

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198900824**

Robinson R22-A

1 September 1989

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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.

Occurrence Number: 198900824
Location: 240 km NE Katherine NT
Date: 1 September 1989
Highest Injury Level: Serious
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident
Time: 1730

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	1	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0

Aircraft Details: Robinson R22-A
Registration: VH-PYG
Serial Number: 390
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Bulman Station NT
Departure Time: N/K
Destination: Bulman Station NT

Approved for Release: 14th September 1989

Circumstances:

The pilot was assisting a ground party in mustering operations. He was pushing a group of bulls some 700 metres from the ground party when they saw the aircraft break away to the West, presumably to chase a breakaway bull. They then heard a dull thud and the noise from the engine of the helicopter stopped suddenly. The helicopter was found some 10 metres from the base of a six metre high dead tree. The pilot was seriously injured in the accident but he was later able to recall that there was, in his opinion, no fault with the aircraft and he had simply flown into the dead tree without seeing it. On site investigation confirmed the tree strike and showed that at the time of the collision, the aircraft was heading in a westerly direction into the low sun and dust. The tree struck by the helicopter was also disguised by another tree behind it. At the time of completing the report, the pilot was still in intensive care and unable to be interviewed.

Significant Factors:

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

1. Sun glare - pilot flying into low sun.
2. Visibility reduced by dust.
3. The pilot did not see and avoid a tree.