

# Treasure MAPS

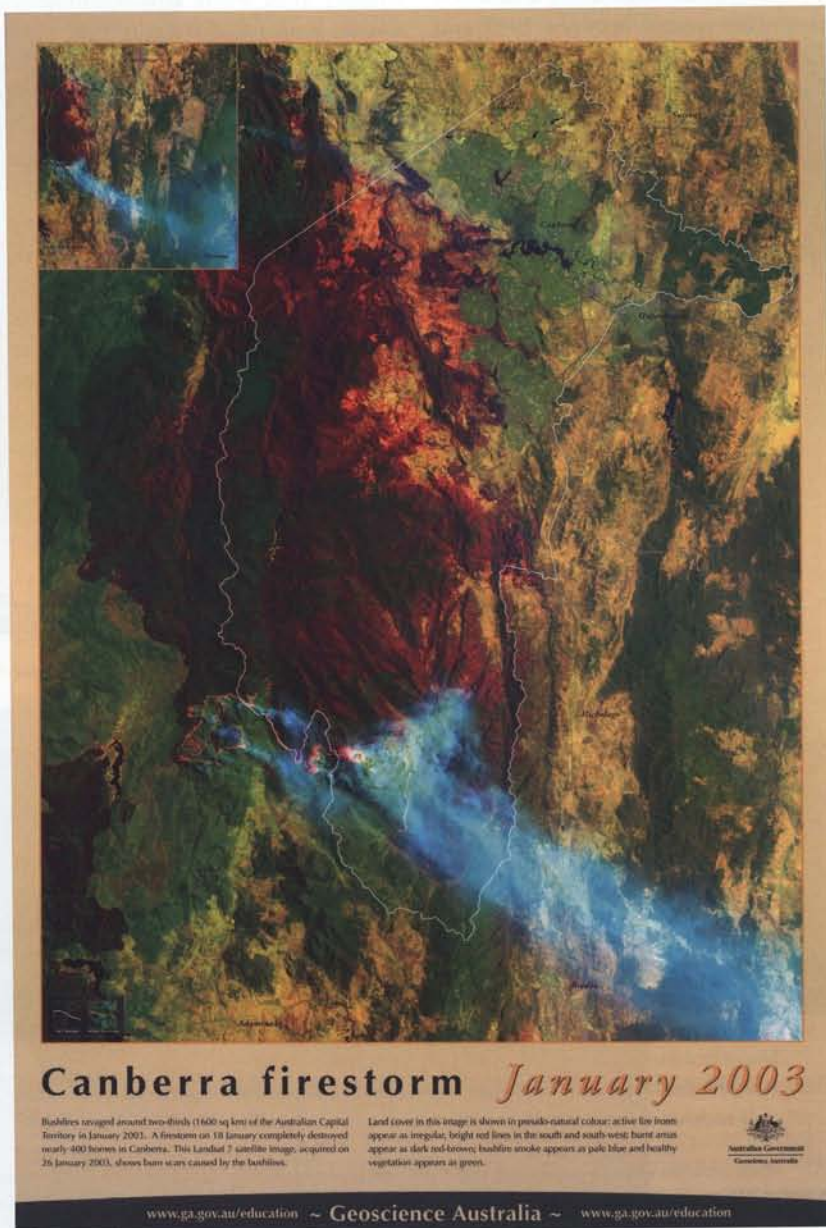
Maura O'Connor recalls some of the acquisition stories behind maps displayed in *Future Memory*

Building any collection, but particularly a map collection, is slow, methodical work requiring regular contact with publishers as the map industry is not regular in its output. In the National Library of Australia both current and retrospective maps relating to Australia's cartographic record are sought from a wide range of sources.

Current Australian mapping is sought from publishers at all levels of government, as well as commercial publishers and private individuals. A selection of overseas maps are also acquired, guided by the Library's Collection Development Policy.

Two of my most memorable acquisitions of modern maps were the result of dramatic incidents in our lives. First to occur was the acquisition of satellite imagery of the extraordinary bushfires, which hit the southern edge of Canberra on the afternoon of 18 January 2003. In the following week, I contacted colleagues at Geoscience Australia, National Mapping Division who advised that satellite imagery of the Australian Capital Territory, taken by the Landsat-7 and MODIS satellites, was available for 10 and 26 January. They were very happy to provide, free-of-charge, TIFF and JPEG files of the satellite imagery documenting the landscape before and after the bushfires, ensuring there is a record for future generations.

The second acquisition related to the recent war in Iraq, which commenced in March 2003. With the involvement of Australian troops in the conflict, it was essential that an up-to-date map of Iraq be acquired. With the assistance of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)



Liaison staff, a copy of the Iraq Strategic Planning Map and a large-scale plan of Baghdad were quickly obtained.

Both acquisitions reflect the strong relationships the Library has established, not only with these agencies but with a wide range of government publishers at all levels of government.

