



GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Reference No.

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

AS/741/1037

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 283 (1)

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCEApproximately 15.5 kilometres west-north-west of
Townsville, QueenslandHeight a.m.s.l.
10 feet approx.Date
11.10.74Time (Local)
1255 hoursZone
EST**2. THE AIRCRAFT**

Make and Model Bell 47G5 Helicopter	Registration VH-PDJ	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 24.11.69 to 23.11.78
Certificate of Registration issued to Helicopter Transport Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 1492, Cairns, Queensland.	Operator Helicopter Transport Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 1492, Cairns, Queensland.	Degree of damage to aircraft Substantial Other property damaged Equipment on board the barge "Point Lookout"
Defects discovered Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Intended departure point Two kilometres north-west of Saunders Beach	Time of departure 1255 hours	Next point of intended landing Saunders Beach	Purpose of flight Return from food delivery flight	Class of operation Charter
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Peter Llewellyn CROOK	Pilot	29	Commercial Helicopter	1700	3400	Nil

5. OTHER PERSONS (All passengers and persons injured on ground)

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
George Ferguson SHORTLAND	Intending Passenger	Minor	Gary Frank ALLOWAY David Paul MOORE Ray William FLORENCE	Bystander Bystander Bystander	Serious Minor Minor

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The barge "Point Lookout" was being utilised in off-shore pipe laying operations and radio communication was available between the barge and the shore. VH-PDJ was based on the shore primarily to stand by for emergency purposes but it made a number of flights to enable passengers to observe the pipe laying. The helicopter was not equipped with radio suitable for communicating with either the barge or the shore. The barge, which was approximately two kilometres off-shore, was unsuitable for use as a helicopter landing pad and the helicopter was equipped with floats so that it could alight on the water.

When the pipe laying was completed, arrangements were made for a dinghy from the barge to be stationed nearby to take delivery of a quantity of food which was to be flown from the shore by the helicopter. Both the pilot and the foreman on the barge were advised that workers from the barge were permitted to have a flight in the helicopter after the food was delivered. The helicopter subsequently alighted near the dinghy to which the food was transferred but there were no intending passengers in the dinghy to be uplifted. The pilot has said that, as he lifted off prior to returning to the shore, he was attracted to somebody on the barge waving him over to it. He proceeded to its vicinity where he hovered the helicopter over the water with the starboard float immediately adjacent to the starboard rear side of the barge. The pilot has also said that, when he was hovering near the barge, somebody on the barge indicated to him to come closer.

The barge foreman believed that the helicopter approached the barge to pick up passengers directly from it and arranged for Mr. Shortland, who had experience in boarding large helicopters in similar circumstances, to position himself for this purpose. While the helicopter was hovering with its floats just above the level of the side of the barge, Mr. Shortland climbed up on to the side of the barge and reached out over the starboard float to the passenger door. As his weight was applied to the float, the helicopter tipped to the right, the main rotor blades made contact with objects on the deck of the barge and three bystanders were struck by flying debris. The helicopter then fell into the water and subsequently the pilot and Mr. Shortland swam clear of the wreckage and were rescued by persons on the barge.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the helicopter was operated in unsafe proximity to the barge.

Approved for
publication

(I.M. Leslie)
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

3.11.1975