

From: s47E(d) on behalf of [DSTGroupcoord](#)
To: [AIRSP Executive Administration](#)
Cc: [Canney, Shane DR](#); [DSTGroupcoord](#)
Subject: For AIRSP action by 29 September: Senate Estimates briefs for CDS [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 12 September 2023 10:38:50 AM
Attachments: [28. AIRSP - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena \(UAPs\) - SB23-000945.docx](#)
[CDS SE Briefs - Quality Assurance Checklist.pdf](#)

OFFICIAL

Dear AIRSP,

Please find below the list of Senate Estimates briefs allocated to your Division to support CDS at the upcoming Budget Estimates Hearings in October 2023.

Updates to briefs, amended into the master versions attached, are due back with clearance by Band 2 Chiefs NLT **COB 29 September 2023**. Kindly understand this deadline is non-negotiable.

Please verify brief updates against the attached [Quality Assurance checklist](#) before seeking Chief clearance. We appreciate your compliance with the template formatting and layout; this will help reduce the additional quality assurance process DSTG MinCoord undertakes to rectify any changes and ensures CDS receives the briefs the earliest possible.

Kindly note SE briefs co-led with RAAF, Hypersonics and High Altitude Balloons, has already been completed and doesn't require further action.

Please update briefs for the below topics and consider the comments:

| PDR | Topic | Consultation | Comments |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| SB23-000945 | Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAPs) | | <p>NEW Brief: Please follow template guidance. CDS personally requested this brief.</p> <p>Please address Australia's' position on UAPs (in comparison to the US) and recent media coverage.</p> <p>Brief doesn't need to be long, and only cover high level developments.</p> <p>Note relevant questions have been asked to both CDS and CAF in previous Hearings.</p> <p>DSTG Coord will consult with RAAF and share brief with CAF.</p> |

Additional guidance:

- Please keep content of the briefs at OFFICIAL level.
- Focus on key facts and figures with a few succinct points covering the narrative. Avoid assumed knowledge and please review the highlighted sections.
- All dollar and HR figures must be relevant as at **31 August 2023** and must clearly indicate applicable date (ie. DSTG have XX staff as at 31 August 2023 / The NGTF has spent XX on XX projects in FY22-23 to 31 August 2023).

- Please ensure content is consistent across any products that's been developed on the subject matter, for example, if content has been previously used in a QoN, the information should be consistent with the content in the SB.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and contributions.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

s47E(d)

Senior Ministerial Liaison Officer | Office of the Chief Defence Scientist
Defence Science and Technology Group

Department of Defence | Russell | R1-GF-D Zone

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FOLLOW THE DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS BELOW

1. No more than six pages total, excluding essential attachments (e.g. Supporting Information and below). This is a hard rule with no exceptions.
2. Ensure the material included in the brief is current and relevant for the upcoming Estimates specifically, and not simply included because it has been in the past.
3. Ensure information included is suitable for public release. To ensure continuity in the briefing pack, ensure care is taken to correctly format as stated in this template.
4. All names, contact details and dates must be checked and updated prior to returning any revised briefs.
5. Please ensure all example red text is replaced and highlighted yellow instructions are removed.

ENSURE THIS TEXT BOX IS REMOVED BEFORE SUBMITTING

Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAPs)

Handling Note: Position title, Name to lead on topic. (if there are multiple leading officers, please use dot points)

The Handling Note provides guidance on who is in a position to briefing on certain topics.

If nominating the FAS of a different group or service for an issue, please confirm with them directly before submitting the brief.

All officers listed should also be listed in the key witness section in the header.

Key Messages

- . Articulate **what will the Minister, the Secretary or CDF would respond with in the first 20 seconds**.
- . Should clearly and succinctly outline the Government's position and Defence's engagement with the issue.
- . These messages should address the issue/s most likely to be raised.
- . No more than six dot points in length and no more than one sentence per dot point.
- . Dot points can be expanded on under talking points. (eg. the 'what, when, who, how').

Talking Points

Type sub-heading if necessary or delete

- . Use Dot Dash style (as per this example)
 - continue with text
 - : continue with text.
- . Drafting Note: Calibri Light in 12 font, black text. Single spacing with 6pt before and after. Do not add a space between paragraphs.
- . A Senate Estimates brief **should not** replicate the group level brief or a Question Time Brief.
- . TPs should explain ‘what, when, who, how’ on an issue and articulate Defence’s perspective and reasons.
- . There is a preference for certain language formatting in the briefs. See below for preferences:
 - **Dates and year-based data**
 - : Quarters – refer to the full quarter (e.g. Quarter 2, 2023).
 - : Specific Dates – refer to the date as DAY MONTH YEAR. If date is in single digits (for example, the first day of any month) do not reference in double digits (e.g 1 June 2023 is correct, not 01 June 2023).
 - **Financial Year**
 - : Spell out ‘Financial Year’. Do not use ‘FY’.
 - : When referring to specific financial years, the following example should be used. For example, ‘2023-24’ if referring to a single financial year, use ‘2023-24 to 2026-27’ if referring to a range of financial years. Always write the financial year with a hyphen, not a slash (e.g. 2023-24).
 - **Common acronyms**
 - : Refer to the DSR as the Defence Strategic Review. If it appears more than once it can then be represented at the Defence Strategic Review (the Review) and referenced as the Review from there forward. Do not refer to it as the National Defence Review.
 - : When referring to an agency, state/territory or country, use their full name. For example, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade not DFAT, United States not US, New South Wales not NSW.
 - : When referring to rank or title, use full title and name. E.g., Vice Admiral David Johnston, Vice Chief of the Defence Force not VADM David Johnston.

- : Refer to politicians by their most senior or relevant title. Do not refer to them by name. For example, the Minister for Finance not Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, the Prime Minister not the Hon Anthony Albanese MP.
- : It is suitable to refer to the Australian Defence Force as the ADF, and the Australian Public Service as APS. These are the only exceptions to the above.

If pressed: to be in bold and italics

- . Do not use 'if raised', by nature of Senate Estimates, all questions are 'if raised'.
- . Please avoid answering questions with TPs such as *"Conversations with foreign governments are confidential"*. The Australian Parliament has the power to require the disclosure of information and the production of documents from the executive government, in order to fulfil its role of holding the executive to account. There are limited exceptions to this principle. Consider a response which provides as much information as possible, in a manner which avoids the disclosure of sensitive information.
- . Financial data should be as at 31 August 2023 and Personnel data should be as at 1 August 2023 to ensure consistency, reliability and confidence in the underlying data used for Estimates.

Background

- . **Limit background to fit in 6 pages rule.**

Background sub-heading only if background is lengthy, or delete.

