

COURIER MAIL ( AUSTRALIA)

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# Meteorite lights up the outback

AS the earth shook and the night sky lit up from South Australia to outback New South Wales at the weekend, thousands of people were convinced they were watching an alien space craft.

Hundreds of residents called police at Broken Hill around 9pm on Saturday after seeing a "huge bright white light plummeting toward earth".

But scientists have established the light was caused by a meteorite as it plunged, white hot, through the atmosphere before breaking up somewhere near Broken Hill.

It is not known if any fragments survived the plunge, but if they did it is expected they would now be no bigger than golf balls.

Witnesses reported feeling the ground shake when the meteor hit earth but scientists said yesterday the shaking was probably a sonic boom rather than impact with the ground.

Reports of what has so far been explained by scientists as a Bolide (meteorite) had been received from night sky watchers 60km north-west of Sydney to Eyre Peninsula on the west coast of South Australia.