

It's Campbelltown, Jim, but not as we know it

Richard Macey

The fine print in a flyer promoting a national conference on UFOs in Campbelltown next weekend contains a cautionary note.

"The current list of speakers could increase or decrease if unexpected circumstances beyond the control of the organisers should eventuate."

For those dealing with claims that include alien abductions, the warning may be wise.

Up to 200 people, including speakers from the United States, will attend the two-day event at the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

"We want to present to the public the information that exists on the UFO phenomena," explained Doug Moffett, a member of UFO Research NSW.

He estimated "probably half" of the 1000 calls a year received by the Australian UFO Research hotline - 1800 77 22 88 - "are unexplainable ... but that doesn't mean they are ET craft".

Mr Moffett, 44, who has never had a close encounter, quickly admits he learnt first-hand how easy it is to mistake something earthly for an alien experience. He recalled the night, when aged 19, he was driving with his girlfriend in south-west Sydney. "It was pitch black."

Suddenly a bright light appeared, about 30 degrees above the horizon. "It became brighter and brighter." Then two beams of light came down. Something

appeared to be landing in front of them. "My girlfriend was telling me to turn the car around."

Then a four-wheel-drive appeared over a steep hill in front of them. In the dark, unable to see the hill, they had been confused by the headlights of the car. "You can be tricked," Mr Moffett said.

Still, there were far too many detailed sightings that could not be dismissed as weather balloons, Venus, ball lightning or flocks of geese. "Anyone who says they have all been explained hasn't done the work and looked at the stories."

Such as the "bright silver object with a constant red glow" two Mildura constables saw hovering five metres above the Murray on May 17 last year. About 100 metres away, it was "about the size of a small car ... shaped like a triangle with rounded edges". They watched for a minute or two before "it shot off at tremendous speed".

Then there was the incident last March when the crew of a Mexican Air Force plane used infrared equipment to record 11 flying objects for 31 minutes.

Bill Chalker, a qualified Sydney laboratory chemist who runs www.theozfiles.com, will tell the conference about technology that can test physical evidence of alleged encounters.

He says he has already had hair samples, recovered from two alleged NSW alien encounters, DNA tested.

Sydney Morning Herald 29 May 2004 John Pulizzi Sydney Australia