- . Type in text if required. Please use hyperlinks in place of attachments.
- . Timelines can be useful, however, please use judgement as to whether the full timeline is better placed in the relevant group level brief. Any timelines should be in chronological order.

Supporting Information [not included in 6 pages limit]

Questions on Notice

Only include Questions on Notice from the 47th Parliament. Delete the below examples and update with relevant information or state "No QoNs asked". **NOTE: Please ensure you include the question and answer to any referenced QoN/s at the end of this brief. See example at the end of this template.**

XXXX Estimates/Inquiry Hearing: (date of hearing)

In QoN XX, **Budget Allocation**, Senator Z (Labour, Queensland) asked to be provided with an itemised breakdown of all costs associated with the contract.

In QoN XX, **New appointment**, Senator P (Green, Victoria) asked for a detailed list of applicants.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests (Delete examples and update with relevant information or write 'No FOIs requested'). Please ensure the status of the Freedom of Information is included. Names of applicants or organisations cannot be included (please use 'an individual' or a 'media organisation' only).

- In January 2022, an individual sought access under Freedom of Information to documentation relating to the XXXXXX contract. **The documents are yet to be released.**
- In June 2021, a media organisation sought access under FOI to documentation relating to Defence's involvement in XXXXX. **The Documents were released on 1 November 2021.**

Recent Ministerial Comments (Delete examples and update with relevant information or "No recent comments". Hyperlinks can be used for lengthy statements, media releases, etc.). The relevant minister should be referred to by their full title, for example, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence Personnel, or the Minister for Defence Industry.

Former ministers should be referred to as 'the then Minister for Defence'. Do not include names or honorifics.

- On 8 December 2020, during Question Time, Senator X asked the then Minister for Defence a question regarding allegations that protestors were forcibly removed from outside a Defence base.
- On 1 August 2022, the Deputy Prime Minister responded to questions about the Prime Minister's visit in an interview with the program ABC 730. The questions related to the commercial value of contracts signed during the visit.

Relevant Media Reporting Update with relevant information or note "None identified". Stream links must be included, ensure font in the hyperlinks are consistent with **Calibri Light in size 12 font**)

- Australian media has reported extensively on XX.
- In News Limited publications on [date], [Journalist's name] wrote that commercial arrangements signed with Y are likely to yield in excess of \$500 million for Australian Subject Matter Experts. [include Stream link].

| | |
|---|--|
| Division: | |
| PDR No: SB23-000945 | |
| Prepared by: Name, Position, Branch Mob: XXXX XXX XXX Ph: XX XXXX XXXX | Cleared by Division Head: (Band 2/2* level) Name, Position, Division Mob: XXXX XXX XXX Ph: XX XXXX XXXX |

| | |
|---|--|
| Date: DAY MONTH YYYY | Date: DAY MONTH YYYY |
| Consultation: Division Name, Position Consultation should be Band 1 / 1*, or higher. | Date: DAY MONTH YYYY Mob: XXXX XXX XXX Ph: XX XXXX XXXX |

Questions on notice referred to within the brief:

(Please remove if no QoNs asked and do not include screenshots of QoNs)

Budget Estimates

Senator Penny Wong

Question Number: X

Date question was tabled: X

Question

INSERT QUESTION

Answer

INSERT ANSWER

Include the answer as it was tabled (check [APH website](#) for wording) if it hasn't been tabled yet please note "Not yet tabled" and highlight yellow to be updated before the hearing.

Quality Assurance Checklist – CDS Senate Estimates Briefs

The below checklist must be completed before submitting the brief to DSTG Ministerial Coordination

- 'If raised' is not used. 'If pressed' has been used instead.
- 'If pressed' sections – headers are in bold and italics.
- Brief is no longer than six pages – not including relevant attachments from Questions on Notice and below.
- Dates do not split over two lines (Use CTRL + SHIFT)
- \$ amounts are spelt out fully and not split over two lines.
- Check use of acronyms and ensure **only** APS and ADF acronyms are used.
- All ADF Ranks and position titles are spelt out in full.
- 'Financial year' is not referred to as 'FY'.
- In the instance where adding a hyperlink changes the font, the font is changed back to remain consistent with body text – **Media section**.
- Use the following format for Media articles: **In News Limited publications on [date], [Journalist's name] wrote that commercial arrangements signed with Y are likely to yield in excess of \$500 million for Australian Subject Matter Experts. [include Stream link].**
- Hyperlinks provided are publically accessible (no objective links) – **Stream is preferred**.
- Double digit dates (e.g 01 March 2023) changed to single digit (e.g. 1 March 2023).
- QoNs are in date order (newest to oldest).
- QoN references are clear, including QoN Number and date of estimates hearing (e.g. QoN 49 from the 2022-23 Budget Estimates hearings on 30-31 May 2023).
- QoNs referenced in the brief are tabled.
- Include QoN number and tabling date in 'Questions on Notice referred to within the brief'.
- Clearance table has been filled out and relevant sections deleted.

From: s47E(d) on behalf of [DSTGroupcoord](#)
To: [Seedhouse, Andrew MR](#); s47E(d)
Cc: [Canney, Shane DR](#); [AIRSP Executive Administration](#); s47E(d); [DSTGroupcoord](#)
Subject: Clearance Request - due by 3pm 20 Sept: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 19 September 2023 10:20:09 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL

Good morning C/CINS,

C/AIRSP will not be able to clear the UAP Senate Estimates brief co-developed with RAAF, and as such, we are kindly requesting your assistance in clearing the DSTG input for the brief. We will send the brief with DSTG input through to you once we receive it from AIRSP, and would much appreciate if you can send the cleared brief back to us by **1500 tomorrow, Wednesday 20 September**.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

s47E(d)

A/g Ministerial Liaison Officer | Office of the Chief Defence Scientist
Defence Science and Technology Group

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From: s47E(d) **On Behalf Of** DSTGroupcoord
Sent: Thursday, 14 September 2023 3:46 PM
To: Canney, Shane DR s47E(d); AIRSP Executive Administration
s47E(d)
Cc: DSTGroupcoord s47E(d)
Subject: Due by 12pm 20 Sept: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear Shane, AIRSP team,

RAAF have confirmed the UAP Senate Estimates brief can be co-developed, and will be included in both CDS and CAF Senate Estimates packs for the October hearing.

Please ensure the DSTG input covers the below:

- Whether there is R&D on UAPs conducted in Australia
- If not, what Australia's opportunities could encompass
- How we do/don't align to the US work
- Handling note: Tanya would lead on [INSERT TOPIC]

Grateful if the attached brief version is updated with DSTG contributions in yellow highlight and return C/AIRSP cleared input by **12pm 20 September 2023**.

