Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199904189

Boeing Co B737

24 August 1999

Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199904189

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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.

199904189

Aviation Safety Investigation Report

Occurrence Number: 199904189 Occurrence Type: Incident

Location: 185km S Brisbane, VOR

State: **NSW Inv Category:**

Tuesday 24 August 1999 Date:

1820 hours **Time Zone EST** Time:

Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Boeing Co

Manufacturer:

Aircraft Model: 737-377 VH-CZB

Aircraft Registration: Serial 23654

Number:

Type of Operation: Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger

Scheduled

Damage to Aircraft: Nil

Departure Point: Brisbane Old

Departure Time:

Destination: Melbourne Vic.

Approved for Release: Tuesday, September 14, 1999

During the climb to cruise altitude, the pilot in command noticed that the co-pilot's head was resting on a side window and that he was not responding. After gaining assistance from cabin crew he found that the pilot had been ill into an airsickness bag. The co-pilot was restrained in his seat and a return to Brisbane was requested. The co-pilot regained and then lost consciousness a number of times during the arrival. Weather conditions were suitable for a visual approach, and an uneventful landing was made.

The pilot was examined by a company doctor, and although no obvious reason for his illness was found, a viral infection was suspected. The co-pilot had been restrained in his seat for his own safety during the landing and his head had been allowed to tilt forward. The doctor suggested that crews be warned that in this type of situation, if the sick crew member's head is not held back, there is a possibility of suffocation due to an obstructed airway.