In 1611, a new sailing route that stretched across the Pacific Ocean from Cape York, in South Africa to the west coast of Australia was pioneered by Dutch explorer Hendrik Brouwer (1581-1643). This new sailing route took advantage of the powerful winds known as the Roaring Forties that occurs along the latitudes between $40^\circ$ and $50^\circ$. The winds were so powerful that it reduced the voyage between South Africa to Java from 12 months to 6 months. It would also blow ships so far, that it wasn’t uncommon for ships to slam into the shores of the western coast of Australia. For many years the Dutch only knew of the western coast of this land, and gave it many different names, one of which was ‘New Holland’.

In 1616 Dirk Hartog was sailing to Java in the East Indies by this new route during a spice trade run. His ship, the *Eendracht* was blown too far east and Hartog landed on a small island (now called Dirk Hartog Island) off the west coast of Australia on the 25th October 1616.

*Map showing Dirk Hartog Island of the west coast of Australia*
The large bay of the island was later named by William Dampier as Shark Bay. Hartog is the second known European to have landed on Australian soil, (the first being Willem Jansz). Hartog explored the nearby islands and later named the area *Eendrachtsland*, after his ship and also nailed a pewter plate to a post.

On the plate was an inscription which read:

"1616 25th October arrived here the ship Eendracht of Amsterdam; the supercargo Gilles Miebais of Luick; Skipper Dirk Hartog, of Amsterdam, the 27 ditto set sail for Bantam. Subcargo Jan Stins; Upper-steersman Pieter Doores Bil. Dated 1616."

Translated to English this says:

“1616. On the 25th October the ship Eendracht of Amsterdam arrived here. Upper merchant Gilles Miebais of Luick (Liege); skipper Dirck Hatica (Dirk Hartog) of Amsterdam. On the 27th October we sail for Bantum. Under merchant Jan Stins; upper steerman Pieter Doores of Bil (Brielle). In the year 1616."

The plate now resides in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Later in 1697, Willem de Vlamingh found Hartog’s plate during his voyages. In turn he also left a pewter plate inscribed with a copy of Dick Hartog’s inscription.

Hartog continued sailing north along the coast of Western Australia and charted the shore line up to North West Cape, before finally departing to his destination; Batavia (now called Jakarta, Indonesia).
This was a significant discovery of the unknown south land and it became a part of world maps at the time. Following this knowledge, further expeditions by the Dutch continued to discover the rest of the Western Australian coastline.

The mapped coastline made by Dirk Hartog.