Important note: this development means AIRSP Division no longer needs to draft group level briefs (email attached), and the deadline of 29 September no longer applies.

Kind regards,

s47E(d)

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From: s47E(d) > **On Behalf Of** DSTGroupcoord

Sent: Thursday, 14 September 2023 2:58 PM

To: Canney, Shane DR s47E(d) DSTGroupcoord

s47E(d)

Cc: AIRSP Executive Administration s47E(d)

Subject: RE: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Shane,

Thanks for getting back to me.

Tend to concur, I'll engage further with RAAF and let you know the preferred approach.

In the case we provide input to the RAAF brief, input will need to cover what Australia's position may be, how we align to the US, where Tanya would answer questions etc.

Kind regards,

s47E(d)

Senior Ministerial Liaison Officer | Office of the Chief Defence Scientist
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From: Canney, Shane DR s47E(d)

Sent: Wednesday, 13 September 2023 9:20 AM

To: DSTGroupcoord s47E(d)

Cc: AIRSP Executive Administration s47E(d)

Subject: RE: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s47E(d)

I too have been contemplating our approach for this brief. Given the majority of the focus will be on policy and process considerations and we don't currently have any I,S&T in this area, my recommendation is that we align with the same approach taken for HAPS and Hypersonics i.e. RAAF take the lead and we review and supplement with DSTG elements. Can you please liaise with AFHQ to determine the best way forward?

Thanks
Shane

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From: s47E(d) **On Behalf Of** DSTGroupcoord
Sent: Tuesday, 12 September 2023 3:18 PM
To: AIRSP Executive Administration s47E(d)
Canney, Shane DR s47E(d)
Cc: DSTGroupcoord s47E(d)
Subject: FW: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon AIRSP,

Spoke further with RAAF, upon CDS request, for consisting messaging between CDS and CAF at the upcoming Hearing. Confirming that CDS only wants to be across the topic alongside CAF (not lead).

Please advise whether it would be better to co-develop this brief with RAAF, and insert DSTG input rather than complete the new brief request of SB23-000945. This would be similar to the approach we've undertaken with Hypersonics and High Altitude Balloons briefs.

To summarise, let me know whether the DSTG content would be substantially different from the CAF brief or supplementary. We can then re-assess the appropriate way forward to ensure both CAF and CDS are properly briefed.

Happy to discuss further.

Kind regards,

s47E(d)

Senior Ministerial Liaison Officer | Office of the Chief Defence Scientist
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From: s47E(d)
Sent: Tuesday, 12 September 2023 3:35 PM
To: s47E(d)
Cc: RAAF MLO s47E(d)
Subject: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon s47E(d)

As discussed earlier today, please find attached draft CAF UAP Senate Estimates Brief.

If CDS are taking the lead on this, can you please consult with Air Force as to date all matters relating to UAP have been dealt with by us.

If the content of your Brief is substantially different from the CAF brief, we will maintain ours. If not, Air Force will seek a copy of your cleared brief for CAFs pack for Senate Estimates.

Please keep RAAF MLO in the loop and updated on this topic/SEB.

Kind regards

s47E(d)
Ministerial Liaison Officer
Ministerial Liaison Office – Air Force
Directorate Strategic Issues Management

W: s47E(d) M: s22 s47E(d) | Russell Offices, RUSSELL, ACT, 2610

Group Mailbox: [RAAF MLO](#) Website: [Ministerial Liaison Office](#)

cid:image006.png@01D5A9E1.113E50D0



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Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects

Handling Note: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Chief of Air Force, to lead on topic.

Key Messages

- Defence does not have a policy governing the reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena by either members of the public or Defence members.
- The Air Force ceased the handling of reports of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena in 1996, after determining there was no scientific or other compelling reason to continue to devote resources to the recording and investigation of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.
- Defence safety of flight incidents, including those potentially posed by Unidentified Aerial Phenomena, are handled by the Defence Aviation Safety Authority, with civilian safety of flight incidents the purview of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Talking Points

- Under Air Force Aviation Reporting protocols, there has been no records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft over the past ten years.
- Any unidentified aircraft identified by Air Force pilots or personnel entering military controlled airspace or posing a safety risk to military aircraft are subject to Air Force Aviation Safety Reporting protocols.
- Aircrew can report unidentified aircraft to airspace control agencies and report unusual or unexpected activity through Aviation Safety procedures.
- We are aware of the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) within the United States Department of Defense and continue to monitor their reports.
- We are aware of the latest reporting on 19 April 2023, that they are examining a number of cases, however, they have not found any credible evidence of extra-terrestrial activity, off-world technology, or objects that defy the known laws of physics.
- Air Force's position continues to be that there is no scientific or other compelling reason to divert resources to the recording and investigation of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. This aligns resources with the priorities, mission and objective of Defence.

Prepared By:
Name: s47E(d)
Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:
Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Background

- . On 31 August 2023, the United States Department of Defense launched a website for the AARO to provide the public with information concerning the AARO and its efforts to understand and resolve UAP. The website will provide information, including photos and videos on resolved UAP cases as they are declassified and approved for public release.
- . In the US fall, the AARO will launch a secure reporting tool on the website to enable current and former US Government employees, service members, or contractors with direct knowledge of US Government programs or activities to contact the AARO directly to make a report. A mechanism for the general public to make reports will be announced in coming months.
- . On 19 April 2023, the United States Department of Defense, released a news article on the testimony of Senator M Kilpatrick, Director of the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office, at their Senate Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.
- . The article summarises the Senator's testimony:
 - An Unidentified Aerial Phenomena is anything in space, in the air, on land, in the sea or under the sea that cannot be identified and might pose a threat to United States military installations or operations.
 - The Department is working to better understand respond to Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.
 - All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office scientists continue to improve their data collection and implementation of rigorous scientific and intelligence analysis to resolve cases in a systematic and prioritised manner.
 - Only a very small percentage of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reports display signatures that could be reasonably be described as 'anomalous'. The majority of reports demonstrate mundane characteristics of balloons, unmanned aerial systems, clutter, natural phenomena or other readily explainable resources.
 - The All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office have found no credible evidence thus far of extra-terrestrial activity, off-world technology, or objects that defy the known laws of physics.
- . On 11 January 2023, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence delivered the Annual Report on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (now Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena) to Congress as required by their National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022.

