

# The Dutch Toponymic Legacy in Australia

## 1 INTRODUCTION

A country's toponyms has many hidden complexities. For example, some name-forms can deceive the unwary in terms of their origins and meanings. Australia's toponymy is a good case in point.

Many of Australia's toponyms are transparent as to their etymologies, such as, *Port Macquarie* (NSW), *Sandy Bay* (TAS), whilst others are more opaque, like *Yo Yo Creek* (QLD) (Tent 2018). Some toponyms' origins are subject to folk-etymology, as for example *Vrihya Point* (QLD) (Tent 2009), *Ulimaroa* (a 19<sup>th</sup> century appellation for Australia) (Tent & Geraghty 2012), and *Orange* (NSW) (Tent 2022).<sup>1</sup> Misconceptions of placename origins and meanings often find their way into placename dictionaries or history books, thereby perpetuating such myths. The etymologies and aetiologies of First Nations toponyms in Australia provide a multitude of examples.<sup>2</sup> Most First Nations toponyms have been anglicised, thereby making their meanings and language of origin obscure, whilst many others have been displaced, copied from one region to another, further concealing their language of origin. One corollary of this is their usually simply being labelled as 'Aboriginal' in most placename dictionaries. This is akin to labelling the toponyms of France, Germany, Denmark, Lithuania etc. as coming from the 'European' language.

This Occasional Paper is a case study of the origins of some of the first introduced European placenames in Australia, namely those bestowed by the Dutch. Although relatively few Dutch names are still to be found on the Australian map, they have nevertheless played a significant role in the namescape of Australia. In many instances names with a Dutch language name-form have been attributed to the Dutch when they were actually conferred by the British at a later date honouring or commemorating the Dutch. Toponyms bestowed by the Dutch themselves shall be referred to as 'Dutch', whilst those bestowed by the British or others, as 'Dutch-linked'.<sup>3</sup> Some original Dutch toponyms were also calqued into English,<sup>4</sup> thereby obscuring their origin, whereas others were displaced and now refer to a different location than its original referent. The aim of this Occasional Paper is to shed light on some of the circumstances that lie behind the bestowal of Dutch and Dutch-linked toponyms.

## 2 BACKGROUND TO DUTCH EXPLORATION

At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch seized the opportunity to replace the Portuguese monopoly of the spice trade in the East Indies. They sent forth various fleets to the region between 1595 and 1601, before the *Verengide Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) ['United Dutch East India Company'] was formed sending out its first fleet in 1602. The States-General (the government of the Dutch republic) granted the company an overseas patent, permitting it to establish forts, trading posts (factories), wage war, imprison and execute convicts, strike its own coins, conclude treaties, and establish colonies in the name of the States-General. The VOC was so successful in this venture that it is deemed to have been the world's first multinational company, and was the first to issue shares. From 1619, Batavia (Jakarta) was the centre of its Asia trade network, and thus became its regional administrative centre and main shipping port. Due partially to rampant corruption, the VOC became insolvent and was formally dissolved on 17 March, 1798 (Gaastra 2002).

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<sup>1</sup> A folk etymology is a false belief about the origin or derivation of a word or name.

<sup>2</sup> The 'aetiology' of a toponym is story behind the name, or how the place came to bear this name.

<sup>3</sup> In line with state and national gazetteers, I shall exclude the names of streets and roads (e.g. *Hilversum Crescent*, Belrose, NSW). I also disregard names of buildings, schools and post offices that mirror the name of the suburb in which they occur.

<sup>4</sup> A 'calque' is a literal translation from language *x* into language *y*.

### 3 VOC SPONSORED EXPLORATION AND MAPPING OF THE SOUTHLAND

Under the auspices of the VOC, approximately three-quarters of Australia's coastlines were mapped between 1606 and 1756. During this period, no *official* territorial claims were made to any part of Australia.<sup>5</sup> The only section of Australia that remained uncharted, until Cook did so in 1770, was its east coast.

The VOC sent out exploratory expeditions to Australia, then referred to as the 'Southland', for a number of reasons. The main one was to find new commercial opportunities. However, when it was deemed there were none, the focus shifted to charting its coastlines for navigational and victualling purposes. Indeed, an inspection of the available sailing instructions to the VOC navigators reveals that it was not the company's intention to claim and occupy any part of the Southland. On the contrary, its instructions made clear navigators were to chart the coasts for navigational purposes, and find suitable places for revictualling (Major 1859; Heeres 1899; Robert 1973; Schilder 1976; Roeper & Wildeman 2006). Only as an ancillary to this, were they to look for trade opportunities.

