

RADAR BLIPS STILL MYSTIFY

SYDNEY: Mystery radar blips picked up at Sydney Airport last week were probably caused by unusual atmospheric conditions, equipment interference or a combination of both, a spokesman for the Department of Aviation said yesterday.

But the spokesman said that the phenomena could not be positively explained.

A UFO debate was sparked when air-traffic controllers reported radar sightings of something travelling at 2400kmh about 100km north of Sydney.

More mystery dots flashed across the screens at Sydney Airport in the weekend.

The Department of Aviation spokesman said that technical personnel had been conducting tests and observations.

The spokesman said that the phenomena were not affecting actual radar returns from aircraft.

"Technical staff at Sydney Airport are continuing to observe the performance of the route surveillance radar in order that the nature of these phenomena can be positively

identified," he said.

After news of the sightings last week the RAAF put Mirage fighters on alert at Williamtown base near Newcastle to try to photograph any mystery objects.

An RAAF spokesman said that the weekend sightings were not picked up on RAAF radar.

"Either they (Sydney Airport radar operators) are getting some interference or their equipment is having problems," he said.