

# Airline Forced to Delay Flights Over Deadly Risk From Elon Musk Rockets

Story by Janna Brancolin

As if there weren't already enough ways for airline travel to go awry, an airline has been forced to delay flights for up to six hours over the past few weeks thanks to Elon Musk's rocket re-entries.

Several Qantas flights between Johannesburg and Sydney were delayed based on "advice received from the U.S. government regarding the re-entry of SpaceX rockets over an extensive area of the Southern Indian Ocean," a company spokesperson told *The Guardian*.

The airline often receives little advance notice of where and when the rockets will fall, as recent launches have been rescheduled at the last minute, it said.

"We've had to delay some flights just prior to departure," Qantas said. "We're in contact with SpaceX to see if they can refine the areas and time windows for the rocket re-entries to minimize future disruption to our passengers on the route."

The Daily Beast has reached out to SpaceX for comment.

The company has been working for years to develop rockets that can make soft landings in the ocean—and then be retrieved and reused—instead of blowing up or disintegrating after pushing the spacecraft during launch.

In July, its massive Starship rocket launched from SpaceX's base in Texas and then made a controlled fall into the Indian Ocean about an hour later for the first time ever, Al Jazeera reported.

SpaceX reportedly chose the Indian Ocean as its landing site because it's so remote. But apparently it's not remote enough to avoid stranding airline passengers flying between Africa and Australia.

“Customers generally understand that this is outside of airlines’ control and that we can’t fly in the area when the rocket re-entry is taking place,” Qantas said.

South African Airways flights have also been affected, according to *The Guardian*.