

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199003410**

**Boeing 737-376**

**9 August 1990**

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

**Occurrence Number:** 199003410  
**Location:** Mackay QLD  
**Date:** 9 August 1990  
**Highest Injury Level:** Nil  
**Injuries:**

**Occurrence Type:** Incident

**Time:** 1232

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

**Aircraft Details:** Boeing 737-376  
**Registration:** VH-TAZ  
**Serial Number:** 23491  
**Operation Type:** Regular Public Transport  
**Damage Level:** Nil  
**Departure Point:** Townsville QLD  
**Departure Time:** 1209  
**Destination:** Brisbane QLD

**Approved for Release:** 10th October 1990

#### **Circumstances:**

The operator submitted an ICAO format flight plan direct to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) telecommunications network on the evening prior to the flight. This flight plan took into account a temporary change of routes in the Mackay area due to decommissioning of the Mackay VHF omni-directional radio range (VOR). The operator also advised the CAA Mackay briefing office of the sectors to be flown by the crew who would obtain briefing at Mackay. When the crew arrived for briefing the Briefing Officer had a set of notams and flight sector sheets available for collection. The crew advised him that they would be using the plan submitted by their company. The sectors for the crew that day were Mackay - Rockhampton - Brisbane - Townsville - Brisbane. All legs were flown uneventfully until the Townsville - Brisbane sector. The clearance for the aircraft was to track Townsville - Bowen then planned route. Radar coverage from Townsville is lost at 90 nautical miles just prior to Bowen. The aircraft was flown from Bowen to Mackay with the next point being Corio instead of Bowen to Hamilton Island then to Corio. The error was detected when the Hamilton Island position report was requested by Townsville Control. The investigation disclosed that the crew did not read the Notams received at Mackay. Those Notams contained a typed note concerning amended routes around Mackay due to decommissioning of the Mackay VOR and readers were directed to a Brisbane FIR Notam number 3600. That Notam was not in the package given to the crew. In any event it had been superseded by Brisbane FIR Notam 3667 on 1 August and it was not given to the crew either. The company navigation officer is responsible for the routes flown by company aircraft. He had ensured that the flight plans relating to flights around Mackay took the amended routes into account. The pilots have two other sources of route data available. These are the flight planning books available at each CAA briefing office and the Flight Management Computer (FMC) sector details programmed into each aircraft. Neither of these were altered due to the effort required and the temporary nature of the changed routes. The only route effectively altered by the changes was the tracking of flights between Townsville and Hamilton Island instead of Townsville and

Mackay. When the crew were checking the legs in the FMC on the ground at Townsville they used the sheet given to them by the Mackay briefing officer. Since this agreed with the FMC legs they had no reason to question the planned route. Had the flight plan been used as a check the different track would have been noted.

**Significant Factors:**

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

1. The Briefing Officer did not provide a full Notam list for pre-flight briefing.
2. The operating company did not highlight discrepancies in route information to crews.
3. The pilots did not read the Notams.
4. The pilots did not use the ATC flight plan to check FMC data.

**Reccomendations:**

1. When an aircraft is given an airways clearance the route to be flown is usually specified to the first turning point or a point along the cleared track. If the first reporting point was nominated all parties concerned would have a final check on the track the aircraft would fly. At the first reporting point the next segment of the route would normally be confirmed by the pilot's position report or the radar track of the aircraft. It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority amend the format of airways clearances to include the first reporting point instead of the first turning point or tracking point along a cleared route.