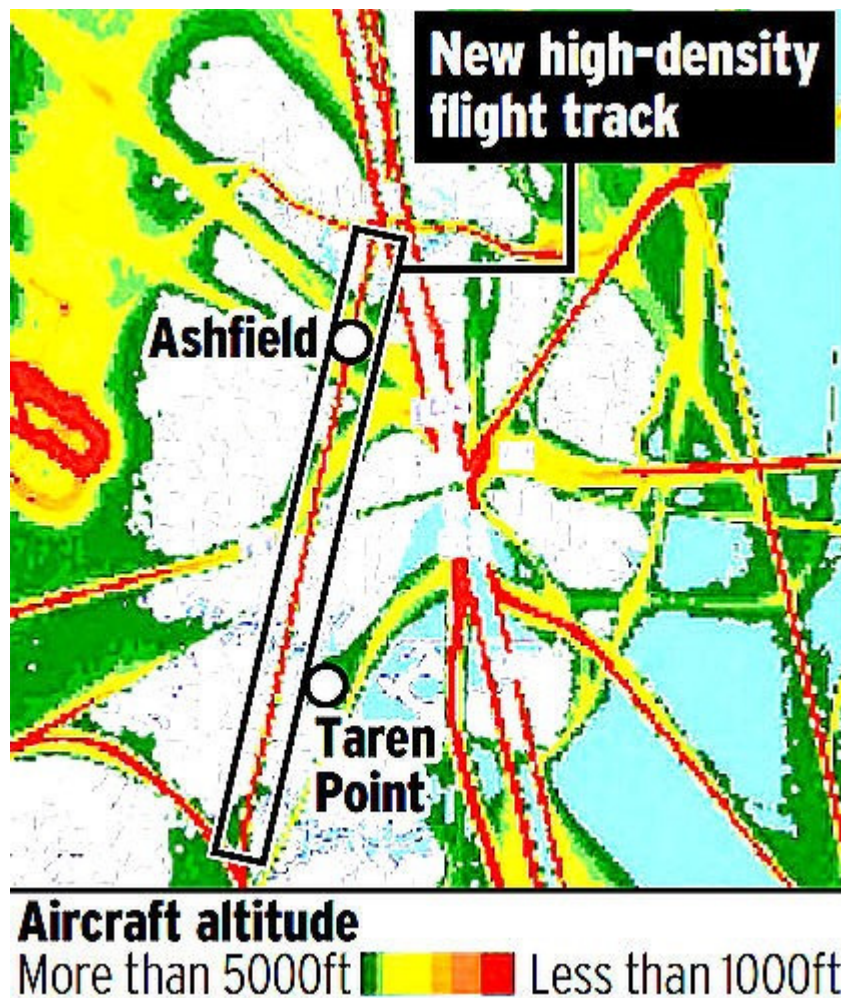


## Residents furious as tenfold increase in flights flouts rulebook

PAUL BIBBY URBAN AFFAIRS REPORTER

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New flight path running across Sydney ... residents from Five Dock to Miranda have copped the brunt.

A CLUSTER of Sydney suburbs has experienced a dramatic increase in air traffic due to flight path changes quietly introduced by Airservices Australia in an apparent breach of its own guidelines.

Residents in a line of suburbs from Five Dock to Miranda have borne the brunt of a tenfold increase in the concentration of aircraft movements over their homes since the middle of last year, which they say has resulted in excessive aircraft noise.

Reports from Airservices Australia which map the density of flights over Sydney reveal the emergence of a concentrated stream of aircraft over a nine-month period.

The planes approach from the north, descending to 3000 feet as they pass over the Sutherland Shire, before turning left sharply to land on Sydney Airport's main runway.

a number of years, the frequency of flights has soared from 180 per quarter to at least 1800, and the flight path corridor has been narrowed from 6.8 kilometres to just 200 metres.

The Liberal member for Cook, Scott Morrison, has received a string of calls from residents complaining about a sudden increase in aircraft noise.

"What the Government has allowed to happen is a new flight path running right across Sydney, and in particular over the Sutherland Shire," he said.

"It's not just the noise, it's the repetition early in the morning and late at night."

Having initially denied to Mr Morrison that there had been any unusual increase in the concentration or number of flights, Airservices Australia changed its position yesterday. It told the *Herald* that there had been an increase, but that it was the result of safety works being carried out on the east-west runway.

"This has led to the use of ... Mode 15, and the increased use of simultaneous opposite direction parallel runway operations," a spokesman said. "These modes result in the use of a left circuit for arrivals to land on runway 34L. These account for the increase in traffic to the west."

But the dramatic increase in the number and concentration of aircraft movements is an apparent breach of Airservices Australia's own guidelines, which specify that aircraft movements over built-up areas should be spread out rather than concentrated to reduce noise impacts.

It also breaches similar principles set out in the Sydney Airport long-term operating plan which came into force in 1997.

Kevin Hill, one of two community representatives on the committee which was set up to implement the operating plan, said Airservices Australia had not made committee members aware of the changes it was proposing.

"If they had said there was going to be a tenfold increase over these houses, there would have been total opposition," he said.

Airservices Australia said it had informed the committee of the changes.

*»It's not just the noise, it's the repetition early in the morning and late at night. «*

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