The charting the Southland's western coastline became paramount after a new, faster route to the East Indies was discovered by Hendrik Brouwer in 1610–11. This route took mariners directly east from the Cape of Good Hope across the Indian Ocean—keeping between 35 and 40 degrees south latitude—to just off the west coast of the Southland, where they were to turn northwards towards Batavia. This route shortened travel time to the Indies from one year to five or six months. In 1617, the VOC mandated all its ships take this route. This route had one major problem, though. At the time, the calculation of longitude was very inexact, due to the absence of accurate chronometers; its calculation relying on dead reckoning. Generally, this went reasonably well, but occasionally ships unexpectedly found themselves against the west coast of the Southland, and due to the prevailing westerly winds and their limited manoeuvrability, a number ships foundered upon this coast. The accurate charting of this coast therefore became imperative. The application of toponyms and topographic descriptors onto these charts was an obvious *sine qua non* to enable safe passage.<sup>6</sup>

There were at least 35 recorded Dutch explorations of, or unintended encounters with, the Southland's coastlines between 1606 and 1756. Table 1 itemises these encounters, and shows there were at least fourteen instances (indicated by ✓) when placenames were directly conferred. On at least three occasions a name (or names) was conferred at a later date by the Dutch, e.g. *Tortelduyff*.<sup>7</sup> And in a number of cases, the Dutch renamed places already named due to inaccurate initial charting.

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<sup>5</sup> However, on 3 December 1642, Tasman sent a carpenter ashore in what is believed Blackman's Bay with a pole (into which the VOC's mark or logo had been carved), and a Prince-flag 'to be set up there, that those who shall come after us may become aware that we have been here, and have taken possession of the said land as our lawful property' (The Prince-flag was the Dutch flag used from the late-16<sup>th</sup> to mid-17<sup>th</sup> century). Notwithstanding this, neither the VOC or the States-General took any notice of Tasman's declaration (Posthumus Meyjes 1919, 34; Roeper & Wildeman 2006, 88; Kenihan [n.d.]).

<sup>6</sup> A 'topographic descriptor' is an appellation (consisting of a single word or a phrase) found on a map or chart, that cannot be readily classified as a toponym, generally providing a description of a portion of the topography; often serving as a guide to future navigators or explorers as an aide to navigation, or a warning of shallows, hidden reefs, places for victualling etc. Examples appearing on early English, Dutch and French charts of Australia include: *Shoal*, *Low country thickly wooded*, *High irregular range of rocky hills*, *Woody hills*, *Waterplaets* ['Watering place'], *Vuijle Gronden* ['Traacherous Sea Bottoms'], *Roode en zeer kenbare hoek* ['Red and very recognisable point'], *Vase* ['Mud'], *Sable* ['Sand'], *Terrain Montueux et Boisé* ['Mountainous and Wooded Terrain'], *Corail et Roche* ['Coral and Rock'].

<sup>7</sup> First appearing on Hessel Gerritszoon (1627) *Caert van't Landt van d'Eendracht uyt de Iournalen ende afteykeningen der Stierhuyden t'samengestelt*, Ao. 1627 ['Chart of the Land of Eendracht ...'] [Amsterdam]: Hessel Gerritsz. National Library of Australia, MAP RM 749. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231306061/view> (accessed August, 2022). The name derives from the VOC ship *Tortelduyf*, which is recorded as having discovered the shoal in 1623.

Date	Ship(s) involved	Commanded by	Region	Engaged in place-naming?
1606	<i>Duyfken</i>	Willem Janszoon	300 km of the west coast of Cape York Peninsula	✓
1616	<i>Eendracht</i>	Dirk Hartog	Dirk Hartog Is. and Shark Bay	✓
1618	<i>Zeewolf</i>	Haevik Claeszoon van Hillegom	Along North-West Cape	✓
1618	<i>Mauritius</i>	Lenaert Jacobszoon & Willem Janszoon of the <i>Duyfken</i>	Exmouth area, 22°S	✓
1619	<i>Dordrecht &amp; Amsterdam</i>	Frederik de Houtman & Jacob Dedel	West coast (Swan River region), Houtman-Abrolhos Islands	✓
1622	<i>'t Wapen van Hoorn</i>	?	Ran aground near Shark Bay, but was re-floated	✗
1622	<i>Leeuwin</i>	?	Southwest coast of WA	✗/✓
1623	<i>Pera &amp; Arnhem</i>	Jan Carstenszoon & Willem van Coolsterdt	West coast of Cape York Peninsula & east coast of Arnhem Land	✓
1623	<i>Leijden</i>	Claes Hermanszoon	Dirk Hartog Is. and further south	✗
1624	<i>Tortelduyff</i>	?	Houtman-Abrolhos Islands	✗/✓
1626	<i>Leijden</i>	Daniël Janszoon de Kok	Coastline between Zuytdorp Cliffs and Dirk Hartog Is.	✗
1627	<i>'t Gulden Zeepaert</i>	Peter Nuyts & Francois Thijssen	Southern coast of Australia from Albany to Ceduna	✓
1627	<i>Galias</i>	Jan Pieterszoon Coen	Abrolhos Islands <sup>8</sup>	✗
1627	<i>'t Wapen Van Hoorn</i>	J. van Roosenburgh & David Pieterszoon de Vries	Dirk Hartog Is.	✗
1628	<i>Vianen</i>	Gerrit Frederikszoen de Witt	Port Hedland area, Montebello Islands, Barrow Is. and the coastal reefs to the south	✓
1629	<i>Batavia</i>	Francisco Pelsaert	Wrecked on Morning Reef, Wallabi Group, Houtman Abrolhos	?
1631	<i>Grooten Broeck</i>	?	West coast from Cape Leeuwin to Dirk Hartog Is.	✗
1635	<i>Amsterdam</i>	Wijbrandt Geleynszoon de Jongh	WA coast around latitude 25°S (Shark Bay)	✗
1636	<i>Klein Amsterdam &amp; Wesel</i>	Gerrit Thomaszoon Pool & Pieter Pieterszoon	Northern coasts of Melville Is. and the Coburg Peninsula	✓
1642–43	<i>Heemskerck &amp; Zeebaen</i>	Abel Janszoon Tasman & Gerrit Janszoon	South and southeast coast of Tasmania	✓
1644	<i>Limmen, Zeemeeuw &amp; Braq</i>	Abel Janszoon Tasman	Charts entire coast from Cape York to Point Cloates southwest of North-West Cape	✓
1648	<i>Leeuwerik</i>	Jan Janszoon Zeeuw	WA coastline at approx. 26°S	✗
1656	<i>Vergulde Draeck</i>	Pieter Albertszoon	Wrecked approx. 95 kms north of Perth	✗
1656	<i>Goede Hoop &amp; Witte Valcq</i>		Searched for the <i>Vergulde Draeck</i> along WA coast	✗
1657	<i>Vincq</i>	Joost Janszoon	Searched for the <i>Vergulde Draeck</i> along WA coast	✗
1658	<i>Waekende Boey &amp; Emeloordt</i>	Samuel Volkersen & Aucke Pieter Jonck	Searched for the <i>Vergulde Draeck</i> from Rottnest Is. northward	✓
1658	<i>Elburgh</i>	Jacob Pieterszoon Peereboom	Region north of Cape Leeuwin	✗

