

## "Meteor Showers" At Longreach?

A RAAF team who investigated reports of flying objects in the Longreach area (Queensland) last month believe that the sightings may have been meteor "showers".

The Minister for Air, Mr Howson, said that the RAAF received a considerable number of reports of unidentified objects, and these reports were investigated.

On many occasions, they had turned out to be weather balloons, high-flying aircraft, stars or meteors. Over the last few years, only three or four per cent of these sightings had not been explained on the basis of some natural phenomena.

The sightings were made on July 22 by Mr C. Lanham and a party from an airstrip at Longreach. Mr Lanham, an experienced commercial charter pilot, and his party reported that they observed from six to 10 high-flying objects, somewhat resembling jet aircraft, flying overhead in the vicinity of Longreach.

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While the sightings could not positively be identified, the RAAF investigating team did establish that about the time of the sightings a KLM DC8 aircraft was flying overhead in the vicinity of Longreach at a height of 33,000 ft bound for Manila in the Philippines.

**Mr Howson said that similar sightings were reported to the RAAF last year, and from information made available at that time by the Mount Stromlo Observatory, it appeared likely that the phenomena observed on July 22 could have been associated with a major meteor "shower".**

These meteor "showers" were most prevalent in the southern hemisphere during the months of July and August.

Mr Howson said that, having in mind the information supplied by the observatory, it was probably coincidental that engine noise from the DC8 was associated with the observed phenomena at that time. Noise associated with meteor activity was not unusual, and sometimes occurred when large meteors penetrated the earth's surface at hypersonic speed.