

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199000606**

Austflight Drifter A-503

22 September 1990

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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.

Occurrence Number: 199000606 **Occurrence Type:** Accident

Location: Lake Richardson (16 km ENE Woomera) SA

Date: 22 September 1990 **Time:** 1630

Highest Injury Level: Fatal

Injuries:

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

Aircraft Details: Austflight Drifter A-503

Registration: AUF-357

Serial Number: DR89-0383

Operation Type: Private

Damage Level: Substantial

Departure Point: Lake Richardson SA

Departure Time: 1625

Destination: Woomera SA

Approved for Release: 10th April 1991

Circumstances:

The pilot landed the aircraft on a strip near the lake and visited a group of friends on the shore with his passenger. It was arranged that the pilot would return in the aircraft and fly past for some photographs to be taken. The first run past the group on the shore was made in an easterly direction. The aircraft was then seen to turn onto a westerly heading and position for a second flypast. The height of the aircraft above the water on the two passes was estimated to be about 60-80 feet although photographs of the event show it to be much lower. After passing over the the observers on the last run, the aircraft was seen to turn towards the east and start a steep climb. Witnesses reported that the speed of the aircraft reduced rapidly and, at about 150 feet above ground level, the engine noise apparently reduced or stopped. The aircraft then dropped the right wing and dived into the water. The aircraft was seen to sink rapidly and only the passenger extricated himself from the wreckage. He clung to the tail and was recovered quickly by rescuers in a power boat. Despite repeated dives, the pilot could not be reached and his body was removed after the wreckage was towed to shore. Detailed investigation did not reveal any faults or anomalies in the aircraft which could have contributed to the accident. Damage to the propeller was consistent with a strike under power. It is considered that the reduced power at the top of the steep climb was pilot induced during the attempted execution of a stall turn type manoeuvre. Discussions with witnesses and club members revealed that the pilot was overconfident in his attitude to flying the ultralight and would not readily accept advice or counselling on his handling the aircraft. It was further revealed that the pilot was prepared to perform in front of an audience and the events on the day of the accident support the conclusion that the pilot was engaged in an impromptu display in front of friends at the lake shore.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The pilot engaged in an impromptu flying display for friends.
2. The pilot attempted a manoeuvre at an altitude that provided insufficient height for recovery.
3. The pilot was probably complacent and overconfident in his ability to handle the aircraft.