



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

ATSB TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATION REPORT

Aviation Occurrence Investigation Report – 200601509

Preliminary

**Collision with Terrain
55 km South of Narrandera, NSW
26 March 2006
Cessna 188B, VH-ZIP**



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Collision with Terrain, 55 km South of Narrandera, NSW, 26 March 2006, Cessna 188B, VH-ZIP

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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. Accordingly, the ATSB also conducts investigations and studies of the transport system to identify underlying factors and trends that have the potential to adversely affect safety.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and, where applicable, relevant international agreements. The object of a safety investigation is to determine the circumstances to prevent other similar events. The results of these determinations form the basis for safety action, including recommendations where necessary. As with equivalent overseas organisations, the ATSB has no power to implement its recommendations.

It is not the object of an investigation to determine blame or liability. However, it should be recognised that an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. That material will at times contain information reflecting on the performance of individuals and organisations, and how their actions may have contributed to the outcomes of the matter under investigation. 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.

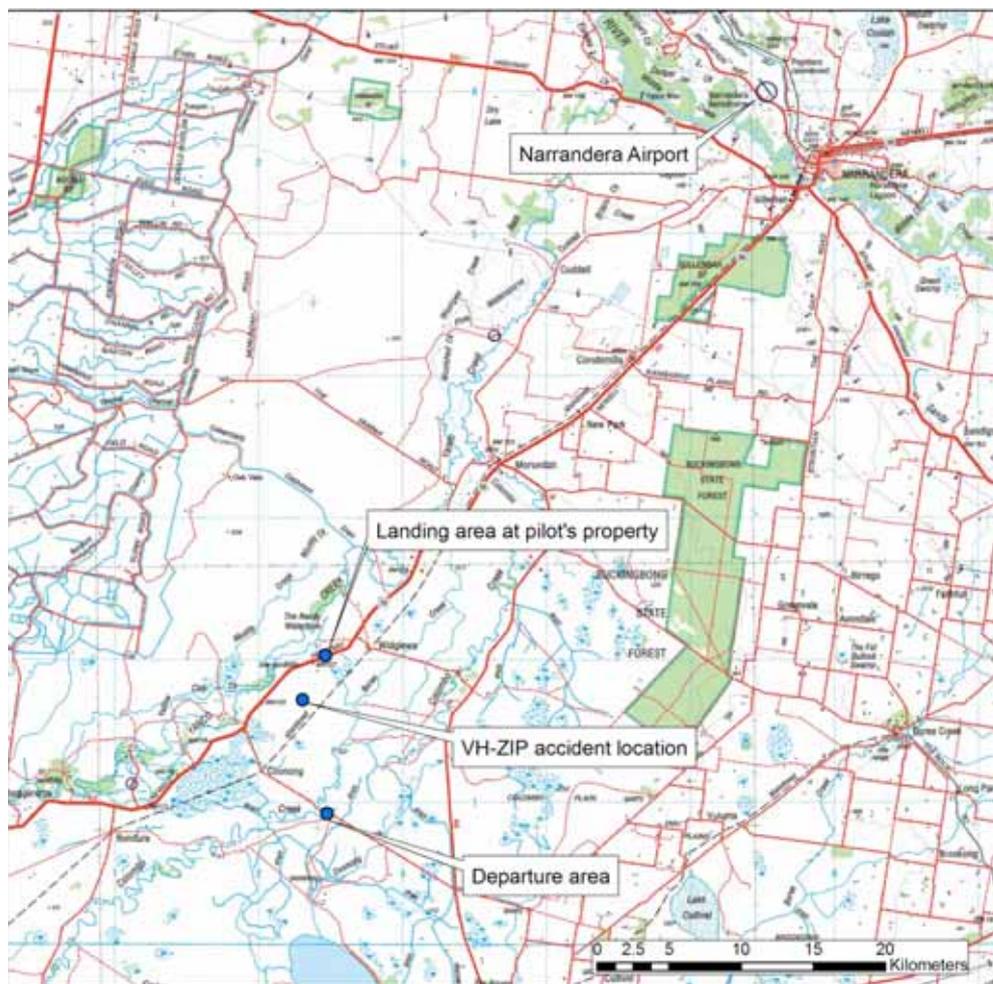
Central to the ATSB's investigation of transport safety matters is the early identification of safety issues in the transport environment. While the Bureau issues recommendations to regulatory authorities, industry, or other agencies in order to address safety issues, its preference is for organisations to make safety enhancements during the course of an investigation. The Bureau is pleased to report positive safety action in its final reports rather than make formal recommendations. Recommendations may be issued in conjunction with ATSB reports or independently. A safety issue may lead to a number of similar recommendations, each issued to a different agency.

The ATSB does not have the resources to carry out a full cost-benefit analysis of each safety recommendation. The cost of a recommendation must be balanced against its benefits to safety, and transport safety involves the whole community. Such analysis is a matter for the body to which the recommendation is addressed (for example, the relevant regulatory authority in aviation, marine or rail in consultation with the industry).

FACTUAL INFORMATION

On 26 March 2006, at about 1800 Eastern Daylight-saving Time, a Cessna 188B Agwagon aircraft, registered VH-ZIP, was reported to have taken off from a field, about 59 km south of Narrandera, NSW, with the pilot as the sole occupant. The following morning at about 0900, the wreckage was found by a passer-by at a position 55 km south of Narrandera and about 5 km from the departure area (Figure 1). The aircraft was destroyed, there was no fire and the pilot was fatally injured.

Figure 1: Accident location



Examination of the aircraft wreckage indicated that it had impacted the ground heavily, in a nose-down, right wing-low attitude (Figure 2). All components of the aircraft were accounted for at the accident site and the aircraft was not fitted with an emergency locator transmitter. Weather conditions in the area were reported to be fine with little or no wind.

Due to the rupture of the fuel tanks on impact, the amount of fuel on board could not be established, however an examination of the engine and propeller indicated

that they were producing power at the time of impact. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has recovered a number of components for further examination.

Figure 2: Accident site



The investigation is continuing and will include:

- a detailed examination of recovered components
- examination of the aircraft maintenance documentation
- a review of operational factors.