<sup>8</sup> Nearly ran aground there, after which Jan Pieterszoon Coen (Governor-General of the East Indies) ordered the coasts of the Southland be properly charted.

1659	<i>Immenhorn~Emmenhorn</i>	Dirk Dirkszoon Jonas	Searched for the <i>Vergulde Draeck</i> along WA coast	✘
1678	<i>Vliegende Zwaan</i>	Jan van der Wall	From Dampier to the Exmouth Gulf	✓
1693	<i>Ridderschap van Holland</i>	?	Believed wrecked on WA coast	✘
1696–97	<i>Geelvinck, Nijptang &amp; 't Wezelkje</i>	Willem de Vlamingh	Searched for the <i>Ridderschap van Holland</i> , charted Rottenest Is., Swan River, then north to Dirk Hartog Is.	✓
1705	<i>Nova Hollandia, Waijer &amp; Vosschenbosch</i>	Maerten van Delft, Andries Rooseboom & Pieter Hendrikszoon	North coasts of Bathurst Is., Melville Is. & Cobourg Peninsula, & west coast of Croker Is.	✓
1712	<i>Zuytdorp</i>	Martinus Wijsvliet	Wrecked WA coast, 60 kms north of the Murchison River	✘/✓
1727	<i>Zeewijk</i>	Jan Steyns	Wrecked on the Pelsaert Group of the Abrolhos Islands	✘
1756	<i>Rijder &amp; Buijs</i>	Jan Etienne Gonzal & Lavienne Lodewijk van Asschens	Coasts of Gulf of Carpentaria	✓

**Table 1.**  
Timeline of Dutch contacts with the coasts of Australia <sup>9</sup>

**Legend:**

- ✓ 'placenames bestowed'
- ✘ 'no known placenames bestowed'
- ✘/✓ 'no known placenames bestowed, but subsequently named'

## 4 ORIGINAL DUTCH NAMING

A tally of the names appearing on Dutch charts of the Southland reveals there were some 132 names bestowed. Of these, only 40 (30%) are to be found, in one form or another, on current maps and in national or state gazetteers (Table 2). Some of the current locations bearing the original toponym, or calque thereof, do not coincide with the original location, e.g. *Staatens River* (QLD).<sup>10</sup> Other locations, e.g. *Van Speult Point* at the mouth of the Jardine River (QLD),<sup>11</sup> do not refer to the original type of feature. *Van Speult Point* first appeared as *De revier van Speult* ['The river van Speult'].<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Based on: Australia on the Map (AOTM), 'A Time Line of the Build-Up to and Recorded Events of Australia's Earliest Maritime History'. [www.australiaonthemap.org.au/landings-list/](http://www.australiaonthemap.org.au/landings-list/) (accessed July, 2022); Western Australian Museum, 'Voyages of Grand Discovery – Timeline' <https://museum.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/voyages/timeline/1600s.html> (accessed July, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> Staatens River is the location at which Jan Carstenszoon erected a wooden board upon which was carved: 'Anno 1623 den 24n April sijn hier aen gecomen twee jachten wegen de Hooge Mogende Heeren Staten Genl.' ['AD 1623 the 24<sup>th</sup> April here arrived two yachts on behalf of the High and Mighty Lords of the States-General'] (Heeres 1899, 38).

