

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199400782**

**Cessna Aircraft Company  
C-152**

**20 March 1994**

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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:** 199400782                      **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** Berowra  
**State:** NSW    **Inv Category:** 3  
**Date:** Sunday 20 March 1994  
**Time:** 0715 hours                                      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** Fatal  
**Injuries:**

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

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Cessna Aircraft Company  
**Aircraft Model:** 152  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-RNN                      **Serial Number:** 15285083  
**Type of Operation:** Instructional Solo  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Destroyed  
**Departure Point:** Maitland NSW  
**Departure Time:**  
**Destination:** Unknown

**Crew Details:**

		<b>Hours on</b>	
<u>Role</u>	<u>Class of Licence</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Hours Total</u>
Pilot-In-Command	Private	92.0	820

**Approved for Release:** Wednesday, January 24, 1996

The pilot had been authorised to carry out a night-VFR flight in the Maitland training area on 19 March. That evening VH-RNN was observed to depart Maitland and later in the evening the pilot was seen in his car in the airport carpark. The following morning witnesses observed an unidentified aircraft flying in a northerly direction below low cloud on the eastern side of the F3 freeway, approximately 105 km south of Maitland. The aircraft was subsequently observed to bank steeply to the left and appeared to descend before disappearing from view. The wreckage of VH-RNN was subsequently found on 30 March, near the F3 freeway, about 800 m south of the earlier sighting of the unidentified aircraft.

Toxicological analysis of the pilot revealed the presence of the drug Dextropropoxyphene at levels which may have caused him to experience sleepiness, hallucinations, delusions and confusion during the flight.

The pilot's intentions could not be established. The aircraft was observed manoeuvring in conditions of low cloud and reduced visibility and it is likely that the pilot was attempting to turn back to an area of more favourable conditions. The pilot's ability to remain safely clear of terrain may have been adversely affected by the effects of the drug Dextropropoxyphene.

#### Significant Factors

1. The aircraft was operating at a low height in conditions of low cloud and reduced visibility.
2. The pilot's ability to safely control the aircraft may have been adversely affected by an analgesic drug.