



**Australian Government**

**Australian Transport Safety Bureau**

# Decompression event involving a Fairchild SA227DC, VH-ANW

56Km NE of Truscott-Mungalalu aerodrome, Western Australia, 7 March 2014

**ATSB Transport Safety Report**  
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#### **Addendum**

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# Decompression event involving Fairchild SA227DC, VH-ANW

## What happened

On 7 March 2014, at about 1100 Western Standard Time, a Fairchild SA227DC, registered VH-ANW, with a crew of two and 18 passengers departed Truscott-Mungalalu aerodrome and was on climb passing through FL 125 when the cabin altitude annunciator illuminated.

The pressurisation system was checked by the crew and the cabin altitude was observed to be climbing at around a 1,000 feet per minute. While the flight crew were fitting (donning) their oxygen masks the CARGO DOOR warning light also illuminated. They then completed the checklist items which included turning off the engine air bleeds.

As part of the depressurisation drill the first officer made a passenger announcement (PA) requiring all passengers to don oxygen masks. This PA could not be heard by any of the passengers in the cabin. After approximately 5 minutes, a passenger seated in the front of the cabin noted that the crew had donned their masks so went forward to ask if the passengers needed to do the same. This message was then passed throughout the cabin.

As the aircraft was above the maximum landing weight for a return to Truscott, the crew made the decision to continue on to Darwin and, due to the lower cruise altitude required when unpressurised, deviations from the track were necessary in order to avoid any significant weather.

The crew reported that after an uneventful landing in Darwin and engine shutdown, they debriefed the passengers.

They also reported that there were no issues experienced when closing the door at Truscott and that prior to engine start an additional confirmation check was made that the cargo door warning lights were extinguished. It was noted however, that there had been issues with that door in the previous weeks, including being hard to lock and a loss of cabin pressure.

## ***Aircraft operator investigation***

Maintenance examination of the aircraft found that several of the ten locking pins on the cargo door were worn. As a precaution, seven of these pins were replaced. The pilot's oxygen mask microphone was tested as serviceable and the first officer's microphone was found to be faulty and was also replaced.

## Safety action

The operator has introduced amendments to the aircraft type PA and safety procedures checklists in order to confirm safety related PA announcements to passengers in these low capacity aircraft are understood and complied with.

## Safety message

The incident highlights the need, in lower capacity passenger aircraft without flight attendants, to assist in the cabin to confirm compliance with safety related announcements for the flight crew to confirm that the passengers have understood and complied with any safety message broadcasts.



## General details

### Occurrence details

Date and time:	7 March 2014 – 1100 WST	
Occurrence category:	Incident	
Primary occurrence type:	Depressurisation	
Location:	NE M 56km Truscott-Mungalalu Aerodrome, WA	
	Latitude: 13° 45.13' S	Longitude: 126° 45.68' E

### Aircraft details

Manufacturer and model:	Fairchild DA227DC	
Registration:	VH-ANW	
Operator:	Airthorth	
Serial number:	DC-873B	
Type of operation:	RPT	
Persons on board:	Crew – 2	Passengers – 18
Injuries:	Crew – Nil	Passengers – Nil
Damage:	None	

## About the ATSB

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory agency. The ATSB is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve safety and public confidence in the aviation, marine and rail modes of transport through excellence in: independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis and research; and fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

The object of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not a function of the ATSB to apportion blame or determine liability. At the same time, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

## About this report

Decisions regarding whether to conduct an investigation, and the scope of an investigation, are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation was conducted in

order to produce a short summary report, and allow for greater industry awareness of potential safety issues and possible safety actions.