

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198503510**

**Piper PA32-R300**

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

**Occurrence Number:** 198503510

**Occurrence Type:** Accident

**Location:** 5 km West of Babinda Qld

**Date:** 15 May 1985

**Time:** 1220

**Highest Injury Level:** Fatal

**Injuries:**

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	1	0	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	3	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Piper PA32-R300

**Registration:** VH-PNB

**Serial Number:**

**Operation Type:** Business Travel

**Damage Level:** Destroyed

**Departure Point:** Townsville Qld

**Departure Time:** 1220

**Destination:** Cairns Qld

**Approved for Release:** 4th September, 1985

**Circumstances:**

The pilot received a weather briefing before departing Townsville which indicated that the weather enroute was unsuitable for flight under the Visual Flight Rules. After being issued with a clearance to enter Cairns control zone no further transmissions were received from the aircraft and it failed to arrive at Cairns. The wreckage of the aircraft was located in rain forest on the lower southern slopes of the south peak of the Bellenden Ker Range. The weather in the area at the time was reported as low cloud with heavy rain. The pilot was not qualified for flight in other than visual meteorological conditions. Investigation revealed that the aircraft was serviceable prior to impact. Witnesses reported that they observed the aircraft passing in and out of the cloud base, which was at about 800 feet. They saw the aircraft tracking in a northwesterly direction towards high ground which rose to 4000 feet amsl. The wreckage was discovered at an elevation of 680 feet amsl. The pilot was known to have urgent business commitments and this may have influenced his decision to continue the flight in unsuitable weather conditions.