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# Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Researchers explore lost ancient continent of Zealandia

A team of 32 scientists from 12 countries has arrived in Hobart on the research vessel *JOIDES Resolution* after a nine-week voyage to study the lost and now submerged continent of Zealandia in the South Pacific.

The University of Tasmania is one of 16 Australasian universities who, along with CSIRO, Geoscience Australia, GNS Science and NIWA from New Zealand, participate in the [International Ocean Discovery Program](#) (IODP), which mounted the expedition to explore Zealandia. Australian involvement in IODP is funded by the Australian Research Council and coordinated by the Australian National University (ANU).

Earlier this year Zealandia was confirmed as Earth's seventh continent but little is known about it because most is submerged more than a kilometre below the ocean surface.

"That is still probably true, but it is now clear that dramatic later events shaped the continent we explored on this voyage," Professor Sutherland said.

"The discovery of big geographic changes across northern Zealandia, which is about the same size as animals disperse and evolve in the South Pacific?"

"The discovery of past land and shallow seas now provides an explanation: there were pathways for animals and plants to move along," Professor Sutherland said.

"Zealandia, a sunken continent long lost beneath the oceans, is giving up its 60 million-year-old secrets through scientific ocean drilling," said Jamie Allan, IODP program director at the U.S.

New Zealand, to the shifting movements of Earth's tectonic plates, to changes in ocean circulation

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