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BRIEF FOR CAS

UNUSUAL AERIAL SIGHTINGS

POLICY

Brief prepared by:  
WGCDR B. Biddington  
Ext 52422

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE  
(AIR FORCE OFFICE)

Ref: AF 84 3508 Pt1 (14)

BRIEF FOR CAS

UNUSUAL AERIAL SIGHTINGS - POLICY

BACKGROUND

1. (U) The RAAF has been responsible for collecting and collating material on unusual aerial sightings (UAS) for many years. Policy was last reviewed in 1984 following two separate incidents that attracted wide publicity. One involved strange lights in the sky in Bendigo and the other caused Mirages and F-IIIs to be brought to high states of alert because of a series of low-level Mach3 paints on the Sydney radar. The Bendigo investigation was inconclusive and the Sydney radar was found to have been faulty.

2. (U) Recently, HQTC sought guidance on UAS policy because of the reduced numbers of out of hours duty personnel at a number of bases. This has prompted a review of policy as it should apply across the RAAF.

DISCUSSION

Current Policy

3. (U) Current policy on UAS is at FLAG 1. The key element is:

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The RAAF accepts reports on UAS and attempts an allocation of reliability. Those which suggest a defence or security implication are further investigated and a probable cause determined.

Where the RAAF is notified about sightings deemed not to have a 'defence or security implication', the sightings are not investigated and the person making the report may be referred to a civil UFO research organisation.

4. (R) There are two basic problems with the current policy:
  - a. It is impossible to assess in advance whether a sighting may have defence or security significance.
  - b. Resources devoted by RAAF to UAS investigation have dwindled over the years to the point that our stated commitment to investigation is not put into effect.

#### **Community Interest**

5. (R) There remains a small but committed element of the community which devotes considerable effort and resources to the study of extra-terrestrial phenomena. Also, there is a much wider but mostly latent general community interest in UAS. In the past, the RAAF has been accused of:
  - a. withholding documents about particular sightings or incidents, and
  - b. neglecting our national security obligations by not taking UAS matters seriously.

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Neither accusation has caused the RAAF serious embarrassment or concern. The change of policy in 1984 was notified by Ministerial Press Release and passed with cursory comment.

6 (U) Since 1984, the number of UAS reported to the RAAF has significantly reduced. This may indicate that civilian organisations are better known and are meeting community requirements. It may also reflect that current policy of referring individuals who wish to report sightings directly to civil UFO research organisations, has been successful.

#### RAAF Interest

7. (S) In the past, responsibility for UAS 47E  
47E

47E The most recent example is  
thought to have occurred in the late 70s/early 80s when a  
RAAF SQNLDR was dispatched at short notice to central  
Queensland 47E

47E

8. (U) At a more mundane level, the UAS mechanism has provided information about missing and crashed aircraft.

9. (U) The enormous improvements in surveillance technologies in the past 20 years make it possible to predict when large items of space junk are likely to fall to earth and where they are likely to fall; this occurred with SKYLAB in 1983. Civil and military aviation

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communications in Australia are highly developed and initial indications that an aircraft is in difficulty are increasingly likely to come from within the system and not be dependent on external observation of flaming wreckage and falling debris. Witness observations of such events remain important but not from the UAS perspective.

#### SUGGESTED POLICY

10. (U) To account for the changes that have occurred since UAS policy was last reviewed, a new policy is proposed. This policy reads:

For many years the RAAF has been formally responsible for handling Unusual Aerial Sightings (UAS) at the official level. Consideration of the scientific record suggests that whilst not all UAS have a ready explanation, there is no compelling reason for the RAAF to continue to devote resources to recording, investigating and attempting to explain UAS.

The RAAF no longer accepts reports on UAS and no longer attempts assignment of cause or allocation of reliability. Members of the community who seek to report a UAS to RAAF personnel will be referred to a civil UFO research organisation in the first instance. Known organisations are listed at Annex A to this policy.

Some UAS may relate to events that could have a defence, security, or public safety implication, such as man-made debris falling from space, a burning aircraft or an aircraft making an unauthorised incursion into Australian airspace.

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Where members of the community may have witnessed an event of this type they are encouraged to contact the police, civil aviation authorities or Coastwatch.

#### POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

11. (U) The strategy proposed for implementing this policy is based on discussions between Mr Llewellyn, DGPI and DGSS. A Press Release is not favoured by DGPI because it is seen as likely to generate unnecessary publicity. DGSS has suggested that members of the public should not be discouraged from reporting unusual aerial activities, especially in northern Australia, because of the potential value to Coastwatch. The final paragraph of the new policy incorporates this point.

12. (U) The proposed publicity strategy is to send a letter to known UFO research organisations, notifying them of the change to policy (draft letter attached). In addition the policy would be promulgated within the RAAF via normal channels.

13. (U) A longer term task will be to centralise all sighting records held by RAAF and to place them in the Australian Archives. The privacy implications of placing the records in the Archives will need to be understood before this occurs.

#### CONCLUSION

14. (R) The RAAF's commitment to UAS has declined over the past decade to the point that current policy is not

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followed and cannot be sustained. In the past, UAS has provided evidence of human activities of interest to the RAAF 47E [REDACTED]  
Should unambiguous extra-terrestrial contact with earth occur (which may or may not be associated with UAS), however remote that possibility might be, levels of organisation well beyond the RAAF will be interested and involved. Should the RAAF be required to respond, how we do so will be defined not by extant UAS policy but by instructions from Government. It follows that there is no valid reason for the RAAF to retain a formal interest in UAS.

