

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199000582**

**Piper PA-28 140**

**17 April 1990**

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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:** 199000582  
**Location:** Broken Hill NSW  
**Date:** 17 April 1990  
**Highest Injury Level:** Fatal  
**Injuries:**

**Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Time:** 1200

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

**Aircraft Details:** Piper PA-28 140  
**Registration:** VH-IAJ  
**Serial Number:** 28-22927  
**Operation Type:** Private  
**Damage Level:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** Shepparton VIC  
**Departure Time:** 0920  
**Destination:** Broken Hill NSW

**Approved for Release:** 15th May 1991

#### **Circumstances:**

The aircraft had been engaged on a flight from Shepparton, Victoria to Pine Creek, Northern Territory, and was scheduled to make a refuelling stop at Broken Hill. After arrival in the circuit area at Broken Hill the pilot decided to carry out an additional circuit to facilitate spacing with another aircraft operating in the circuit. During the second circuit, the engine lost power. The pilot turned the aircraft to enter a long final for runway 14. The aircraft touched down in an area of mine tailings, ran up a slope and became airborne before the right wing struck a tree causing the aircraft to roll to the right and come to rest inverted. An inspection of the wreckage revealed that there was no useable fuel in the left fuel tank, however, the right fuel tank contained approximately 70 litres of fuel. There was also evidence that further fuel had drained from the right tank but not from the left tank. An examination of the engine and other aircraft systems did not reveal any fault that may have contributed to the loss of engine power. The aircraft was refuelled to full tanks five days prior to DEPARTURE from Shepparton, and a preflight inspection carried out on the day of DEPARTURE. Calculations indicate that it is likely that the pilot selected the right fuel tank for the DEPARTURE and that the left tank was selected at the first enroute reporting position, about 30 minutes later. That fuel tank then remained selected until the loss of engine power.

#### **Significant Factors:**

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The pilot probably mismanaged the aircraft fuel system.
2. The engine probably failed due to fuel starvation.
3. The aircraft landed on unsuitable terrain.