

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198204544**

**Cessna 172RG**

**9 October 1982**

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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](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

**Occurrence Number:** 198204544  
**Location:** Lake Grace WA  
**Date:** 9 October 1982  
**Highest Injury Level:** Fatal  
**Injuries:**

**Occurrence Type:** Accident

**Time:** 2140

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	1	0	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	2	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Cessna 172RG  
**Registration:** VH-WMX  
**Serial Number:**  
**Operation Type:** Non Commercial - Carriage  
of Passengers  
**Damage Level:** Destroyed  
**Departure Point:** Lake Grace WA  
**Departure Time:** 2140  
**Destination:** Jandakot WA

**Approved for Release:** 28th February, 1984

**Circumstances:**

At the time of the accident, weather conditions were fine but it was a very dark night. The stars were obscured by a high overcast and there were only a few ground lights. The horizon was not visible. The take-off was into the southeast. Shortly after becoming airborne the aircraft entered a left turn and then began to descend. This continued until the aircraft struck the surface of a salt lake, in an inverted attitude. No contributory faults could be found with the aircraft or aircraft systems. The pilot was inexperienced in night operations and on this occasion there was a lack of external visual cues available. It is probable that the pilot became disorientated during the turn after take-off and lost control of the aircraft.