#### RECOMMENDATION

15. A change to current UAS policy is recommended. You are requested to agree:

- a. to the new policy, stated above in para 10, and
- b. to the proposal for publicising the change outlined in para 12.

15 October 1993

47F [REDACTED]

B Biddington  
WGCDR  
Ext 52422

19 October 1993

47F [REDACTED]

S.T. James  
AIRCDRE  
DGPP-AF

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Page 7 of 7

CLEARED BY DCAS

.....  
AVM  
DCAS  
.....

**Annexes:**

- A. List of known UFO Research Organisations (FLAG 2)
- B. Draft letter to UFO Research Organisations (FLAG 3)

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**Question on notice no. 88**

**Portfolio question number: 90**

**2021-22 Supplementary Budget Estimates**

**Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Defence Portfolio**

**Senator Peter Whish-Wilson:** asked the Department of Defence on 27 October 2021

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Has the Department of Defence had the opportunity to formally review the report completed by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence titled 'Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena' published in June 2021?

What guidance, if any, has the Department sought on the publication of the US report and the implications for Australian aerospace?

Is the 'Unusual Aerial Sightings Policy' still in effect, and if so when was it last reviewed? If it is not in effect or has been superseded, please give details of the current policy.

In 2011, the Department of Defence reported that, in response to a FOI request from the Sydney Morning Herald, it had 'discovered one file, which had not been destroyed but could not be located'. If it could not be located, how would the Department know that the file had not been destroyed? Were all the files referenced hardcopy only (i.e. not digital) ?

A response from the Department dated 8 June 2011 states that members of the public making reports of "unusual aerial sightings" are directed to their local police authority. What is the protocol for members of the defence forces when reporting such sightings during military operations and/or normal duty?

**Answer —**

Answer attached

## Defence Portfolio

# SENATE ESTIMATES QUESTION

(Question No.90)

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 05 November 2021:

1. Has the Department of Defence had the opportunity to formally review the report completed by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence titled 'Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena' published in June 2021?
2. What guidance, if any, has the Department sought on the publication of the US report and the implications for Australian aerospace?
3. Is the 'Unusual Aerial Sightings Policy' still in effect, and if so when was it last reviewed? If it is not in effect or has been superseded,
4. In 2011, the Department of Defence reported that, in response to a FOI request from the Sydney Morning Herald, it had 'discovered one file, which had not been destroyed but could not be located'. If it could not be located, how would the Department know that the file had not been destroyed? Were all the files referenced hardcopy only (i.e. not digital)?
5. A response from the Department dated 8 June 2011 states that members of the public making reports of "unusual aerial sightings" are directed to their local police authority. What is the protocol for members of the defence forces when reporting such sightings during military operations and/or normal duty?

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson – The Department of Defence provides the following answer to the Senator's question:

1. The Department of Defence has not formally reviewed the report.
2. The Department of Defence has not sought guidance on the publication.
3. The Unusual Aerial Sightings Policy was last reviewed in November 2003 and cancelled 25 March 2013.
4. A file was confirmed in 2008 to be at the National Archives of Australia. The interest of its location was raised again in 2011, however Defence was unable to verify its location nor held record of the file being destroyed. As such and to date, the Department of Defence cannot confirm its current existence.
5. The Department of Defence does not have a protocol for reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) or Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO). The Air Force ceased handling reports of UAP or UFO in 1996 after determining that there was no scientific or other compelling reason for the Air Force to continue to devote resources to the recording and investigation of UAP or UFO.

**Question on notice no. 19**

**Portfolio question number: 20**

**2021-22 Additional estimates**

**Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Defence Portfolio**

**Senator Peter Whish-Wilson:** asked the Department of Defence on 17 February 2022—

During the last Supplementary Budget Estimates (in response to a question on notice) , the Department of Defence advised that there is no protocol for reporting or recording Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.

In a scenario that an airforce pilot, or airforce personnel on the ground (such as monitoring radar) , detects or sights an aircraft over Australian airspace, or in their sphere of operation, but is unable to identify the nature of the craft, what is the process/protocol for pilot and/or personnel to report their observation?

If there is an existing protocol - how many such observations or sightings have been made in the past 10 years?

If there is no protocol - by what means does the air force maintain the security of Australian Airspace in dealing with unidentified craft?

What encouragement is given to pilots to make reports of aircraft they cannot identify?

**Answer —**

Please find answer attached

## Defence Portfolio

# SENATE ESTIMATES QUESTION

(Question No. 20)

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 25 February 2022:

During the last Supplementary Budget Estimates (in response to a question on notice), the Department of Defence advised that there is no protocol for reporting or recording Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.

1. In a scenario that an airforce pilot, or airforce personnel on the ground (such as monitoring radar), detects or sights an aircraft over Australian airspace, or in their sphere of operation, but is unable to identify the nature of the craft, what is the process/protocol for pilot and/or personnel to report their observation?
2. If there is an existing protocol – how many such observations or sightings have been made in the past 10 years? If there is no protocol – by what means does the air force maintain the security of Australian Airspace in dealing with unidentified craft?
3. What encouragement is given to pilots to make reports of aircraft they cannot identify?

