

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198503496**

Piper PA31-350

18 January 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.

Occurrence Number: 198503496 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Saibai Island QLD; with diversion to Weipa QLD
Date: 18 January 1985 **Time:** 850
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	9
Total	0	0	0	10

Aircraft Details: Piper PA31-350
Registration: VH-WJK
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Supplementary Airline
Service
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Horn Island QLD
Departure Time: 0850
Destination: Saibai Island QLD

Approved for Release: 19th March, 1985

Circumstances:

The pilot reported that, during approach to the 765 metre wet grass strip, the wind appeared to change to a tailwind. The mainwheels struck a concrete sea wall which marks the threshold, both tyres burst and the landing gear legs were damaged. Directional control problems were experienced during the landing and a go-around was carried out, with the aircraft becoming airborne just before the far end of the strip. The pilot was not aware that any damage had occurred until the gear would not retract. A diversion to an alternate aerodrome was conducted and the left main gear leg collapsed on landing. The strip at the original destination was too short for normal operation of the heavily laden aircraft. Because of this, and the wet surface, the pilot had approached at a lower than recommended airspeed, aiming to land close to the threshold. He had been unable to arrest the sink rate which developed in the final stages of the approach.