



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

ATSB TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATION REPORT

Aviation Occurrence Report – 200606354

Final

**Collision with terrain
102 km north of Port Moresby, PNG
20 October 2006
P2-HBG
Bell Helicopter Co 206L-3, Jetranger**



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ISBN and formal report title: see 'Document retrieval information' on page iii.

DOCUMENT RETRIEVAL INFORMATION

Report No.	Publication date	No. of pages	ISBN
200606354	3 May 2007	5	978-1-921164-69-6

Publication title

Collision with terrain – 102 km north of Port Moresby, PNG – 20 October 2006 – P2-HBG, Bell Helicopter Co 206L-3, Jetranger

Prepared by

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Reference No.

Mar2007/DOTARS 50223

Abstract

On 23 October 2006, the Air Safety Investigation Branch (ASIB) of Papua New Guinea notified the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) of an accident that occurred on 20 October 2006, at 1200 Eastern Daylight-saving Time, involving a Bell Helicopter Co Jetranger helicopter, registered P2-HBG, that was piloted by an Australian citizen. The helicopter was reported missing and was subsequently found to have impacted rough terrain approximately 102 km north of Port Moresby. The pilot and three passengers were fatally injured.

The ATSB initially appointed an expert to the investigation into the accident, in accordance with clause 5.27 of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

On 6 November 2006, the ASIB requested ATSB assistance to oversight the examination of the helicopter's engine that was to be conducted at an Australian maintenance facility. To assist in that process, it was agreed that the ATSB could appoint an accredited representative, in accordance with Clause 5.23 of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, to participate in the ASIB's investigation.

To protect the information supplied by the ASIB to the ATSB and investigative work undertaken to assist the ASIB, the ATSB initiated an investigation under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*. Subsequently, the ASIB advised the ATSB that the engine examination would not be conducted in Australia.

On completion of its investigation, the ASIB of Papua New Guinea will publish the final investigation report regarding the accident.

THE AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SAFETY BUREAU

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an operationally independent multi-modal Bureau within the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services. ATSB investigations are independent of regulatory, operator or other external bodies.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

Purpose of safety investigations

The object of a safety investigation is to enhance safety. To reduce safety-related risk, ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not the object of an investigation to determine blame or liability. However, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

Developing safety action

Central to the ATSB's investigation of transport safety matters is the early identification of safety issues in the transport environment. The ATSB prefers to encourage the relevant organisation(s) to proactively initiate safety action rather than release formal recommendations. However, depending on the level of risk associated with a safety issue and the extent of corrective action undertaken by the relevant organisation, a recommendation may be issued either during or at the end of an investigation.

The ATSB has decided that when safety recommendations are issued, they will focus on clearly describing the safety issue of concern, rather than providing instructions or opinions on the method of corrective action. As with equivalent overseas organisations, the ATSB has no power to implement its recommendations. It is a matter for the body to which an ATSB recommendation is directed (for example the relevant regulator in consultation with industry) to assess the costs and benefits of any particular means of addressing a safety issue.

About ATSB investigation reports: How investigation reports are organised and definitions of terms used in ATSB reports, such as safety factor, contributing safety factor and safety issue, are provided on the ATSB web site www.atsb.gov.au.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

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1 A State which has a special interest in an accident by virtue of fatalities or serious injuries to its citizens shall, upon making a request to do so, be permitted by the State conducting the investigation to appoint an expert.

2 Any State which on request provides information, facilities or experts to the State conducting the investigation shall be entitled to appoint an accredited representative to participate in the investigation.