Senator Whish-Wilson – The Department of Defence provides the following answer to the Senator's question:

1. Any unidentified aircraft identified by Air Force pilots or personnel entering military controlled airspace or pose a safety risk to military aircraft are subject to RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting protocols.
2. Under RAAF Aviation Reporting protocols, there has been no records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft over past ten years.
3. There is no specific encouragement given to pilots to report aircraft they cannot identify, rather to report unusual or unexpected events through RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures.

## Defence Portfolio

# SENATE ESTIMATES QUESTION

(Question No.29)

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 October 2021:

Air Marshal Hupfeld: None from any aircrew or aviation organisation that I'm aware of. The only experience that I have in this was over 40 years ago when some reports were made and we launched Mirage aircraft. The phenomena turned out to be errors on the radar screens in our normal civil air-traffic control system, but no physical objects were detected.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Does the characterisation of the DOD, in relation to their report, of both intent and advanced technology concern you? Basically, they're saying they can't explain what these things are, but they would like to better understand them.

Air Marshal Hupfeld: I can't answer for another sovereign nation. That is a matter for the US and the Pentagon and the Department of Defense in the US.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Would it be possible for you to see if, across the other services, there has been any kind of reporting system in relation to this in Australia?

Air Marshal Hupfeld: Certainly, I can take that on notice. But I feel confident that, as the airspace control authority within Australia, if there had been any detections or items such as this, I would have been aware of them. But I can take that on notice to double-check.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. Typically, would something like Jindalee be able to pick-up fast-moving objects, or is it more designed to look at ships and—

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson – The Department of Defence provides the following answer to the Senator's question:

The Department of Defence does not have a protocol for reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.





**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

**BP23602592**

**DEFENCE FOI 408/21/22 STATEMENT OF REASONS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

1. I refer to the application by Grant Lavac under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) for access to:

*“Following the senate estimates hearing (2021-22 Supplementary Budget Estimates) on 27 October 2021, the Department of Defence responded to Senator Whish-Wilson’s questions via the following:*

**Question No.29:** Answered on: 01/02/2022

*APH Answer Attachment*

*Link:* <https://www.aph.gov.au/api/qon/downloadattachment?attachmentId=f7805cb7-aabc-47be-b2f7-9d1a2616d30a>

**Question No.90:** Answered on: 06/12/2021

*APH Answer Attachment Link:*

<https://www.aph.gov.au/api/qon/downloadattachment?attachmentId=4bac42e4-2853-49e1-b4a5-e917d9e964b2>

*I kindly request all email communications that informed the conclusions and subsequent responses by the Department of Defence, as documented in Question No.29 and Question No.90 (refer highlighted copy in the attached). The date range for this request is the period commencing 27 October 2021 and ending 2 February 2022 inclusive. I also kindly request that personal details be limited to the full names of individuals involved in any applicable FOI response.”*

**FOI decision maker**

2. I am the authorised officer pursuant to section 23 of the FOI Act to make a decision on this FOI request.

**Documents identified**

3. I identified four documents as matching the description of the request.

**Exclusions**

4. Personal mobile telephone numbers contained in documents that fall within the scope of the FOI request, are excluded from this request.

**Decision**

5. I have decided to release four documents in full, removing irrelevant material as referred to in the scope of the request in accordance with section 22(1)(b)(ii) of the FOI Act.

### **Material taken into account**

6. In making my decision, I had regard to:
- a. the terms of the request;
  - b. the content of the identified documents in issue;
  - c. relevant provisions in the FOI Act; and
  - d. the Guidelines published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the Guidelines).

### **Further Information**

7. Reference Item 2, Document 1 in relation to responses to the questions presented to Defence Aviation Safety Authority, these responses were communicated via a phone conversation.

anthony.sta  
inton

Digitally signed by  
anthony.stainton  
Date: 2022.05.04  
15:14:27 +10'00'

**A. Stainton**  
GPCAPT  
Accredited Decision maker  
Air Force

**From:** [Elliott, Gene SQNLDR](#)  
**To:** [RAAF MLO](#)  
**Cc:** [Sayson, Jericho SQNLDR](#)  
**Subject:** FW: SQ21-000906 : SSCFADT - Supplementary Budget Estimates - 27 October 2021 - Q29 - UAPs - Senator Whish-Wilson PDMS Notification - Record Assigned [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Wednesday, 3 November 2021 8:46:01 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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## OFFICIAL

Sir,

As discussed, some recommended words for the email to Army and Navy.

- Does Navy/Army have protocols for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?
- Historically as the Navy/Army had any protocol for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?
- If no protocol exists does Navy/Army intend to establish Service specific protocols for reporting on UFO/UAPs? (I'm on the fence if we need to ask this one?)

We should probably ask the following to DASA too:

- Does DASA have any protocol for the reporting of UFO/UAPs outside of existing Aviation Safety reporting mechanisms?

In the transcript it references CAF is the Air Space Control Authority – The Joint Airspace Control Cell (under DGAIR) executes that on CAFs behalf, so it might be worth us requesting their input – can I go direct to them or do MLO need to approach them for a response?

Happy to discuss further if required.