Equally memorable, but in a less dramatic way, are the unexpected visits from individuals who may either ring in advance and announce their intended arrival or simply arrive in the Map Reading Room with their

Australia. Geoscience Australia  
*Canberra Firestorm, January 2003*  
[Symonston, ACT]: The Agency, [2003]  
col. map; 71 x 54 cm  
Map Collection MAP G8981.A4 [2003]  
Map courtesy Geoscience Australia, Canberra.  
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special and previously unknown map in their hands. Alternatively, a brief article in a local newspaper may lead us to a precious map. Such was the case with Tracey Andrews' and Lyn Moore's stunning satellite images of western New South Wales, enhanced

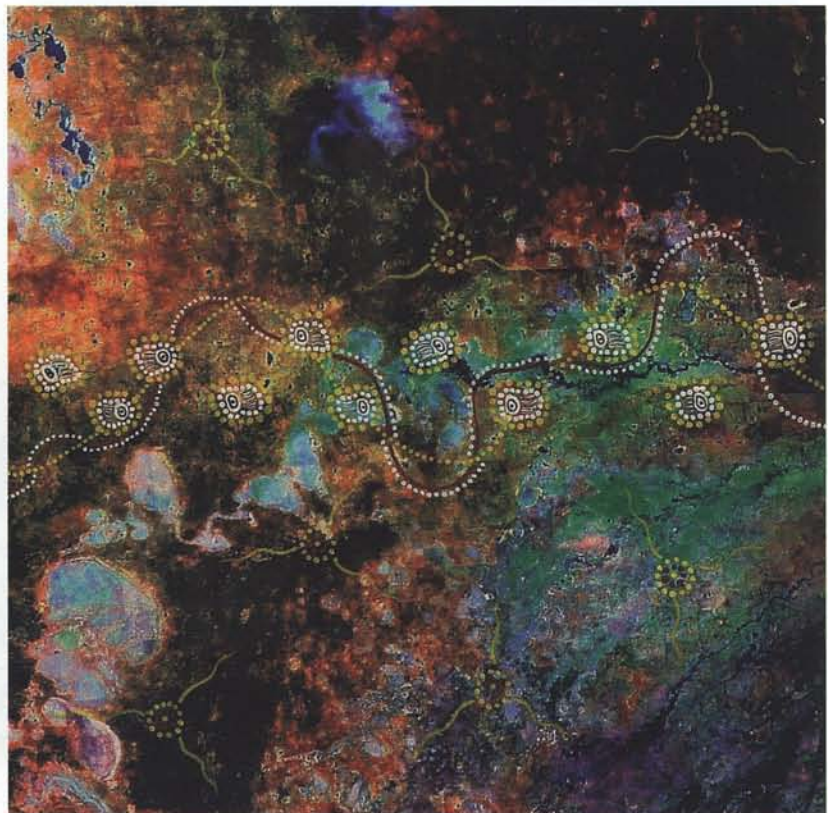
Tracey Andrews and Lyn Moore  
 [North Balranald Region 2000 Annotated  
 with Aboriginal Dreaming Tracks] 2000  
 col. ms. map; 28.9 x 28.9 cm  
 Map Collection MAP RM 3478

with hand-painted dreaming tracks. Artworks have long been recognised as important interpretations of the natural environment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Tracey Andrews has extended this concept by utilising a very modern map form, the remote satellite image, to depict her people's unique interpretation of the landscape, the dreaming tracks.

Retrospective maps are usually sought from well-established antiquarian map and print dealers but may also be sourced through individuals and auction houses. Such was the case with a couple of our most treasured items acquired in recent years.

In early September 2002, Christies (London) announced the sale of a significant collection of original manuscript charts and pictorial items relating to the Baudin expedition to Australian waters in 1800–04. This expedition was the first French scientific expedition to Australia and paved the way for many more expeditions over the next century. The catalogue was wonderful, full of original material that rarely appears on the open market. However, it quickly became obvious that we would not be able to bid for all the desired items!

Over a frantic three weeks and with the assistance of colleagues in the state libraries, we made our selection and finally settled on bidding for the map of the Derwent River, in Tasmania.



Support from friends of the National Library was also sought to ensure sufficient funds were available to purchase the map. The map has since proved to be highly significant, as it also documents the earliest known occurrence of giant kelp beds in the river which no longer exist.

While a bid was being prepared for the Baudin map, the same auction house announced, very quietly, the sale of a collection of material relating to Antarctica, including a copy of the very rare Bellingshausen atlas. Only 600 copies of the accompanying narrative volume were published but it is not

known how many copies of the atlas were produced. This atlas documents one of the earliest Russian surveys of the southern Pacific waters, paving the way for future Russian exploration and research which continued well into the twentieth century.

With the assistance of an Australian dealer, the provenance of the work was established and an appropriate bid made, securing another treasure for the Library's Collection.

MAURA O'CONNOR is Map Curator at the National Library

## Community Heritage Grants 2004

[www.nla.gov.au/chg](http://www.nla.gov.au/chg)

Community Heritage Grants of up to \$8000 are available to assist in preserving locally held nationally significant documentary heritage collections. Community organisations such as historical societies, public libraries, indigenous and migrant community groups are eligible to apply for funding.

Applications close on Wednesday 30 June 2004

Application forms are available from:

Coordinator, Community Heritage Grants  
 National Library of Australia  
 Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1147  
 Fax: (02) 6273 4493  
 Email: [chg@nla.gov.au](mailto:chg@nla.gov.au)



**Australian Government**  
 Department of Communications,  
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 Department of Immigration and  
 Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs  
 National Archives of Australia



The 2004 Community Heritage Grants Program is funded by the Australian Government through the National Library of Australia; the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts; the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs; the National Archives of Australia and the Australian Film Commission.

pictured: Charles H Kerry (1858-1928); *Woolsorting and Cladding at the Shearing Sheds, Burrumbung, NSW* c.1895 (detail); National Library of Australia; nla.pic-an23378488