<sup>11</sup> The point is referred to as *Van Spoult Head* in the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines gazetteer of placenames. [www.resources.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/place-names/search](http://www.resources.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/place-names/search) (accessed August, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Arent Martenszoon de Leeuw *Caerte van Arent Martensz. de Leeuw Opperstierman die dese West Cust Beseijlt Heeft*. [1623?]. National Library of Australia, MAP RM 392. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231245000/> (accessed August, 2022). The river being named after Herman van Speult, the governor of Ambon, their port of departure.



**Figure 1.**

*Staten River*, QLD.

(Source: [www.capeyorkaustralia.com/burke-developmental-road.html](http://www.capeyorkaustralia.com/burke-developmental-road.html))

The remaining 70% of Dutch names were expunged by the British, forgotten, or lost. The most dramatic example of the latter is that of the 1705 van Delft expedition to the Top End. Some 51 toponyms were conferred by van Delft, none of which are to be found on today's maps (Tent 2020). This was due to the lack of much documentary evidence concerning the voyage; van Delft's journal, as well as those of his fellow officers, failing to come down to us. All that remains are some brief VOC reports about the voyage, and an anonymous manuscript chart of the voyage only discovered in 1868 (Leupe 1868, 198).

Original Dutch name	Translation (Origin)	Current name form
<i>De rivier van Speult</i>	'The river van Speult' (After Herman van Speult, Governor of Ambon)	<i>Van Speult Point</i>
<i>Cabo Keerweer</i>	'Cape Turnagain'	<i>Cape Keerweer</i>
<i>De Rivier Coen</i>	(After Jan Pieterszoon Coen, Governor-General of the East Indies, 1618–23 & 1627–29)	<i>Coen River</i> <sup>13</sup>
<i>De Rivier Nassau</i>	(After Orange-Nassau, one of the names of the Dutch Royal family)	<i>Nassau River</i>
<i>De Staaten Rivier</i>	'The States(-General) River' (After the States-General, the Dutch Government)	<i>Staten River</i>
<i>Carpentaria</i>	(After Pieter de Carpentier, Governor-General of the East Indies, 1623–27)	<i>Shire of Carpentaria</i>
<i>Golf van Carpentaria</i>	(After Pieter de Carpentier, Governor-General of the East Indies, 1623–27)	<i>Gulf of Carpentaria</i> <sup>14</sup>
<i>Rivier van Alphen</i>	(After Pieter van Alphen, 1624–1671, VOC senior merchant)	<i>Van Alphen River</i>
<i>Limmen Bocht</i>	(After Tasman's ship <i>Limmen</i> , after a Dutch town)	<i>Limmen Bight</i>
<i>Aernhem</i>	(After van Coolsteerdt's ship <i>Arnhem</i> , after the Dutch town)	<i>Arnhem Land</i>
<i>Van Diemens Baai</i>	(After Anthony van Diemen, Governor-General of the East Indies, 1636–45)	<i>Van Diemen Inlet</i>
<i>Groote Eylandt</i>	'Great Island'	<i>Groote Eylandt</i>
<i>Wessel Eilanden</i>	(After the VOC ship <i>Wesel/Wezel</i> ) <sup>15</sup>	<i>Wessel Island</i>

<sup>13</sup> Not the current *Coen River*.

<sup>14</sup> The Gulf takes its name from the region name *Carpentaria*, which denoted the west coast of Cape York Peninsula. The region name took its name from *Rivier Carpentier*, named by Carstenszoon and van Coolsteerdt in 1623 (Tent 2023).

<sup>15</sup> The origin of this toponym is far from certain. Several aetiologies may be given (Tent 2019).