Also any chance I can get a copy of a complete QoN so I can see how the responses are worded/formatted etc. I've not seen one in PDMS before (I guess that's a good sign)

Geno

**Gene Elliott**  
Flight Lieutenant  
Staff Officer to Director General Air Defence & Space (DGADS-AF)  
Staff Officer to Director General Space Domain Review (DGSDR)  
Air Force Headquarters

s22 Russell Offices, RUSSELL, ACT, 2610

asdfasd



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**From:** noreply@pws.gov.au <noreply@pws.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 November 2021 4:30 PM  
**To:** Elliott, Gene FLTLT <gene.elliott@defence.gov.au>  
**Subject:** SQ21-000906 : SSCFADT - Supplementary Budget Estimates - 27 October 2021 - Q29 - UAPs - Senator Whish-Wilson PDMS Notification - Record Assigned [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**SEC=OFFICIAL**



**PDR Record Assigned - [SQ21-000906](#)**  
from Jericho Sayson  
to Gene Elliott

**Status:**

**Draft**

**Subject:**

SSCFADT - Supplementary Budget Estimates - 27 October  
2021 - Q29 - UAPs - Senator Whish-Wilson

<b>Instruction:</b>	Geno, as discussed can you please develop input to respond to the attached QoN.  Request you return to RAAF MLO NLT 10 Nov 21 with 1* clearance.  HAC clearance required NLT 12 Nov 21.  CAF clearance required NLT 15 Nov 21.  A/SOHAC & SOCAF - FYSA.  Regards,  RAAF MLO
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**Milestones:**

Due for **Clearance:** 17/11/2021 12:00 PM  
Due to **Parliamentary:** 17/11/2021 5:00 PM  
Due to **Minister's Office:** 26/11/2021 5:00 PM

For help with PDMS, please refer to the [PDMS Quick Reference Guides on the Intranet](#) or for technical issues and assistance please contact the PDMS Helpdesk on 02 6265 9192 or at [PDMSTraining.andSupport@defence.gov.au](mailto:PDMSTraining.andSupport@defence.gov.au)

Thank You

**PDMS Notification Service**

*Please do not reply to this message.*

**CC Recipients:**

RAAF Ministerials RAAF Ministerials ([RAAF.MLO@defence.gov.au](mailto:RAAF.MLO@defence.gov.au))  
Nicole Saker ([nicole.saker@defence.gov.au](mailto:nicole.saker@defence.gov.au))  
Sarah Stalker ([sarah.stalker@defence.gov.au](mailto:sarah.stalker@defence.gov.au))

**From:** [Dodds, Jade MS](#) on behalf of [Navy MLO](#)  
**To:** [RAAF MLO](#); [AHQ-PBA](#); [Navy MLO](#)  
**Cc:** [Elliott, Gene SQNLDR](#)  
**Subject:** RE: RAAF QoN - UFO/UAPs [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Thursday, 4 November 2021 11:12:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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## OFFICIAL

Hi Jericho,

Navy responses to the two dot points as follows:

- **Does Navy have any current protocols for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?** Navy does not have any specific process or protocol for reporting UFO/UAP other than to report unusual air traffic to the appropriate airspace control authorities.
- **Historically has Navy had any protocol for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?** Historically, Navy has not had any specific protocol for reporting UFO/UAP other than to report unusual air traffic to the appropriate airspace control authorities.

This was cleared by the Deputy Fleet Commander, CDRE Jonathan Earley.

Kind regards  
Jade

**Jade Dodds**  
Manager  
Navy Ministerials & Coord  
Navy Headquarters

s22

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**From:** Sayson, Jericho SQNLDR <jericho.sayson@defence.gov.au> **On Behalf Of** RAAF MLO  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 3 November 2021 11:36 AM  
**To:** AHQ-PBA <ahq.pba@defence.gov.au>; Navy MLO <navy.mlo@defence.gov.au>  
**Cc:** RAAF MLO <raaf.mlo@defence.gov.au>; Elliott, Gene FLTLT <gene.elliott@defence.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RAAF QoN - UFO/UAPs [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Good morning Jan/Jade,

Thankyou for taking my phone calls this morning regarding 'SSCFADT - Supplementary Budget Estimates - 27 October 2021 - Q29 - UAPs - Senator Whish-Wilson'.



Could you please provide advice on the following;

- Does Navy/Army have any current protocols for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?
- Historically has Navy/Army had any protocol for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?

Appreciate if you could return your cleared responses to RAAF MLO via email NLT COB Tue 09 Nov 21.

Kind Regards,

**Squadron Leader Jericho Sayson**

Ministerial Liaison Officer

Ministerial Liaison Office – Air Force

Directorate Strategic Issues Management

s22

Russell Offices, RUSSELL, ACT, 2610

Group Mailbox: [RAAF MLO](#) Website: [Ministerial Liaison Office](#)

cid:image006.png@01D5A9E1.113E50D0



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**From:** [Ewers, Jan MRS](#) on behalf of [AHQ-PBA](#)  
**To:** [RAAF MLO](#)  
**Cc:** [AHQ-PBA](#)  
**Subject:** FW: For action - Question on Notice - UFO/UAPs - RAAF [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Friday, 5 November 2021 3:25:15 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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## OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Jericho

Army's response to the QoN, cleared by Director General COL Tim Connolly.

