

Air chiefs fear park could be dangerous

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By **CHERIE BEACH**

Darwin air authorities are campaigning against the possible development of a multi-million theme park because they fear it could cause a disaster.

RAAF Squadron Leader Frank Iwanowski and Federal Airports Corporation Darwin general manager Bruno Santalucia said lights under the flightpaths to the airport might confuse pilots at night.

They also warned development might interfere with navigation equipment.

"We're not scaremongering. It's a possibility and that is one of the major concerns," Sdn Ldr Iwanowski said.

Mr Santalucia said: "It's happened in Melbourne where there's development near the airport and a plane crashed."

The pair were speaking after meeting Lands Minister Steve Hatton and the NT Planning Authority over the development of the McDonalds restaurant on the corner of Fitzer Drive and Bagot Road last week.

The McDonalds restaurant

has been approved. But plans to build a huge commercial, tourism and leisure park on vacant Aboriginal land bounded by Bagot Road and Dick Ward Drive are yet to be approved.

The proposed theme park includes a motel-restaurant, a nine-hole golf course, including a driving range, a go-kart track and a water recreation park.

Sports venues for indoor cricket, volleyball, badminton, basketball and netball would also be developed.

Sdn Ldr Iwanowski and Mr Santalucia said they would detail their safety concerns at a hearing to rezone of the land for the development.

Weapons

The land is one kilometre from the touchdown point where 80 000 aircraft — ranging from light planes to fighter aircraft carrying weapons — flew in and out of Darwin in the past 18 months.

Another major concern was that complaints about noise might escalate into demands the airport be shifted.

Above: In 1992 the RAAF opposed the proposal by Vysrose Pty Ltd and the Gwalwa Daraniki Association for a theme park on the Kulaluk lease in the flight path of the Darwin airport. The plans for the theme park included a nine-hole golf course, motel-restaurant, and sports venues



Above: a mirage jet that crash landed on the tidal flats in Kulaluk Bay in 1985. This aeroplane is now in the aviation museum in Darwin.