<i>Crocodils Eijlandt</i>		<i>Crocodile Island</i>
<i>Kaap Van der Lijn / Vanderlijns Eijlandt</i>	(After Cornelis van der Lijn, VOC Councillor)	<i>Cape Vanderlin &amp; Vanderlin Island</i>
<i>Kaap Maria</i>	(After Anthony van Diemen's wife, Maria)	<i>Maria Island</i>
<i>Dedeliland</i>	(After Jacob Dedel, VOC councillor)	<i>Edel Land &amp; Edel (COUNTY)</i>
<i>Hooge Roode Sandthoek</i>	'High Red Sand Point'	<i>Red Bluff</i>
<i>Dirk Hartogs Ree &gt; Dirk Hartogs Eylandt</i>	'Dirk Hartog's Roadstead'	<i>Dirk Hartog Island</i>
<i>Dorre Eylandt</i>	'Arid Island'	<i>Dorre Island</i>
<i>Steijle Houck</i>	'Steep Point'	<i>Steep Point</i>
<i>Tortelduyff</i>	(After the ship <i>Tortelduyf</i> )	<i>Turtle Dove Shoal</i>
<i>Roode Houck / Roode en Zeer Kenbare Houck</i>	'Red Point' / 'Red and Very Recognisable Point'	<i>Red Bluff/ Red Point</i>
<i>Houtmans Abrolhos</i>	(After Frederick de Houtman, VOC explorer)	<i>Houtman Abrolhos</i>
<i>'t Eylandt Rottenest</i>	'The Island Rats Nest' (After the quakkas seen there, thought to be large rats)	<i>Rottnest Island</i>
<i>Swane Rivier</i>	(After the black swans seen there)	<i>Swan River</i>
<i>'t Land van de Leeuwin</i>	'The Land of the Leeuwin' (After the ship <i>Leeuwin</i> 'Lioness')	<i>Cape Leeuwin</i>
<i>'t Landt van Pieter Nuyts</i>	'The Land of Pieter Nuyts' (After Pieter Nuyts, VOC official)	<i>Nuyts Land District</i>
<i>Eijland St. François</i>	(After François Thijssen, Captain of <i>'t Gulden Zeepaert</i> 'The Golden Seahorse')	<i>St. Francis Island</i>
<i>Eijland St. Pieter</i>	(After Pieter Nuyts, VOC official)	<i>St. Peter Island</i>
<i>Maet Suickers Eijlanden</i>	(After Joan Maetsuyker, VOC councillor)	<i>Maatsuyker Island</i>
<i>Witsen Eijlanden ~ Wits Eijlanden</i>	(After Cornelis Jan Witsen, Mayor of Amsterdam & VOC councillor)	<i>De Witt Island</i>
<i>Zuyd Caap</i>	(Descriptive – relational – name)	<i>South Cape</i>
<i>Pedra Brancka</i>	Portuguese for 'White Rock'. (After <i>Pedra Branca</i> in the Singapore Strait)	<i>Pedra Branca</i>
<i>Boreels Eijlanden</i>	(After Pieter Boreel, VOC councillor)	<i>Boreel Head</i>
<i>Tasmans Eijland</i>	(After Tasman)	<i>Tasman Island</i>
<i>Storm Baij</i>	(Occurrent – incident – name)	<i>Storm Bay</i>
<i>Frederick Hendrix Baij</i>	(After Frederik Hendrik, sovereign Prince of Orange, 1584–1647)	<i>Frederick Henry Bay</i>
<i>Marias Eylandt</i>	(After Anthony van Diemen's wife)	<i>Maria Island</i>
<i>Schoutens Eylandt</i>	(After Joost Schouten, VOC councillor)	<i>Schouten Island</i>

**Table 2.**  
Original Dutch toponyms still in use <sup>16</sup>

## 5 SUBSEQUENT, REPLACEMENT & ASSOCIATED NAMING

After Australia was occupied by the British, the majority of the Dutch-bestowed toponyms were replaced, forgotten or lost. This is not surprising because the practice of conferring toponyms is an ineluctable by-product of conquest and colonisation—it can be seen as a symbolic way of claiming sovereignty over a territory (Carter 1987; Crocombe 1991; Berg & Kearns 1996; Herman 1999).

Despite the replacement, displacement or elimination of most of Dutch-conferred toponyms, the 19<sup>th</sup> century nevertheless saw the augmentation of those that were retained. Matthew Flinders was one proponent of acknowledging the Dutch contribution to the European exploration and charting of the continent's coasts.

<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that Dutch spelling was not standardised until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, personal names and toponyms had various spellings. The spellings used in this article may not correspond with spellings found in other sources.

## 5.1 Some examples<sup>17</sup>

On George Bass and Matthew Flinders' circumnavigation of Tasmania in 1798, the *Heemskirk Ranges*, *Mount Heemskirk* and *Mount Zeehan* were named in honour of Tasman's ships, *Heemskerck* [named either after the Dutch town or explorer Jacob van Heemskerck] and *Zeehaen* ['Gurnard' or 'Sea Robbin', fam. *Triglidae*]. These are some of the oldest British-bestowed placenames in Tasmania. In 1891, the nearby town of *Zeehan* (286 kms north-west of Hobart) was proclaimed.

During his circumnavigation of the Australian continent in 1802–03, Flinders continued to name features honouring the early Dutch explorers, their ships, or their sponsors, they include: *Duyfhen* [sic] *Point* (current *Duyfken Point*),<sup>18</sup> *Pera Head*, *Sweers Island*, *Vanderlins Island*, *Cape Arnhem*, *Arnhem Bay*, *Cape Leeuwin*, *Nuyts Reefs*, *Cape Nuyts*, *Isles of St Francis*, and *Nuyts Archipelago* (Flinders 1814). These names were either copied from a nearby already Dutch-named feature, or a new name was bestowed on a feature left unnamed by the Dutch. Flinders retained the Dutch nomenclature wherever he was reasonably certain of the true location of the feature and its accompanying Dutch name.