- Army does not have dedicated instructions for specifically reporting Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

Trust this helps

Many thanks

Jan

*Jan Ewers*

**Ministerial Liaison Officer**

Parliamentary Business Army  
Chief of Staff Branch – Army Headquarters

s22 Russell Offices | PO Box 7902 | Canberra BC | ACT 2610  
s22 E: [jan.ewers@defence.gov.au](mailto:jan.ewers@defence.gov.au)

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**From:** Schrader, Boyd MAJ <[boyd.schrader@defence.gov.au](mailto:boyd.schrader@defence.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 4 November 2021 5:25 PM  
**To:** AHQ-PBA <[ahq.pba@defence.gov.au](mailto:ahq.pba@defence.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** HQAVNCOMD COS <[hqavncomdcos@dpe.protected.mil.au](mailto:hqavncomdcos@dpe.protected.mil.au)>; King, Thomas MAJ 1 <[thomas.king1@defence.gov.au](mailto:thomas.king1@defence.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: For action - Question on Notice - UFO/UAPs - RAAF [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Hi Jan,

A DG cleared response for collation/use:

Army does not have dedicated instructions for specifically reporting Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

**Boyd Schrader**

Major | Staff Officer to DCOMD HQ AVNCOMD

s22

s22 | PO Box 7904 | Canberra BC ACT 2610

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---

**From:** Ewers, Jan MRS <[jan.ewers@defence.gov.au](mailto:jan.ewers@defence.gov.au)> **On Behalf Of** AHQ-PBA

**Sent:** Wednesday, 3 November 2021 4:38 PM

**To:** King, Thomas MAJ 1 <[thomas.king1@defence.gov.au](mailto:thomas.king1@defence.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Schrader, Boyd MAJ <[boyd.schrader@defence.gov.au](mailto:boyd.schrader@defence.gov.au)>; AHQ-PBA  
<[ahq.pba@defence.gov.au](mailto:ahq.pba@defence.gov.au)>

**Subject:** For action - Question on Notice - UFO/UAPs - RAAF [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Tom

PBA has received the attached Question on Notice asked by Senator Whish-Wilson' that RAAF are leading regarding UFO /UAPs. CAF answered the question on the day but took on notice to double check whether Army/Navy have any protocols in place for reporting.

Grateful if you could provide advice on the following;

- o Does Army have any current protocols for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?
- o Historically has Army had any protocol for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?

Please provide 1\* minimum cleared input/Nil response to PBA by 2pm, Monday 8 November 2021.

As always, happy to discuss if required.

Many thanks

Jan

*Jan Ewers*

**Ministerial Liaison Officer**

Parliamentary Business Army  
Chief of Staff Branch – Army Headquarters

s22

Russell Offices | PO Box 7902 | Canberra BC | ACT 2610

s22

**E:** [jan.ewers@defence.gov.au](mailto:jan.ewers@defence.gov.au)

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email immediately.

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**From:** Sayson, Jericho SQNLDR <[jericho.sayson@defence.gov.au](mailto:jericho.sayson@defence.gov.au)> **On Behalf Of** RAAF MLO  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 3 November 2021 11:36 AM  
**To:** AHQ-PBA <[ahq.pba@defence.gov.au](mailto:ahq.pba@defence.gov.au)>; Navy MLO <[navy.mlo@defence.gov.au](mailto:navy.mlo@defence.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** RAAF MLO <[raaf.mlo@defence.gov.au](mailto:raaf.mlo@defence.gov.au)>; Elliott, Gene FLTLT <[gene.elliott@defence.gov.au](mailto:gene.elliott@defence.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RAAF QoN - UFO/UAPs [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Good morning Jan/Jade,

Thankyou for taking my phone calls this morning regarding 'SSCFADT - Supplementary Budget Estimates - 27 October 2021 - Q29 - UAPs - Senator Whish-Wilson'.

Could you please provide advice on the following;

- Does Navy/Army have any current protocols for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?
- Historically has Navy/Army had any protocol for the reporting of UFO/UAPs?

Appreciate if you could return your cleared responses to RAAF MLO via email NLT COB Tue 09 Nov 21.

Kind Regards,

**Squadron Leader Jericho Sayson**  
Ministerial Liaison Officer  
Ministerial Liaison Office – Air Force  
Directorate Strategic Issues Management

s22 | Russell Offices, RUSSELL, ACT, 2610  
Group Mailbox: [RAAF MLO](#) Website: [Ministerial Liaison Office](#)

cid:image006.png@01D5A9E1.113E50D0



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**From:** [Elliott, Gene SQNLDR](#)  
**To:** [Ahearn, Christopher SQNLDR](#); [RAAF MLO](#)  
**Subject:** SQ21-001018 - Request for DASA response. [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Wednesday, 10 November 2021 12:29:18 PM  
**Importance:** High

---

## OFFICIAL

Hey Mate,

Can you confirm nil returns from DASA to Q's 1 and 2 in the below? We just want to make sure we tick the Airspace Safety angle off, particularly for #2. Draft responses are at the bottom

If you need some top cover to get a 1\* response I can get MLO to push to DASA formally.

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 05 November 2021:

1. Has the Department of Defence had the opportunity to formally review the report completed by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence titled 'Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena' published in June 2021?

2. What guidance, if any, has the Department sought on the publication of the US report and the implications for Australian aerospace?

3. Is the 'Unusual Aerial Sightings Policy' still in effect, and if so when was it last reviewed? If it is not in effect or has been superseded,

4. In 2011, the Department of Defence reported that, in response to a FOI request from the Sydney Morning Herald, it had 'discovered one file, which had not been destroyed but could not be located'. If it could not be located, how would the Department know that the file had not been destroyed? Were all the files referenced hardcopy only (i.e. not digital)?

