

Search for mystery

sky object

PERTH. — The State Emergency Service is organising an aerial search for a space object that is thought to have landed near Scaddan, 928 km south-east of Perth.

The object was seen in daylight passing over Esperance as a fiery ball with a long burning tail.

People 80 km away reported that they heard a big explosion soon after the object was seen over Esperance.

The emergency service co-ordinator, Mr Phil Arlidge, said he hoped to start an aerial search today.

Mr Arlidge said he had received reports from nine people.

Two women, who lived about 30 km apart, both reported hearing an explosion.

One of the women lives at Scaddan and the other at Circle Valley, about 80 km north of Esperance.

"At first I thought it was going to be just an-

other meteorite," Mr Arlidge said.

"But it was too low, moving too slowly and was travelling too parallel to the ground."

The first person to see the object was Mrs Kath Sinclair, of Esperance.

"It was about 7.45 a.m. last Thursday week when I looked out of the window and saw the thing like a ball flying through the air," she said.

Three schoolchildren from a farm at Gibson Soak also reported seeing the object skimming over pine trees.

Nicole, 11, Andrew, 10, and Robbie, 6, Johnson, were waiting for a school bus when they saw it.

"It was like a big blue ball of fire," said Nicole.

"It was followed by a space then there was a long orange tail with

burning bits falling off it."

An astronomer at the Bickley Observatory, Dr I. Nikoloff said that the object sounded like a meteorite or piece of space junk re-entering the earth's atmosphere.

● The Pegasus 2 spacecraft is expected to fall out of orbit and into the earth's atmosphere late this month or early in November.

A spokesman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Mary Fitzpatrick, said the 10,440 kg satellite was expected to fall back to earth between October 29 and November 6.

She said the most probable re-entry date was November 2. Part of its orbit takes it over WA.