

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198600698**

Bell 47-G3B1

10 June 1986

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

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: 198600698 Location: 4km SW of Killarney Station NT Date: 10 June 1986 Highest Injury Level: Fatal Injuries:	Occurrence Type: Accident Time: 0645 apprx
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	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: Bell 47-G3B1
Registration: VH-HMX
Serial Number: 3399
Operation Type: Aerial Work(Cattle mustering)
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: Killarney NT
Departure Time: 0645 apprx
Destination: Killarney NT

Approved for Release: May 12th 1987

Circumstances:

Three helicopters were engaged in the mustering of cattle on the property. One became unserviceable during the afternoon but returned to the muster after rectification. By 1830 hours the herd of 4000 cattle were near the homestead and one of the pilots was instructed to return to the homestead and land. The other two helicopters continued the muster using the landing lights of the aircraft for lighting. Last light in the area was 1842 hours. At about 1910 hours the muster was nearing completion and the pilot of VH-HMX was instructed by the property overseer to move his aircraft away from the herd. Shortly afterwards the pilot of the other aircraft observed a fire, and upon investigation found the wreckage of VH-HMX. The aircraft had struck the ground in a steep nose down attitude while banked at about 90 degrees to the left. The pilot was neither approved nor qualified to conduct night mustering operations. An inspection of the wreckage found that the landing light had failed prior to impact, however, due to the damage to the helicopter no reason for the failure could be established. It is considered likely that while the helicopter was being turned away from the cattle, the landing light failed and with the the resulting loss of visual cues the pilot became disoriented and lost control of the aircraft.