5. A response from the Department dated 8 June 2011 states that members of the public making reports of "unusual aerial sightings" are directed to their local police authority. What is the protocol for members of the defence forces when reporting such sightings during military operations and/or normal duty?

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson – The Department of Defence provides the following answer to the Senator's question:

### 1. The Department of Defence has not formally reviewed the report

The Department of Defence has not sort guidance on the publication

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### 2.





**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

**BP25352594**

**DEFENCE FOI 459/21/22 STATEMENT OF REASONS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

1. I refer to the application by Grant Lavac under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) for access to:

*"I kindly request a copy of all emails, sent to/from | bcc/cc'd Defence Space Commander Air Vice-Marshal Catherine Roberts for the period 25 June 2021 to 15 April 2022 (inclusive), that contain any of the following keywords: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena; UAP; Unidentified Flying Object; UFO; Unidentified Flying Objects; UFOs; Unauthorised Aircraft Movement; UAM; Unauthorised Aircraft Movements; UAMs; Unusual Aerial Sighting, Unidentified Phenomena."*

**FOI decision maker**

2. I am the authorised officer pursuant to section 23 of the FOI Act to make a decision on this FOI request.

**Documents identified**

3. I identified three documents as matching the description of the request.

**Exclusions**

4. Personal email addresses, signatures, PMKeyS numbers and mobile telephone numbers contained in documents that fall within the scope of the FOI request, duplicates of documents, and documents sent to or from the applicant are excluded from this request. Defence has only considered final versions of documents.

**Decision**

5. I have decided to partially release three documents in accordance with section 22 [access to edited copies with exempt or irrelevant matter deleted] of the FOI Act, on the grounds that the deleted material is considered exempt under section 47F [public interest conditional exemptions-personal privacy] of the FOI Act.

**Material taken into account**

6. In making my decision, I had regard to:
- the terms of the request
  - the content of the identified documents in issue
  - relevant provisions in the FOI Act
  - the Guidelines published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the Guidelines).

## **Reasons for decision**

### **Section 47F - Personal privacy**

7. Upon examination of the documents, I identified information, specifically names, rank, and contact details of individuals other than the applicant. The release of the names, ranks, and contact details of individuals identified in the documents could reasonably be expected to cause harm to their privacy. Exposing their contact details would place them as a point of reference for targeted questioning.

8. When assessing whether the disclosure of personal information is unreasonable, I considered the following factors:

- a. the extent to which the information is well known
- b. whether the person to whom the information relates is known to be (or to have been) associated with the matters dealt with in the document
- c. the availability of the information from publicly accessible sources
- d. the effect the release of the personal information could reasonably have on the third party.

9. I found that the:

- a. specific personal information listed is not well known
- b. individuals whose personal information is contained in the documents are not widely known to be associated with the matters dealt with in the documents
- c. information is not readily available from publicly accessible sources.

10. Taking into account the above factors, I consider that the release of the personal information of individuals other than the applicant would be an unreasonable disclosure of personal information and conditionally exempt under section 47F(1) of the FOI Act. My public considerations are listed below.

### **Sections 47F - Public interest considerations**

11. Section 11A(5) provides that, if a document is conditionally exempt, it must be disclosed “unless (in the circumstances) access to the documents at the time would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest”.

12. In assessing whether disclosure is on balance contrary to the public interest, I considered the Guidelines together with a range of factors set out in section 11B(3) of the FOI Act, which favours access to a document in order to:

- a. promote the objects of this Act (including all the matters set out in sections 3 and 3A)
- b. inform debate on a matter of public importance
- c. promote effective oversight of public expenditure
- d. allow a person to access his or her own personal information.

13. I note that disclosure of the requested document may promote some of the objects of the FOI Act, as information held by the Government is a national resource. However, disclosure of the specific conditionally exempt material would not increase public participation in the Defence process, nor would it increase scrutiny or discussion of Defence activities.

14. While I consider that release of the material removed under section 47F may be of interest to the applicant, disclosure of the conditionally exempt material would not inform public debate on any matter of public importance in any meaningful way. Furthermore, the public interest is better served in protecting the privacy of individuals whose personal details are contained within the document from release to the public at large.

15. Paragraph 6.22 of the Guidelines specifies a non-exhaustive list of public interest factors against disclosure. The factors I find particularly relevant to this request are that release of this information could reasonably be expected to prejudice or harm:

- a. the protection of an individual's right to privacy
- b. the interests of an individual or group of individuals.

16. It is for these reasons that I find that the public interest factors against disclosure outweigh the factors for disclosure and I deem the information exempt under section 47F of the FOI Act.

17. In coming to the above decision I considered factors outlined in section 11B(4) [irrelevant factors] of the FOI Act. None of these factors were taken into account in making my decision.

**PR Davies, CSC**  
Group Captain  
Accredited Decision Maker  
Royal Australian Air Force

1

**From:** s47F  
**To:** [Roberts, Catherine AVM](#)  
**Cc:** s47F  
**Subject:** Senate Estimates Briefs [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Friday, 11 February 2022 10:38:29 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[SB21-001257.docx](#)  
[SB21-000769.docx](#)  
[image002.png](#)

---

**OFFICIAL**

Good Morning Ma'am,

As discussed, please find attached Senate Estimates Briefs.

