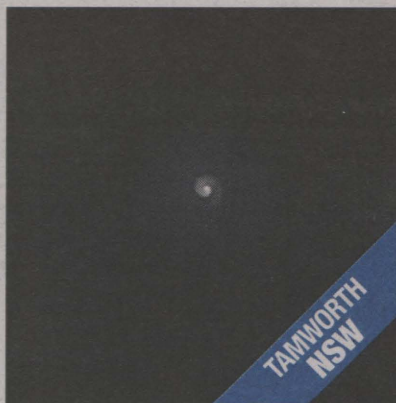


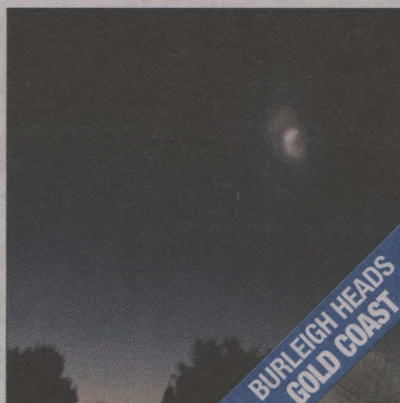
# Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a...



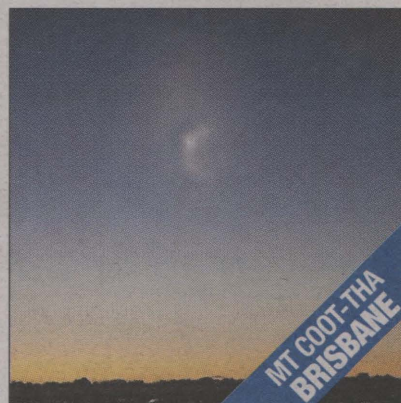
TAMWORTH  
NSW



BELCONNEN  
ACT



BURLEIGH HEADS  
GOLD COAST



MT COOT-THA  
BRISBANE



CAPE CANAVERAL  
FLORIDA, USA

# Rocket, so forget the aliens

By RICHARD CLUNE

THE sightings began just before the break of dawn — a strange swirling light, spinning across the sky that stopped early risers in their tracks.

It was definitely not a bird and moved too quickly to be a plane.

From Melbourne to Caboolture, they gazed upwards wondering the same thing: Could this be the UFO to end the debate about whether UFOs exist?

It took only two hours for that question to be settled.

The unidentified flying object was identified as a private rocket launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

“Sadly for many, it’s not aliens,” said Sydney Observatory curator Dr Andrew Jacob. “We believe it to be the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that was launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida.

“It launched at 4.45am Australian Eastern Standard Time — and that puts it over Sydney and the eastern seaboard about an hour later.

“They always launch eastward and a little south from Canaveral.”

Developed by a California firm and subsidised by NASA, the rocket was on its maiden test flight. Its supporters hope it will be a cheaper way to launch satellites into space and will take over from the space shuttle as a supply vehicle for the international space

shuttle. The SpaceX company was set up by millionaire Elon Musk in 2002.

Hundreds of Australians along the eastern seaboard reported seeing the craft as it made its way across the sky.

Tamworth fireman Andrew Coe said it was a sight to behold.

“I was getting the paper when I looked up and saw the light. I thought it was the moon but then realised it was moving, swirling. I grabbed the boss and we observed it for a couple of minutes. It was really interesting to see it.”

Kevin Watson, of Shellharbour, reported a similar sight. He said: “I couldn’t believe my own eyes.”

The rocket was also seen by workers on an oil rig in the Cooper Basin, in far west Queensland.

“My mate spotted it first and said, ‘Have a look at that!’ At first I thought it was the moon,” Garth Marks said. “It moved slowly, then disappeared.”

Dr Jacob said the craft’s high altitude explained the multiple sightings.

But some remain to be convinced. UFO Research NSW spokesman Doug Moffett labelled the rocket claims a “convenient explanation”.



Real or fake? Send us your UFO pictures

tipoff@sundaytelegraph.com.au

Blast off: The SpaceX rocket takes off from Cape Canaveral, Florida yesterday