Philip Parker King was another British maritime explorer who supplemented the list of Dutch-linked placenames. In honour of Willem de Vlamingh, he named the channel between Rottneest Island and the mainland the *Geelvinck Channel*, after de Vlamingh's ship, named after Joan Geelvinck, one time mayor of Amsterdam, a merchant, and one of the seventeen administrators (*Heeren XVII*, 'the Lords Seventeen') of the VOC (King 1827, Appendix A. Section 4).

Other well-known Dutch-linked toponyms include the NSW city of *Orange*, and the inner-Sydney suburb of *Camperdown*. The former was named in 1833 by the surveyor and explorer Major Thomas L. Mitchell in honour of Prince Willem II of Orange (1792–1849) with whom Mitchell served in the Peninsular War against Napoleon's forces in Spain. Willem was educated in Berlin and Oxford, was an Anglophone, became King of the Netherlands in 1840, and a British Field Marshal in 1845 (Tent 2005, 2022). The inner-Sydney suburb of *Camperdown* obtains its name from the Dutch coastal dune *Camperduin*, situated some 40 kms north-north-west of Amsterdam.<sup>19</sup> The coastal waters off Camperduin was the location of a naval battle between British and Dutch forces on October 11, 1797. In command of one of the British ships, the *Director*, was Captain William Bligh, who later was Governor of NSW from 1806 to 1808. He was granted a 240 acre estate, which he duly named *Camperdown* to commemorate the naval battle. There is also a *Camperdown* in Victoria, which also owes its name to this battle, however, its connection is not as immediate. The township was so named in 1845 on Charles La Trobe's suggestion, to honour Admiral Duncan (later Earl of Camperdown) who was in command of the British fleet at the Battle of Camperdown. Another source suggests La Trobe proposed the name because the oldest settler of the township was called Duncan (Tent 2005).

Another toponym we can add to the list is *Waterloo* [< *water* + *loo* 'forest clearing']. This name-form features numerous times in Australia, and commemorates the 1815 Battle of Waterloo in which Napoleon was finally defeated. Shortly after the battle, the Low Countries were reunited thus making *Waterloo* part of newly-formed United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Although Waterloo became part of Belgium in 1839, I feel it is still legitimate to include the *Waterloos* in our list, because it is afterall a Dutch name. Australia has at least 67 places bearing the name-form *Waterloo*, perhaps the best-known of which is the inner-city suburb of Sydney.

Two little-known Dutch-linked toponyms are those of *Bergen-Op-Zoom*, a parish, and its nearby namesake *Bergen-Op-Zoom Creek*, near Tamworth (NSW).<sup>20</sup> These take their name-forms from an adjacent pastoral run. The name derives from the Dutch city Bergen op Zoom [lit. 'Hills on the Seam/Edge'] in the province of North Brabant, just north of Antwerp. The NSW pastoral run was taken up in 1834 by Captain John McLean from Scotland, and was named by him to honour the military exploits of his

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<sup>17</sup> Not a comprehensive list.

<sup>18</sup> The Point had originally been named *Aschenshoek* ['Aschens Point'] by Jean Gonzal and Lavienne Lodewijk van Asschens in 1756 (Heeres 1899, 98).

<sup>19</sup> The name 'Camperduin' refers to the *duin* (dune or down) beyond (or belonging to) the village of Camp. On maps dating back to the 1850s the village is identified as *Camp*, however, in the 1920s it was renamed *Camperduin*, most likely to capitalise on its historic connotation as well as to attract seaside visitors.

<sup>20</sup> The hyphenated name for in the official name-form given in the Geographical Name Register of NSW.

ancestors Allan and Francis McLean who were engaged with the Dutch in defence of the town against the French in 1747 (Tent 2021).



**Figure 2.**

*Bergen op Zoom Creek, NSW.*

(Source: <https://indebuurt.nl/bergenopzoom/genieten-van/mysterie/bergs-mysterie-bergen-op-zoom-buitenland~26600/>)

The Queensland township of *Coen* is another Dutch-linked toponym. It derives its name from the *Coen River* (see Table 2). The township first came into being as a small fort, built by gold miners and prospectors in May 1877. Carstenszoon's original *Rivier Coen* now bears the name *Archer River*, and the current *Coen River* is a tributary of the Archer (Tent 2015).

Another 19<sup>th</sup> century Dutch-linked name is *Zuidpool Rock* (TAS) which was named after the Dutch ship *Zuidpool* ['South Pole'] which struck this rock in December 1845. The vessel remained on the rock for six hours but floated off with the rising tide and was not damaged. The rock is also referred to unofficially as *The Dutchman* or *Dutchman Rock* (Lord 1920).

Later toponyms featuring Dutch names were conferred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They include: *Van Waermyck Reef* (NT), named after a Dutch steamer, and *Van Tuyn Point* (WA), named after Mrs Maria van Tuyn and her baby son, Johannes, who were killed when their Dutch owned DC3 was shot down by Japanese fighter planes in 1942. They were initially buried on the beach at the point (Murray & Hercock 2008, 311).

