

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198502524**

**Cessna 172-M**

**15 March 1985**

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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).**

**Occurrence Number:** 198502524 **Occurrence Type:** Accident

**Location:** 75 km West of Port Macquarie NSW

**Date:** 15 March 1985

**Time:** 0845 (aprx)

**Highest Injury Level:** Serious

**Injuries:**

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	1	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Cessna 172-M

**Registration:** VH-RXN

**Serial Number:**

**Operation Type:** Business

**Damage Level:** Substantial

**Departure Point:** Cooranbong NSW

**Departure Time:** 0845 (aprx)

**Destination:** Armidale NSW

**Approved for Release:** 5th August, 1985

#### **Circumstances:**

Prior to DEPARTURE the pilot checked the fuel quantity using a graduated dipstick, marked in litres and gallons. He noted that there was apparently sufficient fuel for the proposed flight. About 75 minutes after take-off and while cruising at 4500 feet amsl the engine lost all power. The pilot was committed to a forced landing in a rugged, heavily timbered area. The landing gear was sheared off on touchdown and deceleration forces were severe. Subsequent investigation revealed that the engine failed from fuel exhaustion. The pilot had not flown this particular aircraft before and was unfamiliar with the dipstick graduations. He misinterpreted the quantity indicated on the dipstick litres scale as gallons and whilst dipping the tanks his eye level was such that he could not see the fuel level within the tanks. During the flight the pilot had placed little reliance on fuel gauge indications.