



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Runway excursion involving Cessna T210, VH-DQI

Cape Leveque Western Australia, 30 December 2012

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Runway excursion involving Cessna T210, VH-DQI

What happened

On 30 December 2012, a Cessna 210 aircraft registered VH-DQI (DQI), was one of two aircraft being used to conduct scenic flights from Broome to Cape Leveque, Western Australia. On board DQI were the pilot and five passengers. DQI was the first aircraft to land at Cape Leveque and reported an uneventful landing on runway 13. After backtracking to park near the runway threshold, the passengers disembarked for a scenic tour.

During the 3 hours the passengers were away, the pilot allocated time to re-check the aircraft for the return flight to Broome.

At about 1125 Western Standard Time¹, DQI was the first aircraft to depart. Early in the take-off run on runway 13, at a speed of about 20 knots, DQI veered to the left. The pilot applied right rudder to straighten the aircraft and continued with the takeoff. DQI was now about 1 m left of the runway centreline. About half way down the runway and at about 45 knots, DQI veered sharply to the left again. The pilot tried to correct the veer with full right rudder, but the aircraft did not respond. He then retarded the throttle and applied the brakes. The left wing of the aircraft clipped trees along the edge of the airstrip and DQI swung almost 90°, striking the right wing on the ground. The nose-wheel collapsed in the soft sand on the edge of the airstrip, resulting in the propeller striking the ground.

The pilot ensured the aircraft was safely shut down, and then assisted the passengers. One passenger received minor injuries and the aircraft sustained substantial damage.

Cape Leveque Aerodrome

Cape Leveque is an unlicensed airfield. Runway directions are 13/31 and the strip is compacted soil, 972 m long and 40 m wide.²

Aerodrome serviceability and local weather was checked daily by the local tourist operator staff. This information was then emailed to the aircraft operator in Broome. If the strip was unserviceable, a non-serviceable marker (white cross on the ground) was placed at the windsock. On the day of the accident, the operator reported that the airstrip was deemed operational, and no warnings were issued.

Weather

On the morning of the accident, there had been an early rain shower. The pilot reported that there had been rain in the area for the last few days. At the time of the accident, the weather was fine with a light easterly wind.

PIC comments

The pilot had almost 200 hours total time, with about 29 hours on the aircraft type. All his commercial experience had been with the same operator. He had planned the flight and conducted a passenger safety brief covering all appropriate items including aircraft emergency equipment location.

VH-DQI



Source: Pilot

¹ Western Standard Time (WST) was Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) + 8.0 hours

² Information sourced from the *National Airfield Directory*, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association of Australia 2012.

Operator Comments

It was company policy that all new pilots are checked into Cape Leveque. The training records supplied to the ATSB indicated the pilot had initially been to the airstrip as an observational pilot, followed by almost 20 hours of ICUS³. This was the pilot's fourth command flight on this aircraft type, and his third as pilot in command to Cape Leveque.

After the accident, the pilot of the second aircraft inspected the airstrip and reported substantial washout on the edge of the strip inside the cone markers (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Right wing and nose gear damage



Source: Pilot

Figure 2: Washout on edge of airstrip



³ In command under the supervision of a check pilot

Safety action

As a result of this occurrence, the aircraft operator has advised the ATSB that they are taking the following safety actions:

Aircraft Operator

The Chief Pilot has used the occurrence as an educational opportunity for all staff pilots. He refocused pilot attention on the following items:

- to keep the nosewheel on the centreline of the runway at all times
- to use right rudder during takeoff
- where possible, to avoid loose dirt and rough areas on the side of the runway
- if the takeoff needs to be rejected - close the throttle immediately
- to always use the checklist
- not to rush

Cape Leveque management

The aircraft operator reported that Cape Leveque management closed the airstrip the day after the accident to grade the surface and repair the washouts.

General details

Manufacturer and model:	Cessna T210N	
Registration:	VH-DQI	
Type of operation:	Charter - Passenger	
Primary occurrence type:	Runway Excursion	
Occurrence category:	Accident	
Location:	Cape Leveque airstrip	
	Latitude: S 16° 24.03'	Longitude: E 122° 55.88'
Persons on board:	Crew – 1	Passengers – 5
Injuries:	Crew – Nil	Passengers – 1 - minor
Damage:	Substantial	

About the ATSB

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory agency. The Bureau is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve safety and public confidence in the aviation, marine and rail modes of transport through excellence in: independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis and research; and fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

The object of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not a function of the ATSB to apportion blame or determine liability. At the same time, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

About this report

Decisions regarding whether to conduct an investigation, and the scope of an investigation, are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation was conducted in order to produce a short summary report, and allow for greater industry awareness of potential safety issues and possible safety actions.