There are two non-transparent Dutch-linked placenames in Western Australia. The first is the small coastal fishing town of *Leeman* (gazetted in 1961, and formerly known as *Snag Island*), 256 kms north of Perth. It owes its current name to Abraham Leeman van Santwick, the under-steersman of the VOC ship *Waeckende Boeij* ['Watchful Buoy'], which was sent out in 1658 to search for the wreckage and possible survivors of the *Vergulde Draeck* ['Gilt Dragon'] which sank somewhere along the West Australian coast two years earlier. Leeman was put in charge of a small landing party to conduct a search on shore, but was unexpectedly abandoned by his ship when she had to set sail when a storm came upon them. Left to their own devices, Leeman and his companions sailed their small open boat in an epic six-month voyage back to Batavia.

The second is that of *Guilderton*, which up until the 1940s was known as *Moore River*, and had been used as a camping site since the early 1900s. The government gazetted it as a townsite in 1951 and sought an appropriate name. The novelist, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, suggested the name *Guilderton*, to commemorate the sinking of the *Vergulde Draeck* and the loss of its valuable cargo—chests of silver coin. Many coins and relics of the wreck have been found over the years near the mouth of the Moore River, which runs into the sea there.



**Figure 3.**  
Guilderton, WA.

(Source: [www.expressway.online/gallery/roads/](http://www.expressway.online/gallery/roads/))

The foundering of renowned VOC ship the *Batavia* on Morning Reef off the Houtman Abrolhos in 1629, led to a brutal and bloody mutiny. Despite the ship's name bearing a sinister legacy, it has nevertheless, been used in the names least nine locations: in Queensland, a parish, homestead, and bounded locality; in Western Australia, an anchorage, the actual wreck site, two mines, and a harbour; and in NSW, a homestead. The ship derives its name from the settlement established by the VOC as its headquarters in the East Indies, later to become Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. The name itself derives from the Roman name given to modern Rhine delta region (100 BC–200 AD), *Batavia*, which was inhabited by a Germanic tribe called the *Batavi*.

Then there are numerous toponyms which are perhaps best labelled as 'associated names'. They name features adjacent to or close by existing Dutch and Dutch-linked names. Most of these were conferred in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the landscape became better known and more widely settled. Many of these associated names designate civic features (e.g. municipalities, hundreds, etc.), constructed features (e.g. streets, roads, cemeteries, parks, dams etc.), as well as natural features (e.g. creeks, bays, hills, waterfalls etc.). There are far too many to enumerate here, so I shall mention only a few:

- *Cape Arnhem, Arnhem Bay, Arnhem Shoal, Arnhem Rock*, and the region and locality names *East Arnhem* and *West Arnhem*, all named in association with *Arnhem Land*, originally named *Aernhem* by van Coolsterdt in 1623.
- *Nuyts Reef Sanctuary Zone, Nuyts Reef Conservation Park, Nuyts Reef, Nuyts Archipelago Conservation Park, Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area, Nuyts Archipelago, Nuyts Archipelago Marine Park, Nuyts Land District*, all named in association with *'t Landt van Pieter Nuyts* named in 1627 on the voyage by Peter Nuyts and Francois Thijssen in *'t Gulden Zeepaert*.

Finally, we should not forget two of the most iconic Dutch-bestowed toponyms, *New Holland* and *Van Diemens Land*. Although they no longer in use in a geographic sense, they continue to be used in various other spheres. The former may be encountered in some common and scientific names for flora and fauna, for instance:

- 'New Holland Daisy' (*Vittadinia muelleri*)
- 'New Holland Rattlepod' (*Crotalaria novae-hollandiae*)
- 'New Holland Honey Eater' (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*)

- ‘New Holland Mouse’ (aka ‘Pookila’) (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*)
- ‘Emu’ (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*)
- Australian Little Penguin’ (*Eudyptula novaehollandiae*)
- ‘Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*)
- ‘Eastern Snapping Frog’ (*Cyclorana novaehollandiae*)
- ‘Snook/Australian Barracuda’ (*Sphyraena novaehollandiae*)
- ‘Grey Goshawk’ (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*)

Due to its brutal convict history, the name *Van Diemens Land* obtained a very negative connotation which endures today. This negative association, led to its name being changed to *Tasmania* in 1856. Despite this, *Van Diemen* lives on in various commercial names in Tasmania: ‘Van Diemen Brewing’, ‘Van Diemen Genetics’, ‘Van Diemen Quality are Dutch placenames Bulbs’, ‘Van Diemens Land Creamery’ and ‘Vandemonian Touring’.

