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## Meteorite Hunt Sparks Rush in Victoria

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A meteorite that lit up the sky across Victoria is the focus of an intense search in central Australia, as scientists suggest its value may be priceless.

On the evening of August 10, residents from Bendigo to Ballarat and Melbourne’s outer west reported seeing a massive fireball streak across the sky just before 8 p.m. Monash University experts believe the meteorite was large enough to survive its descent and have traced the likely impact zone to a 1km by 3km area of farmland near Dunolly in central Victoria.

“From a distance, animal droppings can look very much like a meteorite, especially when fresh,” said Monash University geochemist Dr. Rachel Kirby. “Cow droppings are a little easier to distinguish, but horse droppings are harder to tell apart.”

Dr. Kirby emphasized the significance of the find. “This meteorite could be 4.5 billion years old. It carries the story of our solar system within it. Our planet is just one small body in a vast vacuum of space. The fact that this rock’s path intersected with Earth is incredibly rare and fortunate.”

Researchers have spent the past week combing paddocks in the area. They organized systematic line searches across four properties, carefully spreading out to increase the chance of locating the meteorite.

Residents shared footage and reactions on social media as the fireball passed overhead. One observer wrote, “Seen from around Taylor’s Lakes heading up on the Calder! Thought it was a firework at first.” Another added, “Saw it out of our window in that exact area. Thought it was a firework.” A Ballarat resident described the event as, “It was so bright, an orange glow then faded to nothing, looked like it was going so fast!”

Experts estimate the meteorite could weigh between 1 and 3 kilograms, roughly the size of a grapefruit. “You can see it stop burning in the sky, then fall to the ground almost like it’s been dropped from a tall building,” Dr. Kirby explained. “The atmosphere slows it down, so it could be sitting near the surface or in a small hole.”

Dr. Kirby is part of the Desert Fireball Network, a research initiative that studies meteorites to uncover insights into the solar system’s formation. If the meteorite is located, scientists plan to scan the rock before breaking it open to examine its interior.

Meteorites like this are rare and provide a tangible connection to the earliest history of our solar system. Researchers hope this finding will shed light on the conditions and materials present during the formation of planets and other celestial bodies.

While the search continues, local farmers and residents are being asked to report any unusual rocks that fit the description of the meteorite. Authorities and scientists alike stress caution to avoid disturbing the potential site until experts can examine it.

The event has sparked widespread fascination across Victoria, reminding the public of the rare but remarkable ways in which space intersects with daily life.