Prepared By:

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Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

- The Report summaries that:
 - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena continue to represent a hazard to flight safety and pose a possible adversary collection threat.
 - Since their publication of their preliminary assessment in June 2021, Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reporting has increased, however could be attributed to a concentrated effort to destigmatise the topic.
 - The All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office has been established as the United States Department of Defense focal point for Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.
 - Coordinated efforts between the United States Department of Defense and other Government agencies to collect and report Unidentified Aerial Phenomena events have resulted in increased data sets, spanning multiple security domains.
- On 25 June 2021, the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (the Report) to provide an intelligence assessment of the threat posed by Unidentified Aerial Phenomena and the progress the United States Department of Defense Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force has made in understanding this threat.
- The Report does not draw conclusions on what Unidentified Aerial Phenomena are and most remain unexplained, mainly due to lack of data.
- The Report finds no evidence that Unidentified Aerial Phenomena are extra-terrestrial in origin.
- The Report did reach the following conclusions:
 - In a limited number of incidents, Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reportedly appeared to exhibit unusual flight characteristics. These observations could be the result of sensor errors, spoofing, or observer misperception and require additional rigorous analysis.
 - There are probably multiple types of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena requiring different explanations based on the range of appearances and behaviours described in the available reporting.
 - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena clearly pose a safety of flight issue and may pose a challenge to United States national security. Unidentified Aerial Phenomena would also represent a national security challenge if they are foreign adversary collection platforms or provide evidence a potential adversary has developed either a breakthrough or disruptive technology.
- On 23 November 2021, the United States Director of National Intelligence directed the establishment of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronisation

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Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
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Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Group to coordinate reporting across United States Department of Defense and other United States agencies, with the goal to minimise flight safety and national security concerns.

- Defence has no plans to replicate a similar mechanism. The Defence Aviation Safety Authority and Civil Aviation Safety Authority already serve this function across flight safety issues and apparatus exist for concerns regarding National security.
- Historically the Air Force was responsible for handling Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reports, however that ceased in 1996. If civilians wish to report Unidentified Aerial Phenomena they should contact their local police authorities, or get in contact with a civil Unidentified Flying Object research organisation.
- Unidentified Aerial Phenomena may also be referred to as Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) or Unusual Aerial Sightings (UAS). Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) is the contemporary term for such phenomena.

Supporting information

Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates: 30-31 May 2023

- In QoN 91, **Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena**, Senator Whist-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked a series of follow up questions following Estimates 15 February 2023, on the topic of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.

Supplementary Budget Estimates: 9 November 2022

- In QoN 28, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked whether the Royal Australian Air Force had held discussions with the United States on the topic of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

Budget Estimates: 19 April 2022

- In QoN 38, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice regarding the Royal Australian Air Force Aviation Safety Reporting and for reports of "unusual or unexpected events" in the past 20 years.

Additional Budget Estimates: 25 February 2022

- In QoN 20, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice on existing processes or protocols within the Royal Australian Air Force regarding unidentified aircraft.

Supplementary Budget Estimates: 27 October 2021

- In QoN 29, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Peter Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice on existing processes or protocols within the Royal Australian Air Force regarding unidentified aircraft.

Prepared By:

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Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Supplementary Budget Estimates: 27 October 2021

- In QoN 90, Unidentified Aerial Phenomena, Senator Peter Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice regarding a report published June 2021 by the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence titled 'Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena'.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Air Force continue to receive a number of FOIs on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena from constituents.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

Relevant Media Reporting

- None

| | | | |
|---|---|----------|-------------|
| Division: | Air Force | | |
| PDR No: | SB23-000235 | | |
| Prepared by: s47E(d) RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office Directorate Strategic Issues Management Mob: s22 Date: 11 September 2023 | Cleared by Division Head: Air Vice-Marshal Harvey Reynolds Deputy Chief of Air Force Air Force Headquarters Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 2023 | | |
| Consultation: Air Force Headquarters Air Vice-Marshal Wendy Blyth, Head of Air Force Capability | Date: 2023 | Mob: s22 | Ph: s47E(d) |
| Cleared by CFO / DPG / DSR: | Date: N/A | | |
| Cleared by Deputy Secretary (or equivalent Band 3/3*): Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Chief of Air Force Air Force | Date: 2023 | | |

Prepared By:
Name: s47E(d)
Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:
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Budget Estimates: May 2023
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Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)
Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
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Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Questions on notice referred to within the brief:

Budget Estimates (QoN 91)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

At Estimates on 15 February 2023, Air Marshal Chipman stated that: “We have sought additional information from [the US] through the air attache in Washington.”

1. Has a response been provided by the air attache? If so, what additional information was provided?

At the same Estimates: Senator WHISH-WILSON: The UK government have recently said that they are now going to also look at their ability to detect, for example, slower-moving objects that might be balloons or surveillance balloons or other objects—drones; who knows. Is that something the Australian government might consider, based on your responses?

Air Marshal Chipman: I haven't been directed to do that by the Australian government, but I have asked our Air Commander to understand what capabilities we have in order to detect these sorts of objects in our airspace.

2. What response did the Air Commander provide about capabilities?

A Defence FOI 459/21/22 states that collection and investigation of “these systems” (a reference to other nations systems) is the remit of the Intelligence Community and is classified.

3. What is the process/procedure for Air Defence to provide relevant reports to the Intelligence Community when an UAP (or some other observed phenomenon consistent with being another nations system) is sighted?
4. Did Australia attend the recent Five-eyes meeting held in May 2023? If so, did it attend the US briefing on UAP's?

Answer

1. Yes. The United States military released classified analysis to Defence.
2. The Air Commander provided a classified summary of relevant Air Force capabilities.
3. The Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities; control and reporting system; and procedures enable aircrew and air battle managers to gain awareness and communicate with higher headquarters and the Air Operations Centre (AOC). Intelligence Officers are resident at unit, headquarters and AOC levels in case deeper analysis is warranted.
4. Australia did not attend a United States briefing on UAPs.

Questions on notice referred to within the brief:

Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)
Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
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Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Supplementary Budget Estimates (QoN 28)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

Senator WHISH-WILSON: At the US Congressional hearing on UAP back in May, the Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence, Scott Bray, confirmed that, since the release of this preliminary report in 2021, they now had 400 case reports they were considering. Most of them were from pilots like you. He was quoted at those hearings as saying that the US had brought many allies and international partners into their discussions on UAP. Given how close we are to the US, have there been any discussions with Australian intelligence services or the Air Force in relation to their approach—

Senator WHISH-WILSON: You're 'not aware'; does that mean that this just hasn't come across your desk, or can you say categorically there haven't been any?

