

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199601630**

**Boeing Co  
B737  
British Aerospace Plc  
BAe 146-300**

**14 May 1996**

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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).**

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

**Occurrence Number:** 199601630                      **Occurrence Type:** Incident  
**Location:** Yango  
**State:** NSW    **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Tuesday 14 May 1996  
**Time:** 1738 hours                                      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** None

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** British Aerospace Plc  
**Aircraft Model:** BAe 146-300  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-EWR    **Serial Number:** E3195  
**Type of Operation:** Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger Scheduled  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Nil  
**Departure Point:** Coolangatta Qld  
**Departure Time:** 1635 EST  
**Destination:** Sydney NSW

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Boeing Co  
**Aircraft Model:** 737-377  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-CZL    **Serial Number:** 23664  
**Type of Operation:** Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger Scheduled  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Nil  
**Departure Point:** Brisbane Qld  
**Departure Time:** 1640 EST  
**Destination:** Sydney NSW

**Approved for Release:** Wednesday, October 9, 1996

A British Aerospace 146 (BA146) was established in the holding pattern at YANGO, 60 NM NNW of Sydney, maintaining Flight Level 190 (FL190). A Boeing 737 (B737) entered the holding pattern at FL200, and was given traffic information on the BA146, which was directly below.

Holding was cancelled for the BA146, which was cleared to descend to FL180. The Arrivals North radar controller subsequently observed the BA146 height readout indicating FL200, and was about to query the level of the aircraft, when the crew of the BA146 advised the aircraft had climbed to FL200 but was now on descent to FL190. The lateral separation between the two aircraft was reduced to 1.53 NM, with a vertical separation of 800 ft. The minimum required separation was 5 NM laterally, or 1,000 ft vertically.

The Captain of the BA146 subsequently reported that the aircraft was being controlled by the autopilot at the time of the occurrence. FL180 had been correctly set on the altitude controller, but the aircraft had inadvertently climbed without warning. The Captain, who was the non flying pilot, had earlier given permission to permit three children to stand near the flight deck door. As the aircraft commenced descent to FL180 he had turned around briefly to say goodbye. When he turned back he saw the aircraft was climbing at about 1,500 fpm, approaching FL200. He immediately instructed the co-pilot to descend to FL190, and alerted ATC.