## 6 SECOND-HAND DUTCH-BASED TOPONYMS

Some toponyms are best termed ‘second-hand Dutch-based’ names. These are copied to Australia from places outside of the Netherlands, and may have altered name-forms. One example is that of the name-form, *Brooklyn*, of which there are four, all suburbs: one each in NSW, VIC, TAS, and SA. All these toponyms are ultimately copied from New York’s *Brooklyn*, which is itself an anglicisation of the name of the Dutch town *Breukelen*, near Utrecht (Room 2006, 69). The Dutch town name derives from the 13<sup>th</sup> century name *Broeclede*, a compound of *broec* ‘swampy terrain/land’ + *lede* ‘excavated watercourse’. *Broec* is a cognate of Anglo-Saxon *brôc* ‘torrent, river, brook’ (*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, <https://gtb.ivdnt.org/>), which could possibly explain the anglicised form *Brooklyn*.



Figure 4.

*Breukelen*, province of Utrecht

(Source: Margaret Larkey, [www.pinterest.com.au/pin/180707003777256902/](http://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/180707003777256902/))

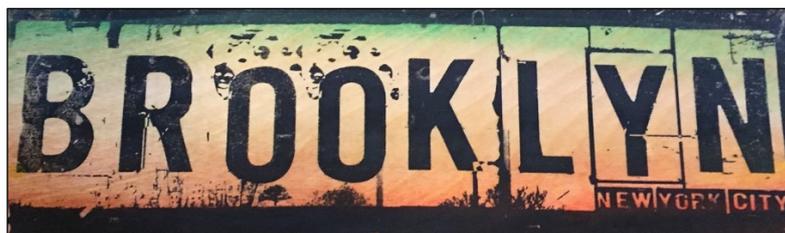


Figure 5.

*Brooklyn*, New York.

(Source: [https://img0.etsystatic.com/130/0/6053480/il\\_fullxfull.1003859098\\_lza2.jpg](https://img0.etsystatic.com/130/0/6053480/il_fullxfull.1003859098_lza2.jpg))



Figure 6.

Brooklyn, NSW

(Source: <http://www.expressway.online/gallery/roads/>)

## 7 PSEUDO-DUTCH TOPONYMS

Finally, care must be taken when assigning the labels ‘Dutch’ or ‘Dutch-linked’ to toponyms. There is at least one example of an Australian toponym that appears to be Dutch, but is not, *viz.* the Victorian locality, *Zeerust*. In Dutch, this name would literally mean ‘sea-rest’ [or more freely translated ‘rest by the sea’, in the vein of *Bay of Rest* (WA) or *Anglers Rest* (VIC, SA)], an unusual name given it is located far from the sea, in the north of the state near Shepparton. It might be seen to derive from Dutch or the Netherlands because there is a *Zeerust Hotel* and *Zeerust* holiday apartments there, however, there are no localities with this name-form. Nevertheless, analogously formed names are found for the Dutch locality and house/building names: *Heirust* (‘Heath Rest’), *Vrederust* (‘Peace Rest’), and *Zeldenrust* (‘Seldom Rest’).

The origin of Victoria’s *Zeerust* is most likely a copy of *Zeerust* in South Africa. This place owes its name to *Coetzee-Rust* [‘Coetzee’s Rest’], after the owner of the farm by that name, Diederik J. Coetzee. In later times, the *Coet-* element was dropped (Raper, Möller & du Plessis 2014).

The name-form seems to have made its way to Victoria sometime in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. The only reference that provides a clue to its origin is found in the ‘Country News’ column in *The Argus* of July 2 1928 (page 16), which says the following (COUNTRY NEWS 1928):

SHEPPARTON

[...] By the postal authorities, Gibbon’s estate, the home of many overseas settlers, has been named *Zeerust*.

If it is accepted that the locality name is a copy from South Africa, it seems fairly reasonable to assume that the so-called ‘overseas settlers’ either referred to South African émigrés or returned Australian soldiers from the Anglo-Boer War. *Zeerust* was the British headquarters during the Siege of Elands River, in which Australian soldiers played a significant role (Australian Light Horse Association; Green 1903; Bufton 1905; Cameron 2014).

Ultimately, the name *Coetzee* has nothing to do with *zee* (the sea). It is fundamentally a South African family name which can be traced back to Dirk Coetzee of the Dutch city of Kampen in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The name is possibly related to the name *Goetzee*, which has been associated with the French name *Gaucher*, or to the name *Kuzee*, which goes back to the Zeeland toponym, *Cudsee*. In addition, a connection could be made with the name *Koetzee*, which possibly goes back to the German name *Kötz* (Meertens Institute).

## 8 CONCLUSION

The early European navigators who charted the Southland's coastlines made significant and influential contributions to the linguistic, cultural, social, and toponymic landscape of Australia. Toponyms are more than just labels to identify and distinguish geographic features. Introduced toponyms reveal the chronology of exploration and settlement.

As I have shown above, name-forms can be deceptive. Even though the majority of so-called 'Dutch' placenames on our maps were actually bestowed by the British commemorating the Dutch, we cannot ignore that the Dutch, either directly, or indirectly, have had a significant impact on our toponymic landscape. These placenames may not number very many, they nevertheless, may be considered as some of the most iconic. If we are to construct an accurate record the European toponymic history of Australia, we must ensure precise accounts of who bestowed those toponyms.

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