

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199700200**

**Cessna Aircraft Company
Conquest
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Conquest**

22 January 1997

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the Executive Director of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number:	199700200	Occurrence Type:	Incident
Location:	Mount Magnet		
State:	WA	Inv Category:	4
Date:	Wednesday 22 January 1997		
Time:	1938 hours	Time Zone	WST
Highest Injury Level:	None		

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Cessna Aircraft Company		
Aircraft Model:	441		
Aircraft Registration:	VH-YFD	Serial Number:	4410157
Type of Operation:	Charter	Aerial Ambulance	
Damage to Aircraft:	Nil		
Departure Point:	Perth WA		
Departure Time:	1540 WST		
Destination:	Meekatharra WA		

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Cessna Aircraft Company		
Aircraft Model:	441		
Aircraft Registration:	VH-FMQ	Serial Number:	4410109
Type of Operation:	Charter	Unknown	
Damage to Aircraft:	Nil		
Departure Point:	Meekatharra WA		
Departure Time:	1626 WST		
Destination:	Perth WA		

Approved for Release: Tuesday, March 11, 1997

A Cessna Conquest aircraft (VH-YFD) was enroute Perth to Meekatharra via the Mount Magnet VOR at FL250. Another Conquest (VH-FMQ) was flying in the opposite direction, Meekatharra to Perth via the Mount Magnet VOR at FL240. Both aircraft had filed IFR flight plans, were inside Perth controlled airspace and their Mount Magnet position estimates were within 2 minutes of each other. YFD had advised a DME position for descent to Meekatharra and the Perth Centre controller subsequently calculated that the traffic would be passing and may require separation.

When YFD reached Mount Magnet, the pilot transmitted the position to Perth FIS and reported that he was planning to commence descent 2 minutes later. Perth FIS acknowledged the transmission and passed known traffic. Soon after, Perth Centre, unaware that YFD had changed to FIS frequency, unsuccessfully attempted to establish radio contact with YFD to arrange separation with FMQ. YFD had descended through FMQ's level by the time YFD had returned to the correct frequency.

The Perth Centre controller reviewed the aircraft positions and assessed that a breakdown of separation had probably occurred. Day VMC existed at the time of the incident.

The pilot of YFD reported that whilst he was within regulated duty hours, the day's flying program had changed a number of times with diversions and periods of waiting at various airfields in the heat of the day. He also reported that air traffic and company frequencies were very busy at the time of his transit to Mount Magnet.

FIS staff reported that Perth Centre regularly instructed aircraft to call FIS on descent to Meekatharra for traffic. It was also common for aircraft to call on the FIS frequency without prior notice from Perth Centre due to time constraints and workload.

The planning and attention required to cope with flight diversions and associated effects of waiting in the heat, probably fatigued the pilot and reduced his level of attention. His attention may have also been diverted by the radio traffic during the transit to Mount Magnet. A combination of fatigue, distraction and the regular practice of contacting FIS for descent may have influenced the pilot to contact FIS without direction from Perth Centre.

Due to the regular occurrence of aircraft appearing on frequency without prior notification, the FIS operator did not realise that the aircraft was descending without a clearance.

Perth FIS have reported that they and ATC are reviewing coordination procedures.