Answer

The Royal Australian Air Force has not held any discussions with the United States on the topic of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)
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Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Budget Estimates (QoN 38)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

What the protocols for RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting that relate to unidentified aircraft identified by Air Force pilots or personnel entering military controlled airspace or considered to pose a safety risk to military aircraft? What records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft have been made over the past 20 years? What records of “unusual or unexpected events” (referring to previous QoN) have been made through the RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures over the past 20 years?

Answer

The protocol for reporting of unusual, or unexpected airborne events is through Air Traffic Control or other military control reporting agencies. If the event manifests in a safety issue, then normal, safety reporting protocols are enacted.

There are no records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft made over the past 20 years.

There are no records of “unusual or unexpected events” made through the RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures over the past 20 years.

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Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
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Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Budget Estimates (QoN 20)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

During the last Supplementary Budget Estimates (in response to a question on notice), the Department of Defence advised that there is no protocol for reporting or recording Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.

5. In a scenario that an airforce pilot, or airforce personnel on the ground (such as monitoring radar), detects or sights an aircraft over Australian airspace, or in their sphere of operation, but is unable to identify the nature of the craft, what is the process/protocol for pilot and/or personnel to report their observation?
6. If there is an existing protocol – how many such observations or sightings have been made in the past 10 years? If there is no protocol – by what means does the air force maintain the security of Australian Airspace in dealing with unidentified craft?
7. What encouragement is given to pilots to make reports of aircraft they cannot identify?

Answer

1. Any unidentified aircraft identified by Air Force pilots or personnel entering military controlled airspace or pose a safety risk to military aircraft are subject to RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting protocols.
2. Under RAAF Aviation Reporting protocols, there has been no records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft over past ten years.
3. There is no specific encouragement given to pilots to report aircraft they cannot identify, rather to report unusual or unexpected events through RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures.

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Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Supplementary Budget Estimates (QoN 29)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Does the characterisation of the DOD, in relation to their report, of both intent and advanced technology concern you? Basically, they're saying they can't explain what these things are, but they would like to better understand them.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Would it be possible for you to see if, across the other services, there has been any kind of reporting system in relation to this in Australia?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. Typically, would something like Jindalee be able to pick-up fast-moving objects, or is it more designed to look at ships and—

Answer

The Department of Defence does not have a protocol for reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.

Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)
Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
Division: RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office
Phone: s22

Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

Budget Estimates: May 2023
Last updated:

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Aerial Phenomena/Unidentified
Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman

Supplementary Budget Estimates (QoN 90)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Does the characterisation of the DOD, in relation to their report, of both intent and advanced technology concern you? Basically, they're saying they can't explain what these things are, but they would like to better understand them.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Would it be possible for you to see if, across the other services, there has been any kind of reporting system in relation to this in Australia?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. Typically, would something like Jindalee be able to pick-up fast-moving objects, or is it more designed to look at ships and—

Answer

1. The Department of Defence has not formally reviewed the report.
2. The Department of Defence has not sought guidance on the publication.
3. The Unusual Aerial Sightings Policy was last reviewed in November 2003 and cancelled 25 March 2013.
4. A file was confirmed in 2008 to be at the National Archives of Australia. The interest of its location was raised again in 2011, however Defence was unable to verify its location nor held record of the file being destroyed. As such and to date, the Department of Defence cannot confirm its current existence.
5. The Department of Defence does not have a protocol for reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) or Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO). The Air Force ceased handling reports of UAP or UFO in 1996 after determining that there was no scientific or other compelling reason for the Air Force to continue to devote resources to the recording and investigation of UAP or UFO.

Prepared By:

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Position: Ministerial Liaison Officer
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Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
Group/Service: Air Force
Phone: s22

From: [Canney, Shane DR](#)
To: s47E(d)
Subject: FW: Urgent: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects - FINAL REVIEW FRI 20 OCT 23 [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 24 June 2024 2:13:05 PM

OFFICIAL

IMPORTANT: This email remains the property of the Department of Defence. Unauthorised communication and dealing with the information in the email may be a serious criminal offence. If you have received this email in error, you are requested to contact the sender and delete the email immediately.

From: Canney, Shane DR
Sent: Friday, 20 October 2023 3:13 PM
To: s47E(d)
Cc: DSTGroupcoord s47E(d)
s47E(d) AIRSP Program Operations
s47E(d)
Subject: RE: Urgent: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects - FINAL REVIEW FRI 20 OCT 23 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s47E(d)

I have reviewed the latest brief and this is consistent with previous DSTG input. Happy to clear without further changes.

Regards
Shane

IMPORTANT: This email remains the property of the Department of Defence. Unauthorised communication and dealing with the information in the email may be a serious criminal offence. If you have received this email in error, you are requested to contact the sender and delete the email immediately.

From: s47E(d)
Sent: Friday, 20 October 2023 1:46 PM
To: Canney, Shane DR s47E(d) AIRSP Program Operations
s47E(d)
Cc: DSTGroupcoord s47E(d)
s47E(d)
Subject: Urgent: SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/Unidentified

Flying Objects - FINAL REVIEW FRI 20 OCT 23 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon AIRSP,

As indicated below, requesting your urgent review of the attached SEB on UAPs and advise whether there are any issues with this draft from your perspective.

Appreciate any advice the earliest possible so we can feed back to CDS and RAAF MLO.

Many thanks,

s47E(d)

Senior Ministerial Liaison Officer | Office of the Chief Defence Scientist
Defence Science and Technology Group

Department of Defence | Russell | R1-GF-D Zone

PO Box 7931 | CANBERRA BC ACT 2601

Ph: s47E(d) | www.defence.gov.au

E: s47E(d)

E: s47E(d)

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From: s47E(d)

On Behalf Of

RAAF MLO

Sent: Friday, 20 October 2023 1:40 PM

To: s47E(d)

s47E(d)

Cc: RAAF MLO s47E(d)

Subject: 231020 - SB23-000235 (Revision) - Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects - FINAL REVIEW FRI 20 OCT 23 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: High

OFFICIAL

A/PSO ACAUST, Hi Sir,

- As you discussed with s47E(d) earlier today, PFA subj SEB for a final ACAUST review prior to CAF clearance – as CAF will be clearing the brief morning of Mon 23 Oct, would appreciate it

if you could please facilitate ACAUST review and subsequent advice back to MLO-AF by EO today Fri 20 Oct

- FYSA the revision was in response to CAF's feedback in the attached markup, and his feedback as recorded in DSIM email of 1243 h 23 Oct 23 as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------|--|----------------------|
| SB23-000235 UAP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need better description of our engagement with US authorities (what is our relationship with them), particularly attendance at 'set briefings'• Ensure consistency of assertions in this brief is consistent with testimony noted in the back of the brief• Key argument is that many unidentified aircraft are addressed through routine air traffic procedures. The creation of new procedures to address any unidentified aircraft would need to be of a magnitude to justify the cost of establishing such a system. We do not believe that this threshold has been met.• Ensure that Dr Munro at DSTG has a copy of this brief | DCAF (DSIM) / ACAUST |
|-----------------|--|----------------------|

