

Background Sheet 3 - Stage 2 British Colonisation of Australia

## **Timeline 2: A Brief Overview of European Exploration in the Southern Hemisphere**

**1567-1772**

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**1567**

Alvaro do Mendana reached the Solomon Islands.

**1595**

Mendana and Quiros plotted the Marquesas Islands in the Santa Cruz Archipelago.

**1606**

Quiros and Vaez de Torres reached the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). Mysteriously, the party split. Quiros returned to America; Torres sailed on to Manila through the Torres Strait, where he saw Australia without realising or reporting it.

**1606-1644**

Sailing from the East Indies, the Dutch conducted exploratory voyages. Several Dutch ships were blown off course and ventured near parts of the west coast of Australia.

**1628**

The Dutch published a map showing parts of the west coast of Australia and the Great Australian Bight.

**1642**

Abel Tasman sailed right around the Australian mainland without once sighting it. He sailed around part of Tasmania, naming it Van Dieman's Land but did not realise it was an island. He then sailed on and his crew were the first Europeans to see New Zealand, which he called Staaten Island. He returned around the top of New Guinea.

**1644**

Tasman returned, exploring the Gulf of Carpentaria.

**1688-1699**

William Dampier explored sections of the west coast of Australia between Shark Bay and the Dampier Archipelago.

**1764-1766**

Byron left England in July 1764 and was to explore the Southern Atlantic and search for a north-west passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic. In July 1765, he claimed the Falkland Islands unaware that the French explorer Bouganville had claimed the Eastern Islands. Byron then decided not to explore the Pacific, putting him in breach of his instructions. However, he then sailed across the Pacific just north of the Tropic of Capricorn, enabling him to make the quickest circumnavigation to date.

**1766-1768**

Wallis and Carteret sailed from England together. On reaching the Pacific they became separated. As commander of the voyage, Wallis had been instructed to focus on exploring the southern Pacific and to search for the reported Great South Land. However, Wallis located Tahiti and returned home after making this discovery without further exploration.

**1769**

On 3 June 1769, the sun was to be eclipsed by Venus. Scientists were keen to observe this, as it would allow them to calculate the distance of the sun from Earth. It was considered that the eclipse would be more easily observed in the southern hemisphere and that the newly identified island of Tahiti was a most suitable location. James Cook was chosen to lead this expedition because of his navigational and charting abilities. He also had secret instructions to look for the fabled Great South Land that Wallis conjectured was just south of Tahiti.

**1766-1769**

Carteret became separated from Wallis and spent far longer than anticipated exploring the Pacific. However, from the time he reached the western Pacific, he was plagued by misfortune. His crew were beset by illness. Dispirited, Carteret decided to abandon further exploration and headed north above New Guinea for the East Indies.

**1766-1769**

Bougainville sailed from France in November 1766. He took an astronomer and a naturalist with him. They sailed through the Straits of Magellan, stopped at Tahiti, found the Solomon Islands and refound the New Hebrides. Reaching the Barrier Reef, 'the sea broke with such violence' that Bougainville believed this to be the voice of God and turned away. As he proceeded up the Atlantic towards Europe, he came across Carteret. While wanting to assist him, national loyalty prevented him from letting him know where he had been.

**1770**

On leaving Tahiti, Cook sailed south but found nothing. He then proceeded to New Zealand, which he circumnavigated, discovering that it comprised two islands. He then sailed west to find the eastern shore of New Holland (Australia). In this and subsequent voyages, Cook proved that there was no Great South Land to counter-balance the land mass in the northern hemisphere. In his second voyage, he sailed into the Antarctic circle three times and made two loops through the South Pacific as well as circumnavigating the world at about the 60° latitude.

**1772**

Marion followed a very similar course to Tasman.