

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198503543**

Piper PA23-250

4 December 1985

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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: 198503543
Location: Blackwater QLD
Date: 4 December 1985
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident

Time: 55

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

Aircraft Details: Piper PA23-250

Registration: VH-MMZ

Serial Number:

Operation Type: Charter (Freight)

Damage Level: Substantial

Departure Point: Brisbane QLD

Departure Time: 0055

Destination: Emerald QLD

Approved for Release: February 6th 1987

Circumstances:

The pilot had intended to conduct a night freight service to Emerald. There were several thunderstorms in the Emerald area and the pilot elected to divert to Blackwater, 70 kilometres to the east. On arrival in the Blackwater area, the pilot report that he commenced holding at an altitude about 1700 feet above ground level, while he waited for the runway lights to be displayed. The aircraft then entered cloud and severe turbulence was encountered. The pilot stated that his headset was thrown from his head and that he accidentally knocked the gear lever into the down position. He said he made no further control inputs. The aircraft struck the ground in a 40 degree turn to the right, at a shallow angle of descent, about 250 metres to the east of the Blackwater runway. The aircraft rotated to the right and slid for about 150 metres before coming to rest. The main gear, right engine, aileron and both flaps had been torn from the aircraft during the impact sequence. Reports from ground witnesses indicate that the aircraft was being flown at an altitude of about 400 feet above ground level. It was established that there were thunderstorms in the area at the time but it was not possible to confirm the pilot's report of their severity. The damage to the aircraft suggests that contact with the ground was at a relatively low rate of descent. The investigation did not determine the cause of the accident.