DSTG Coord, Hi s47E(d)

- As per table above, CAF has requested that Dr Munro be supplied a copy of the subj brief – MLO-AF will ensure a copy of the final cleared brief is distributed accordingly early next week
- While content pertaining to DSTG has not been changed in this revision, the current version is attached for Dr Munro's SA – if there are any issues with this draft from your group's perspective, please advise by EO today Fri 20 Oct

Cheers,

s47E(d)

Squadron Leader

SO2 Ministerial Liaison Officer

Directorate of Strategic Issues Management Air Force Headquarters

s47E(d)

| s22

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Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/Unidentified Flying Objects

Handling Note:

- Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Chief of Air Force, to lead on topic.
- Professor Tanya Monro, Chief Defence Scientist to lead on Defence Science and Technology Group activities related to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.

Key Messages

- Defence does not have a specific policy governing the reporting or recording of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena by either members of the public or Defence members, rather it relies on existing reporting mechanisms.
- Air Force ceased handling reports of the then-termed Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) in 1996 after determining there was no scientific or other compelling reason to continue resourcing their recording and investigation.
- There are existing procedures and mechanisms that apply to unsafe and/or noncompliant military and civilian aviation incidents, regardless of whether one would choose to characterise the aircraft in question as ‘anomalous’ or not. In this respect there are already sufficient protocols in place to enable the reporting of aerial Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.

Talking Points

- Defence continues to assess that there is no compelling reason to divert resources to the specific recording and investigation of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena. This aligns resources with the priorities, mission and objectives of Defence.
- There are well established air traffic control procedures utilised by military and Airservices controllers, and aircrew for the management and reporting of airspace infringements—that is the unauthorised entry of an aircraft into airspace that is either prohibited, or where clearance is required—and unknown aircraft. There are also equally well established military and civilian mechanisms for the reporting of incidents that pose a risk to aviation safety.
- Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities, control and reporting system and procedures also enable our aircrew and air battle managers to gain awareness and communicate with higher headquarters and the Air Operations Centre (AOC). Intelligence Officers are resident at unit, headquarters and AOC levels in case deeper analysis is warranted.

Prepared By:

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Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman
Position: Chief of Air Force
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Supplementary Budget Estimates: October 2023
Last updated: 22 September 2023

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/
Unidentified Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

- The United States (US) Department of Defense (DoD) considers that ‘anomalous detections’ include, but are not limited to phenomena that demonstrate apparent capabilities or material that exceed known performance envelopes. There have been no reports of Air Force observations or sightings lodged over at least the past ten years that would meet this definition.
- We are aware of the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) within the US DoD and continue to monitor their reports. Noting the multiple reporting mechanisms already in place, there would need to be relevant reporting of sufficient volume and credibility to justify consideration of allocating resources to establish a similar body in the Australian context.
- We are aware of the reporting on 19 April 2023 that the AARO is examining a number of cases; however, they have also stated clearly for the record that in their research they have so far found no credible evidence of extra-terrestrial activity, off-world technology, or objects that defy the known laws of physics.
- The AARO has stated that a very small percentage of UAP reports display signatures that could be reasonably be described as ‘anomalous’. The majority of reports they have examined demonstrate mundane characteristics of balloons, unmanned aerial systems, clutter, natural phenomena or other readily explainable resources.
- Defence Science and Technology Group does not conduct specific research and development on UAP and is currently not funded to do so. Defence Science and Technology Group aligns with Air Force’s position that there is no scientific reason to conduct research on UAP.
- Defence Science and Technology Group provides support to the ADF to identify and classify objects detected by sensing technology and currently has in place projects aligned with the requirements of the Defence Strategic Review to improve sensing and intelligence gathering in support of Defence of Australia and its interests.
- Defence Science and Technology Group works with Allied Scientists and to date has had no collaboration on UAP; nor has there been any indication that collaboration would be of benefit. Specifically, Defence Science and Technology Group collaborates closely with the USAF Air Force Research Laboratory through the Air Senior National Representative forum who have not placed any priority on collaboration in UAP.

Prepared By:

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Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

If raised: has the US shared intelligence regarding UAP?

- The United States has shared intelligence on UAP. Defence will continue to monitor and engage with the AARO on UAP, especially if they are deemed to be a security or safety threat.

Background

- On 14 September 2023, the NASA UAP Independent Study Team that was commissioned on 9 June 2022, published its final report. While the AARO leads the US whole-of-government response to UAP, the team recommended that NASA play an essential role within that framework. The team's overall recommendation for NASA from its report was that the agency play a prominent role in the government's effort to understand UAP by furthering the study and data collection of UAP.
- A summary of the report's key points follow:
 - The nature of science is to explore the unknown, and data is the language scientists use to discover our universe's secrets. Despite numerous accounts and visuals, the absence of consistent, detailed and curated observations means they do not presently have the body of data needed to make definitive, scientific conclusions about UAP.
 - The study team found no evidence that reported UAP observations are extra-terrestrial.
 - Recommended that NASA play a prominent role in the whole-of-government effort to understand UAP by leveraging extensive expertise to contribute to a comprehensive evidence-based approach that is rooted in the scientific method.
 - The panel found that public engagement in the effort to better understand UAP will be vital and that NASA lending its name to UAP studies is already helping to reduce stigma associated with reporting. NASA recommended that beyond this, exploration into the viability of developing or acquiring a crowdsourcing system, such as open-source smartphone apps to gather imaging data and other smartphone sensor data from multiple citizen observers as part of a wider effort to more systemically gather public UAP reports.
 - NASA recommended that their Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS)—which collects, analyses, and responds to voluntarily submitted aviation safety incident reports in order to lessen the likelihood of aviation accidents—be harnessed to collect commercial pilot UAP reporting to provide a database that would be valuable for the whole-of-government effort to understand UAP
 - Finally, the NASA report states that the threat to the United States' airspace safety posed by UAP is self-evident.

