The Colony of Queensland was declared in 1859, with its western boundary at first a continuation of the eastern border of South Australia. In the same year, Van Diemen's Land was renamed Tasmania. The final change during this phase was the absorption, in 1861, of that part of New South Wales between South Australia and Western Australia into South Australia.

The map in the lower right shows the boundaries of the States and mainland Territories in place by 1911 and since unchanged. In 1862 Queensland's western boundary was moved west to its present position. In 1863 there was a minor adjustment eastward (too small to show on the map) of the New South Wales/South Australia border. Also in 1863, following John McDouall Stuart's epic journey from the south to the north coast of Australia, the Colony of South Australia sought and gained control of the area to its north, which was then named the Northern Territory.

Control over the Northern Territory and the Federal Capital Territory was surrendered to the Commonwealth Government in 1911. The latter was renamed the Australian Capital Territory in 1938. In 1926 the Northern Territory was split into two separate Territories, along the latitude 20° south. Alice Springs, then known as Stuart, became the administrative centre of the southern Territory. It was reunited 5 years later.

