

Wider search for missing aircraft

MELBOURNE: The Department of Transport stepped up yesterday the search for a light aircraft which disappeared last Saturday night after a mysterious "UFO incident" over Bass Strait.

Four twin-engine light aircraft joined a long-range maritime version of the Nomad over the area from Cape Schank to a point 50 kilometres east of King Island and across to Cape Otway.

The pilot of the aircraft, Mr Frederick Valentich, 20, vanished over Bass Strait in his blue and white Cessna 182 after reporting a mystery craft hovering above him.

However, his father, Mr Guido Valentich, who still believes he may be alive said he thought it was possible his son had been taken by a space craft.

As the mystery surrounding the incident deepened yesterday Melbourne radio stations and newspapers were flooded with calls from people reporting strange lights and possible UFO sightings in the past week.

The search will continue today.