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- The day following the release of the UAP study team's report, NASA announced the appointment of Mark McLnerney as their Director of UAP research. This appointment is a contribution to the United States Federal Government's unified effort on UAP.
- On 31 August 2023, the United States Department of Defense launched a website for the AARO to provide the public with information concerning the AARO and its efforts to understand and resolve UAP. The website will provide information, including photos and videos on resolved UAP cases as they are declassified and approved for public release.
- In the US fall, the AARO will launch a secure reporting tool on their website to enable current and former US Government employees, service members, or contractors with direct knowledge of US Government programs or activities to contact the AARO directly to make a report. A mechanism for the general public to make reports will be announced in coming months.
- On 26 July 2023, the United States Committee for National Security, the Border and Foreign Affairs held a hearing on UAP Implications on National Security, Public Safety and Government Transparency.
- Salient points from the hearing follows:
 - A former military intelligence officer turned-whistle-blower testified that Congress is being kept in the dark about UAP. He alleged that funds have been misappropriated to shield multi-decade UAP crash retrieval and reverse-engineering program operations from congressional oversight.
 - The witness also alleged that he interviewed officials who had direct knowledge of aircraft with non-human origins and that so called 'biologics' were recovered from some craft.
 - Members from both parties questioned how Congress should go about investigating the remarkable allegations.
 - All witnesses stated that current reporting systems were inadequate to investigate UAP encounters and a stigma still exists for pilots and officials who press for more transparency about their experiences.
 - Lawmakers expressed their anger about their inability to retrieve information about UAPs from the military and intelligence agencies describing a system of over classification that shields reports of incidents from public view calling for disclosure, the time has come.
 - Several lawmakers were looking forward to getting some answers in a more confidential setting and assume some legislation will come as a result.

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PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/
Unidentified Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

- While there has been no official US DoD response to the 26 July 2023 hearing, Dr Kirkpatrick issued a memo containing personal observations and opinions via social media stating that he found the allegations disappointing and insulting to the AARO professional community, and affirming that the AARO has yet to find any credible evidence to support the allegations of any reverse engineering program for non-human technology.
- On 19 April 2023, Dr Sean M Kirkpatrick, Director of the AARO, testified at the Senate Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities hearing on the mission, activities, oversight and budget of the AARO.
- A US DoD article published the same day summarises Dr Kirkpatrick's testimony as follows:
 - An Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena is anything in space, in the air, on land, in the sea or under the sea that cannot be identified and might pose a threat to United States military installations or operations.
 - The Department is working to better understand and respond to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.
 - All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office scientists continue to improve their data collection and implementation of rigorous scientific and intelligence analysis to resolve cases in a systematic and prioritised manner.
 - Only a very small percentage of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena reports display signatures that could be reasonably be described as 'anomalous'. The majority of reports demonstrate mundane characteristics of balloons, unmanned aerial systems, clutter, natural phenomena or other readily explainable resources.
 - The All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office have found no credible evidence thus far of extra-terrestrial activity, off-world technology, or objects that defy the known laws of physics.
- On 11 January 2023, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence delivered the Annual Report on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (now Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena) to Congress as required by their National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022.
- The Report outlines that:
 - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena continue to represent a hazard to flight safety and pose a possible adversary collection threat.
 - Since their publication of their preliminary assessment in June 2021, Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reporting has increased, however could be attributed to a concentrated effort to destigmatise the topic.

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Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

- The All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office has been established as the United States Department of Defense focal point for Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.
- Coordinated efforts between the United States Department of Defense and other Government agencies to collect and report Unidentified Aerial Phenomena events have resulted in increased data sets, spanning multiple security domains.
- On 15 July 2022 the US Deputy Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Director of National Intelligence, amended her original direction to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security by renaming and expanding the scope of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Group to the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO). The AARO was charged with serving as the authoritative office dealing not just aerial phenomena but all anomalous, unidentified space, airborne, submerged and transmedium objects activities for the DoD
- On 25 June 2021, the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (the Report) to provide an intelligence assessment of the threat posed by Unidentified Aerial Phenomena and the progress the United States Department of Defense Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force has made in understanding this threat.
- The Report does not draw conclusions on what Unidentified Aerial Phenomena are and most remain unexplained, mainly due to lack of data.
- The Report finds no evidence that Unidentified Aerial Phenomena are extra-terrestrial in origin.
- The Report did reach the following conclusions:
 - In a limited number of incidents, Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reportedly appeared to exhibit unusual flight characteristics. These observations could be the result of sensor errors, spoofing, or observer misperception and require additional rigorous analysis.
 - There are probably multiple types of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena requiring different explanations based on the range of appearances and behaviours described in the available reporting.
 - Unidentified Aerial Phenomena clearly pose a safety of flight issue and may pose a challenge to United States national security. Unidentified Aerial Phenomena would also represent a national security challenge if they are foreign adversary collection platforms or provide evidence a potential adversary has developed either a breakthrough or disruptive technology.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates: October 2023
Last updated: 22 September 2023

PDR No: SB23-000235
Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena/
Unidentified Flying Objects

Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

- On 23 November 2021, the United States Director of National Intelligence directed the establishment of the Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronisation Group to coordinate reporting across United States Department of Defense and other United States agencies, with the goal to minimise flight safety and national security concerns.
- Historically the Air Force was responsible for handling Unidentified Aerial Phenomena reports, however that ceased in 1996. If civilians wish to report Unidentified Aerial Phenomena they should contact their local police authorities, or get in contact with a civil Unidentified Flying Object research organisation.
- Unidentified Aerial Phenomena may also be referred to as Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) or Unusual Aerial Sightings (UAS). Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) is the contemporary term for such phenomena.

Supporting information

Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates: 30-31 May 2023

- In QoN 91, **Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena**, Senator Whist-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked a series of follow up questions following Estimates 15 February 2023, on the topic of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.

Supplementary Budget Estimates: 9 November 2022

- In QoN 28, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked whether the Royal Australian Air Force had held discussions with the United States on the topic of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

Budget Estimates: 19 April 2022

- In QoN 38, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice regarding the Royal Australian Air Force Aviation Safety Reporting and for reports of “unusual or unexpected events” in the past 20 years.

Additional Budget Estimates: 25 February 2022

- In QoN 20, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice on existing processes or protocols within the Royal Australian Air Force regarding unidentified aircraft.

Supplementary Budget Estimates: 27 October 2021

- In QoN 29, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Peter Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice on existing processes or protocols within the Royal Australian Air Force regarding unidentified aircraft.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates: 27 October 2021

- In QoN 90, **Unidentified Aerial Phenomena**, Senator Peter Whish-Wilson (Green, Tasmania) asked for advice regarding a report published June 2021 by the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence titled 'Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena'.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Air Force continues to receive a number of FOIs on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena from constituents.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 15 September 2023, The ABC published article titled [NASA releases UAP report, says more data and scientific techniques are needed to better understand UFOs](#). Journalist Jenny Cai wrote of the released NASA report which found no evidence that the reported sightings had 'extra-terrestrial origins'.

