

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198802419**

**Piper PA28-181**

**29 December 1988**

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.

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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).**

This accident was not subject to an on scene investigation.

<b>Occurrence Number:</b> 198802419 <b>Location:</b> 6.5 kms NW of Gosford NSW <b>Date:</b> 29 December 1988 <b>Highest Injury Level:</b> Nil <b>Injuries:</b>	<b>Occurrence Type:</b> Accident  <b>Time:</b> 1234
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	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Piper PA28-181  
**Registration:** VH-PZR  
**Serial Number:** 28-7790595  
**Operation Type:** Private  
**Damage Level:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** Gunnedah NSW  
**Departure Time:** 1059  
**Destination:** Bankstown NSW

**Approved for Release:** 28th February 1990

#### Circumstances:

The aircraft had departed from Bankstown with full tanks and flown to Gunnedah. After DEPARTURE for the return flight, the pilot was unable to climb to his planned cruising altitude of 7500 feet due to weather and spent some time climbing and descending to avoid cloud. Conditions subsequently improved and he was able to maintain 7500 for a short time. The weather then deteriorated markedly with heavy rain showers and low cloud. The pilot diverted towards the coast, but then became unsure of his position. Some time later the engine failed when the fuel in one tank was exhausted. After changing tanks, and realising that the fuel gauge indicated less than he expected, the pilot prepared for a precautionary landing on a disused strip. The aircraft was fast on the initial approach and the pilot carried out a go around. On the next approach, the aircraft bounced after touchdown and yawed to the left. The pilot overcorrected and on the second touchdown the aircraft veered to the right, ran off the edge of the strip and over an embankment. Approximately 4 litres of fuel remained in the aircraft tanks. There was no evidence of fuel leakage and no pre-existing fault was found with the aircraft. It was probable that the apparently higher than expected fuel consumption was due to the erratic nature of the flight combined with the leaning procedure adopted by the pilot.

#### Significant Factors:

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

1. Precautionary landing due to the weather and low fuel state.
2. The pilot made an improper recovery attempt from a bounced landing.