

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199101224**

**Airbus A320
Boeing 727**

18 July 1991

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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.

from VH-TBN and VH-HYB were in close proximity. VH-TBN, which was on descent to FL 160, was instructed to expedite descent. VH-HYB was instructed to make a turn but the aircraft was still on sector frequency. Separation reduced to a minimum of about 200 ft vertically and one NM horizontally. In giving VH-HYB the initial instruction to turn left onto 200° the sector controller had inadvertently overlooked the potential conflict situation with VH-TBN ahead but at a significantly reducing speed. The recorded radar data showed that as the incident developed, the closing speed between the two aircraft increased to about 180 kts. The radar screen labels for each aircraft included a read out of groundspeed. The arrival controllers did not detect the large closing speed. The traffic workload at the time was moderate. The sector controller had a low level of label brightness selected. The high rate of closure between the two aircraft was partly due to the fact that VH-TBN was operating at a reduced airspeed and partly because of the direction of the strong wind, which gave VH-HYB a reduced headwind component while being vectored left of track.

Significant Factors:

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

1. Significant oversight by the sector controller in vectoring VH-HYB towards VH-TBN, which was ahead and restricted to a slower speed.
2. Strong upper wind situation which increased the ground speed of VH-HYB when it was given a turn onto a heading of 200°.
3. The attention of the two arrivals controllers was diverted at a critical stage and they did not detect the situation of a high closing speed between the two aircraft. This incident is one of eight similar airmiss incidents which are being considered as a part of a special investigation aimed at identifying any ATS systemic deficiencies which may be contributing to airmisses. Any recommendations arising from this and the other reports will be addressed as part of the special investigation.