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| Division: Air Force | |
| PDR No: SB23-000235 | |
| Prepared by: s47E(d) RAAF Ministerial Liaison Office Directorate Strategic Issues Management Mob: s22 Date: 19 September 2023 | Cleared by Division Head: Air Commodore James Badgery Chief of Staff – Air Force Headquarters Air Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 September 2023 |
| Consultation: Air Force Headquarters Air Vice-Marshal Wendy Blyth, Head of Air Force Capability Defence Science & Technology Group Mr Andrew Seedhouse, Chief Cyber, Intelligence & National Security | Date: 20 September 2023 Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 20 September 2023 Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) |
| Cleared by CFO / DPG / DSR: | Date: N/A |
| Cleared by Deputy Secretary (or equivalent Band 3/3*): Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Chief of Air Force Air Force | Date: DD Month 2023 |

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Questions on notice referred to within the brief:

Budget Estimates (QoN 91)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

At Estimates on 15 February 2023, Air Marshal Chipman stated that: "We have sought additional information from [the US] through the air attache in Washington."

1. Has a response been provided by the air attache? If so, what additional information was provided?

At the same Estimates: Senator WHISH-WILSON: The UK government have recently said that they are now going to also look at their ability to detect, for example, slower-moving objects that might be balloons or surveillance balloons or other objects—drones; who knows. Is that something the Australian government might consider, based on your responses?

Air Marshal Chipman: I haven't been directed to do that by the Australian government, but I have asked our Air Commander to understand what capabilities we have in order to detect these sorts of objects in our airspace.

2. What response did the Air Commander provide about capabilities?

A Defence FOI 459/21/22 states that collection and investigation of "these systems" (a reference to other nations systems) is the remit of the Intelligence Community and is classified.

3. What is the process/procedure for Air Defence to provide relevant reports to the Intelligence Community when an UAP (or some other observed phenomenon consistent with being another nations system) is sighted?
4. Did Australia attend the recent Five-eyes meeting held in May 2023? If so, did it attend the US briefing on UAP's?

Answer

1. Yes. The United States military released classified analysis to Defence.
2. The Air Commander provided a classified summary of relevant Air Force capabilities.
3. The Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities; control and reporting system; and procedures enable aircrew and air battle managers to gain awareness and communicate with higher headquarters and the Air Operations Centre (AOC). Intelligence Officers are resident at unit, headquarters and AOC levels in case deeper analysis is warranted.
4. Australia did not attend a United States briefing on UAPs.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates (QoN 28)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

Senator WHISH-WILSON: At the US Congressional hearing on UAP back in May, the Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence, Scott Bray, confirmed that, since the release of this preliminary report in 2021, they now had 400 case reports they were considering. Most of them were from pilots like you. He was quoted at those hearings as saying that the US had brought many allies and international partners into their discussions on UAP. Given how close we are to the US, have there been any discussions with Australian intelligence services or the Air Force in relation to their approach—

Senator WHISH-WILSON: You're 'not aware'; does that mean that this just hasn't come across your desk, or can you say categorically there haven't been any?

Answer

The Royal Australian Air Force has not held any discussions with the United States on the topic of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena.

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Budget Estimates (QoN 38)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

What the protocols for RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting that relate to unidentified aircraft identified by Air Force pilots or personnel entering military controlled airspace or considered to pose a safety risk to military aircraft? What records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft have been made over the past 20 years? What records of “unusual or unexpected events” (referring to previous QoN) have been made through the RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures over the past 20 years?

Answer

The protocol for reporting of unusual, or unexpected airborne events is through Air Traffic Control or other military control reporting agencies. If the event manifests in a safety issue, then normal, safety reporting protocols are enacted.

There are no records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft made over the past 20 years.

There are no records of “unusual or unexpected events” made through the RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures over the past 20 years.

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Budget Estimates (QoN 20)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

During the last Supplementary Budget Estimates (in response to a question on notice), the Department of Defence advised that there is no protocol for reporting or recording Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.

5. In a scenario that an airforce pilot, or airforce personnel on the ground (such as monitoring radar), detects or sights an aircraft over Australian airspace, or in their sphere of operation, but is unable to identify the nature of the craft, what is the process/protocol for pilot and/or personnel to report their observation?
6. If there is an existing protocol – how many such observations or sightings have been made in the past 10 years? If there is no protocol – by what means does the air force maintain the security of Australian Airspace in dealing with unidentified craft?
7. What encouragement is given to pilots to make reports of aircraft they cannot identify?

Answer

1. Any unidentified aircraft identified by Air Force pilots or personnel entering military controlled airspace or pose a safety risk to military aircraft are subject to RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting protocols.
2. Under RAAF Aviation Reporting protocols, there has been no records of observations or sightings of unidentified aircraft over past ten years.
3. There is no specific encouragement given to pilots to report aircraft they cannot identify, rather to report unusual or unexpected events through RAAF Aviation Safety Reporting procedures.

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Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

Supplementary Budget Estimates (QoN 29)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Does the characterisation of the DOD, in relation to their report, of both intent and advanced technology concern you? Basically, they're saying they can't explain what these things are, but they would like to better understand them.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Would it be possible for you to see if, across the other services, there has been any kind of reporting system in relation to this in Australia?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. Typically, would something like Jindalee be able to pick-up fast-moving objects, or is it more designed to look at ships and—

Answer

The Department of Defence does not have a protocol for reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena or Unidentified Flying Objects.

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Key witness/es: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Professor Tanya Monro

Supplementary Budget Estimates (QoN 90)

Topic: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Senator Whish-Wilson

Question

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Does the characterisation of the DOD, in relation to their report, of both intent and advanced technology concern you? Basically, they're saying they can't explain what these things are, but they would like to better understand them.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Would it be possible for you to see if, across the other services, there has been any kind of reporting system in relation to this in Australia?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. Typically, would something like Jindalee be able to pick-up fast-moving objects, or is it more designed to look at ships and—

Answer

1. The Department of Defence has not formally reviewed the report.
2. The Department of Defence has not sought guidance on the publication.
3. The Unusual Aerial Sightings Policy was last reviewed in November 2003 and cancelled 25 March 2013.
4. A file was confirmed in 2008 to be at the National Archives of Australia. The interest of its location was raised again in 2011, however Defence was unable to verify its location nor held record of the file being destroyed. As such and to date, the Department of Defence cannot confirm its current existence.
5. The Department of Defence does not have a protocol for reporting or recording of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) or Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO). The Air Force ceased handling reports of UAP or UFO in 1996 after determining that there was no scientific or other compelling reason for the Air Force to continue to devote resources to the recording and investigation of UAP or UFO.

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