

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198803503**

**Piper Cherokee PA28-180**

**25 November 1988**

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**NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

This accident was not the subject of an on-site investigation.

**Occurrence Number:** 198803503 **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** Wongalee Station (33 km NE Hughenden) QLD  
**Date:** 25 November 1988 **Time:** 800  
**Highest Injury Level:** Nil  
**Injuries:**

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Piper Cherokee PA28-180  
**Registration:** VH-ERR  
**Serial Number:** 28-955  
**Operation Type:** Private  
**Damage Level:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** Wongalee QLD  
**Departure Time:** N/A  
**Destination:** Wongalee QLD

**Approved for Release:** March 6th 1989

**Circumstances:**

As the pilot rotated the aircraft for takeoff he heard several bangs and felt there was an accompanying power loss, so he aborted the take-off. When it appeared he would be unable to stop in the strip remaining he deliberately ground looped the aircraft. The nosewheel leg was damaged and the propeller struck the surface of the strip, necessitating an engine strip - the propeller was not damaged. An inspection of the aircraft did not find any fault with either the engine or the braking system. The blacksoil strip was found to be very soft and it is considered that the retarding action of the strip caused the pilot to believe a power loss had occurred. The bangs heard by him were probably caused by clods of dirt hitting the fuselage.

**Significant Factors:**

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The aircraft was being operated at a high all-up-weight.
2. The strip was extremely soft, causing a loss of acceleration performance.
3. The pilot selected an unsuitable area for takeoff.
4. The pilot was late in aborting the take-off.
5. As a result he was compelled to deliberately ground loop the aircraft to avoid a drop of the end of the strip.