

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198601437**

Piper PA 25-235/A1

06 November 1986

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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: 198601437
Location: 11 km ENE Hopetoun VIC
Date: 06 November 1986
Highest Injury Level: Fatal
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident
Time: 1330 approx

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

Aircraft Details: Piper PA 25-235/A1
Registration: VH-FAU
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Aerial Work (Agricultural Spraying)
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: Hopetoun VIC
Departure Time: 1330 approx
Destination: Hopetoun VIC

Approved for Release: May 12th 1987

Circumstances:

The pilot was conducting spraying operations on a pea crop. Swath runs were being made at right angles to a power line and low trees which were located just beyond the end of the crop. On the final run, the aircraft was flown beneath the power line, but the right wing then struck the top branches of a dead tree. The aircraft was seen to climb to about 200 feet, before descending steeply and striking the ground some 370 metres beyond the point of collision with the tree. A fierce fire broke out on impact and engulfed the wreckage. Previous swath runs had almost certainly been made with the aircraft passing above the power line. The reason the pilot chose to fly under the line on the final run could not be established, as there appeared to be no operational reason for this course of action. Expert opinion indicated that after passing below the line, a collision with the tree was virtually inevitable.