

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198701452**

Cessna A185-F

20 November 1987

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

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.

Occurrence Number: 198701452
Location: Silvan Reservoir VIC
Date: 20 November 1987
Highest Injury Level: Fatal
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident

Time: 1930

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	1	0	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	1	0	0	1
Total	2	0	0	1

Aircraft Details: Cessna A185-F
Registration: VH-TLO
Serial Number: 185-03658
Operation Type: Private (Pleasure)
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Silvan VIC
Departure Time: 1920
Destination: Silvan VIC

Approved for Release: 26 February 1988

Circumstances:

After take-off from a property strip near the Silvan Reservoir, the aircraft was flown at a low height above the calm, smooth surface of the water. A left turn was completed at low level, but shortly thereafter the aircraft struck the surface near the middle of the dam. On initial contact, water entered the front of the cabin and the engine ceased running. The aircraft then bounced back into the air and the pilot attempted, unsuccessfully, to re-start the engine. The aircraft lost height and skidded along the surface to a halt before the nose began to sink. The three occupants evacuated the aircraft but only one passenger succeeded in reaching the shoreline. The wreckage was recovered, and an examination revealed no evidence of any pre-impact defect or malfunction which might have accounted for the accident. Water impact damage sustained by the engine cowling indicated that the aircraft struck the water at a shallow angle of descent, with the wings level. Damage sustained by the propeller assembly and crankshaft indicated that substantial power was being developed at the time of impact. Impact speed was estimated to be about 100 knots. While flying at a low height above the expanse of calm water, the pilot had very few visual cues to gauge his clearance from the water. It was also determined that the pilot had a blood/alcohol level such that impairment of his visual acuity was possible.