

Qantas flights delayed due to falling space debris from SpaceX rocket launches



Tom Chivers

The Australian airline Qantas delayed several recent flights due to last-minute notice of falling debris from SpaceX rocket launches.

SpaceX uses the southern Indian Ocean as its reentry point, thanks to its remoteness, but [flights between Sydney and Johannesburg pass through the region](#), and the airline has asked for more precise warnings.

As space becomes more widely used, debris is becoming a problem: As well as its threat to other satellites, larger items survive atmospheric reentry and can pose a threat to people on the ground. Kenyan authorities are investigating the provenance of a 1,100lb, eight-foot-wide metal ring which [fell from space on New Year's Eve](#), believed to be part of a European Space Agency rocket.