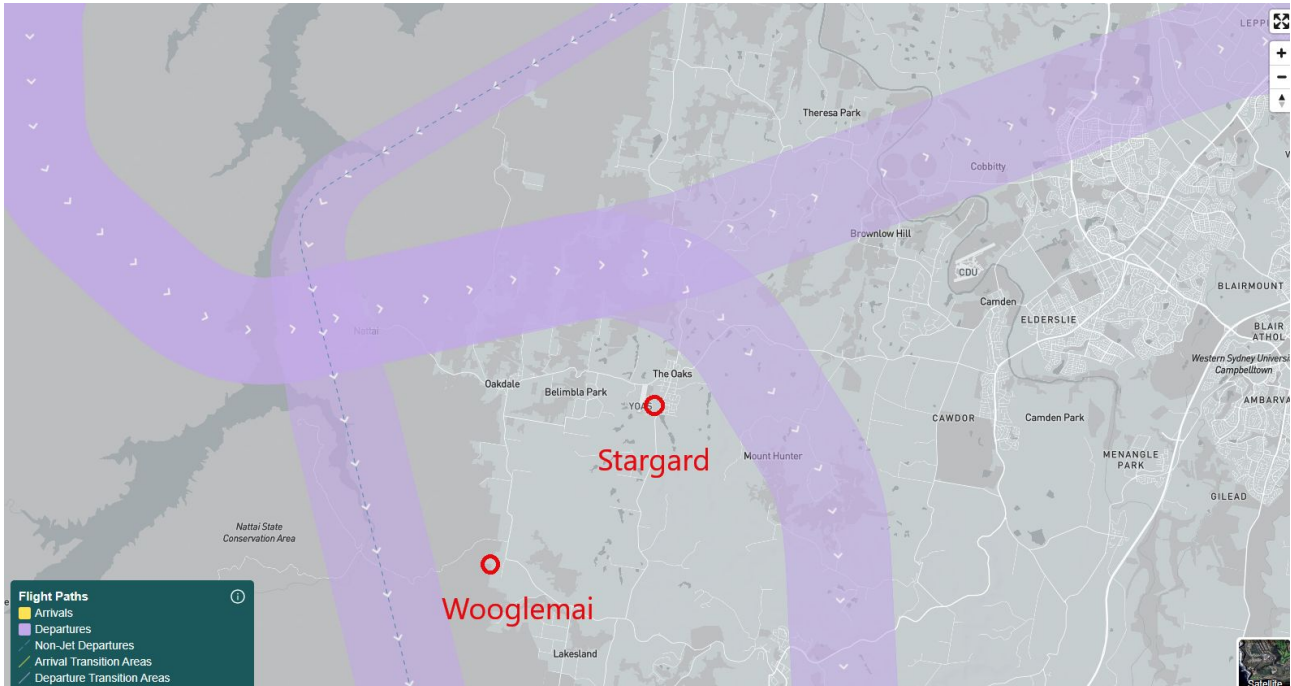


## South Western Threat

Roger Powell



*The wide purple lines are the latest proposed flight paths to and from Western Sydney International Airport.*

The light pollution which affects our astronomy activities here on the outskirts of Sydney is increasing relentlessly. It's the result of poor lighting design and lack of regulation. Our activities at Stargard and Wooglemai will continue for the foreseeable future but we will eventually be forced to look elsewhere.

Fortunately we have been able to secure a return to The Forest cabin at Belanglo, well away from major light pollution. The first weekend will be the nights of Friday 29<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November. The skies at The Forest are so much better than we get at Stargard or Wooglemai.

Unfortunately, the threat to astronomy is far more than just poor lighting design. The second Sydney International Airport will commence operations in 2026 and both Stargard and Wooglemai will be adversely affected by aircraft landing and taking off, according to recently released amendments to the flight paths. Stargard in particular will have aircraft flying along the North, West and South perimeters.

Another threat which amateur astronomers are enduring is the tens of thousands of satellites being sent up by Starlink and other organisations for their own profit. At the moment amateur astronomy software has the capability to remove some of the satellite trails from images but as well as affecting amateurs, serious professional astronomical research is threatened by this onslaught.

Then there are the drones. If and when they are placed in service by the likes of Amazon, the probability is that drones will be buzzing around up there delivering parcels day and night. How much that will affect astronomy is anyone's guess!

Worst of all, the Near Earth Asteroid research could be affected. This crucial activity depends on astronomers worldwide detecting new asteroids with a potential trajectory towards Earth. They do this by searching the skies on a continuous basis, looking for objects which are moving relative to the stars. Guess what? With over a hundred thousand satellites also moving relative to the stars, that vital research will be considerably endangered. We ignore this at our peril.

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