

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198101502**

**Beech 35-C33 A**

**13 December 1981**

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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:** 198101502  
**Location:** 15 km NE Cassilis NSW  
**Date:** 13 December 1981  
**Highest Injury Level:** Fatal  
**Injuries:**

**Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Time:** 1651

	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:** Beech 35-C33 A  
**Registration:** VH-FBM  
**Serial Number:**  
**Operation Type:** Private (Business)  
**Damage Level:** Destroyed  
**Departure Point:** Coolangatta QLD  
**Departure Time:** 1651  
**Destination:** Canberra ACT

**Approved for Release:** April 17th 1986

**Circumstances:**

The pilot and passengers were on the return leg of a flight begun earlier that day. The weather forecast the pilot had obtained included reference to a frontal passage, which would be followed by low cloud, rain and thunderstorm activity. The flight evidently proceeded normally for about two hours, by which time the aircraft was to the south-west of Tamworth. At this point, the pilot reported that he was returning to Tamworth, however, this transmission finished abruptly and nothing further was heard from the aircraft. The wreckage was subsequently located two days later, close to the planned track. The aircraft had struck a ridge 2200 feet above mean sea level, while banked steeply to the right and descending. No defect was subsequently found with the aircraft which might have contributed to the development of the occurrence. At the time of the accident weather conditions in the area were poor, with layers of thick cloud and an embedded cumulo nimbus or large cumulus present. The pilot did not hold an instrument rating, and had only limited experience on the type and on relatively high performance aircraft in general. It was probable that the aircraft was cruising between cloud layers when the pilot noticed deteriorating conditions ahead. While attempting to turn away from these conditions, the pilot probably inadvertently entered the cloud. Control of the aircraft was then lost when the pilot was confronted with a lack of visual reference in turbulent conditions.