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RAAF turns back on UFO investigations

By ROSS PEAKE

NEXT time you see something blinking in the sky, perhaps piloted by little green persons, think twice before you report it to authorities.

Not only will your friends refuse to take you seriously, but, from today, neither will the Royal Australian Air Force.

Unless, that is, the sighting suggests a "defence or national security implication".

Which is a polite way of telling you sky-watchers that all you've been seeing for years is the Aurora Australis.

The move came yesterday in a low-key statement from the Minister for Defence, Mr Scholes.

"The RAAF in future will investigate fully only those Unusual Aerial Sightings which suggest a defence or national security implication," he said.

Other reports will be recorded but not investigated.

Anybody who reports a

sighting of a UFO — as the rest of us call the things that go zip in the night — will merely be given the name of the civilian research organisation that bother with extra-terrestrial events.

Mr Scholes said previously the RAAF's investigation of all reports had proved time-consuming, unproductive and had led to many hours of follow-up action by the RAAF, the Department of Aviation, the Bureau of Meteorology and other agencies.

Peaked

Mr Scholes said the "vast majority" of reports submitted by the public had proved to have no national security significance.

UFO sightings peaked in Australia in the late 1950s and early 1960s and since then have averaged 120 to 150 each year.