Sir – I confirm that both briefs have now been assigned to you on PDMS.

Kind Regards,

s47F

Air Vice-Marshal Catherine Roberts, AO, CSC

**Defence Space Command**  
Office of the Space Commander  
R1-6-A005, Russell Offices, Canberra, ACT, 2610

Phone: s47F  
Mobile: s22  
Email: s47F

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# Space Domain and Policy

## CAF BRIEF

### Questions on Notice

#### Estimates QoNs

Hearing	Date	Senator – Question #	Broad Topic
Supplementary Budget Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	27 October 2021	Whish-Wilson - QON 90	Unexplained Aerial Phenomena
Supplementary Budget Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	01 June 2021	Kitching – QON 141	Space Division

#### Other QoNs

Committee Inquiry	Senator – Question #	Broad Topic
Senate	Patrick – QON <a href="#">2160</a>	Space Agency Approvals



Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

CAF BRIEF

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# Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

## CAF BRIEF

### Notes

### Key Messages

- Defence does not have a policy governing the reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) by either members of the public or Defence members.
- The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) ceased the handling of reports of UAP in 1996 after determining there was no scientific or other compelling reason to continue to devote resources to the recording and investigation of UAP.
- Defence safety of flight incidents, including those potentially posed by UAP are handled by the Defence Aviation Safety Authority (DASA), with civilian safety of flight incidents the purview of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

### Strategic Narrative

- UAP are likely to be one of three things:
  - natural or other benign phenomena
  - anomalies with sensors, or
  - (human-made) technologies.
- UAP could be other nations systems, either contemporary or advanced. Information regarding the collection and investigation of these systems is the remit of the Intelligence Community and is classified.

# Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

## CAF BRIEF

### Background

- On 25 June 2021, the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) released a Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (the Report) to provide an intelligence assessment of the threat posed by UAP and the progress the US Department of Defense Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force (UAPTF) has made in understanding this threat.
- The Report does not draw conclusions on what UAP are and most remain unexplained, mainly due to lack of data.
- The Report finds no evidence that UAP are extra-terrestrial in origin.
- The Report did reach the following conclusions:
  - In a limited number of incidents, UAP reportedly appeared to exhibit unusual flight characteristics. These observations could be the result of sensor errors, spoofing, or observer misperception and require additional rigorous analysis.
  - There are probably multiple types of UAP requiring different explanations based on the range of appearances and behaviours described in the available reporting.
  - UAP clearly pose a safety of flight issue and may pose a challenge to U.S. national security. UAP would also represent a national security challenge if they are foreign adversary collection platforms or provide evidence a potential adversary has developed either a breakthrough or disruptive technology.
- On 23 November 2021, the US Director of National Intelligence directed the establishment of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronisation Group to coordinate reporting across US Department of Defense and other US agencies, with the goal to minimise flight safety and national security concerns.
  - Defence has no plans to replicate a similar mechanism. DASA and CASA already serve this function across flight safety issues and apparatus exist for concerns regarding National security.
- Historically the RAAF was responsible for handling UAP reports, however that ceased in 1996. **If civilians wish to report UAP they should** contact their local police authorities, or get in contact with a civil UFO research organisation.
  - The Defence Instruction was cancelled in November 2000 and not replaced.
  - UAP may also be referred to as Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) or Unusual Aerial Sightings (UAS). UAP is the contemporary term for such phenomena.

# Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

## CAF BRIEF

### Talking Points

#### ***How are UAP reported to Defence?***

- Defence does not have a policy for reporting or recording UAP.
- Historically, the RAAF was responsible for handling UAP reports on behalf of Defence, however that ceased in 1996 after determining there was no scientific or other compelling reason to continue to devote resources to the recording and investigation of UAP.
- Defence safety of flight incidents, including those potentially posed by UAP are handled by the Defence Aviation Safety Authority (DASA), with civilian safety of flight incidents the purview of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

#### ***As an ally, have the United States offered to or asked to collaborate on UAP investigations?***

- No, the United States nor any other nation or ally have requested or offered to collaborate on UAP reporting or investigation.
- Defence has no desire to seek collaboration on this issue.

#### ***With the US calling UAP a potential threat to national security, should Australia be concerned too?***

- UAP are likely to be one of three things, natural or other benign phenomena, anomalies with sensors or (human-made) technologies. Information on the human-made technologies is classified and the remit of the Intelligence Community.
- Countering capabilities spanning the maritime, land, air, cyber and space domains that could threaten our national security is a core business of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), any threat to National security is a concern but also a priority for Defence.

#### ***Are UAP a risk to flight safety?***

- Flight safety is a high priority for ADF aviation. Any risks to flight safety are considered serious, but Defence is not aware of UAP being the cause of an aviation safety incident or featured prominently in a safety investigation.

#### ***Are these likely to be extra-terrestrial in origin?***

- There is no evidence to suggest that UAP would be extra-terrestrial in origin.

# Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

## CAF BRIEF

### Timeline of Significant Events/Decisions

Date	Event
25 June 2021	Release of <i>Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena</i> by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence
13 November 2000	DI(G) ADMIN 55-1 outlining ADF policy on Unusual Aerial Policy is cancelled, and not replaced.
27 August 1996	DI(G) ADMIN 55-1 is amended to cease the reporting of unusual aerial sightings to the RAAF.

### Relevant Media Coverage

Date	Source	Item
10 November 2021	The Sun	<a href="#">TIC TAC WOE Fighter pilots who intercept UFOs may suffer radiation burns &amp; experience warped time, Pentagon insider fears</a>
9 November 2021	GQ UK	<a href="#">This man ran the Pentagon's secretive UFO programme for a decade. We had some questions.</a>
29 October 2021	The Australian	<a href="#">For Defence, UFOs exist only in a distant galaxy</a>
28 October 2021	ABC News	<a href="#">Defence won't follow Pentagon to launch an investigation into UFO sightings or Unexplained Aerial Phenomena</a>

# Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

## CAF BRIEF

25 October 2021	Remo News	<a href="#">The NASA leader suggests that UFOs may be aliens</a>
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### Relevant Media Enquires

Date	Event
Nil	Nil

### Relevant Ministerial Comments

Date	Minister	Details
Nil	Nil	Nil

### Questions on Notice

#### Estimates QoNs

Hearing	Date	Senator – Question #	Broad Topic
Supplementary Budget Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	27 October 2021	Peter Whish-Wilson - <a href="#">QON 90</a>	Unexplained Aerial Phenomena

#### Other QoNs

Committee Inquiry	Senator – Question #	Broad Topic
Nil	Nil	Nil

Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

CAF BRIEF

Freedom of Information

Request Date	Who	Relating to	Documents released
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil



Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

CAF BRIEF

Contact and Clearance Offices

Clearing Officer	<div>AVM Catherine Roberts</div> <div>Commander Defence Space Command</div>	Air Force	<div>s22</div>
Consultation	Mr Colin McKenna, Assistant Secretary Strategic Capabilities Policy Development	Strategy, Policy and Industry Group	<div>s22</div>
	BRIG, Warren Gould Director General Systems and Integration	Army	<div>s22</div>
	Mr Rod Smith, STaR Shot Leader – Resilient Multi- mission Space	Defence Science Technology Group	<div>s22</div>
Contact Officer	<div>AIRCDRE Nick Hogan</div> <div>Director General Space Strategic Plans</div>	Air Force	<div>s22</div>

**From:** s47F  
**To:** [Roberts, Catherine AVM](#)  
**Cc:** [Office of Defence Space Commander](#); [Hogan, Nicholas AIRCDRE](#); s47F  
**Subject:** Space Senate Estimates Brief [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Thursday, 31 March 2022 2:15:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[SB21-000769.docx](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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**OFFICIAL**

Good Evening Ma'am,

As discussed, please see updates to page 20 of 33 highlighted in blue. The key changes were a correction of the kinetic and non-kinetic effects examples.

Let me know if you require any further assistance.

Kind Regards,

s47F  
  
Air Vice-Marshal Catherine Roberts, AO, CSC

**Defence Space Command**  
Office of the Space Commander  
F3-2-097, 26 Scherger Avenue  
Fairbairn, ACT, 2600

**Phone:** s47F  
**Mobile:** s22  
**Email:** s47F

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# Space Domain and Policy

## CAF BRIEF

### Questions on Notice

#### Estimates QoNs

Hearing	Date	Senator – Question #	Broad Topic
Supplementary Budget Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	27 October 2021	Whish-Wilson - QON 90	Unexplained Aerial Phenomena
Supplementary Budget Estimates, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	01 June 2021	Kitching – QON 141	Space Division

#### Other QoNs

Committee Inquiry	Senator – Question #	Broad Topic
Senate	Patrick – QON <a href="#">2160</a>	Space Agency Approvals

14

s47F

---

**From:** Hogan, Nicholas AIRCDRE  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 29 March 2022 6:58 PM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** s47F; Roberts, Catherine AVM; s47F; Denney, Robert AVM; Gordon, Philip AIRCDRE; s47F  
**Subject:** Estimates additions [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** SB21-000769\_s47F.docx

**OFFICIAL**

Good evening s47F

As requested changes highlighted (and track changed).

Regards,  
s47F

**Nick Hogan**  
Air Commodore  
Director General Space Capability (Sp8)  
Defence Space Command

s47F | s22 | ASNET 012 02 4579 2825 | F3-2-041 | Fairbairn Precinct, FAIRBAIRN, ACT, 2610

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Questions on Notice

Estimates QONs

Hearing	Date	Senator - Question #	Broad topic
SBE	27 October 2021	Peter Whish-Wilson - <a href="#">QON 90</a>	Unexplained Aerial Phenomena

Other QONs

Nil.

FOI

Nil.

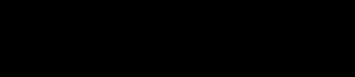


**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE**  
**AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS**

Department of Defence, R1-6-C002, PO Box 7902, CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

MC22-001294

**Mr G Lavac**



Dear Mr Lavac

**UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL PHENOMENA**

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 June 2022 to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, concerning Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) and Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO). I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this matter to my attention.

Defence does not have a protocol for the reporting and recording of UAP and UFO sightings. At this point in time, Defence will not be pursuing research into this matter.

I understand that the United States Congress recently held a hearing on UAP and UFO sightings. As this is a matter from a foreign government I am unable to provide you with further insight.

I understand that this may be disappointing to you, however, I thank you for your ongoing interest and passion on this matter.

Yours sincerely

**RJ Denney, AM**  
**Air Vice-Marshal**  
**Head of Air Force Capability**

07 July 2022