

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199700785**

**Kavanagh Balloons Pty Ltd
E-260**

11 March 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.

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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: 199700785 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 3km NE Mareeba
State: QLD **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Tuesday 11 March 1997
Time: 0700 hours **Time Zone** EST
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	Total
Crew	0	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	0	0
Passenger	0	0	1	11	12
Total	0	0	1	12	13

Aircraft Manufacturer: Kavanagh Balloons Pty Ltd
Aircraft Model: E-260
Aircraft Registration: VH-ADC **Serial Number:** KB106
Type of Operation: Charter Passenger
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Mareeba QLD
Departure Time: 0630 EST
Destination: Mareeba QLD

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	24.0	413

Approved for Release: Tuesday, May 27, 1997

The pilot reported that he had obtained a weather briefing from the Bureau of Meteorology at Cairns, prior to the flight. This information including early morning observations from Mareeba Airport. After selecting a launch site to the south-east of Mareeba, Winds in the area were again assessed using a weather balloon. The departure and flight were uneventful until north-east of Mareeba, when the pilot became aware that the surface wind was a southerly, gusting between 10 and 15 kts.

During the approach to land, at about 90 ft above ground level, the balloon was effected by a wind rotor near some trees. The rotor distorted the canopy and caused it to lose heat. As a result a high descent rate developed. The pilot estimated that about 50 ft of height was lost before he was able to arrest the descent using the burner. During the latter part of the descent, the basket and lower flying wires struck the branches of a tree, causing damage to lower panels of the canopy. A fast landing then ensued. After landing, the canopy was further damage when it became entangled in a barbed wire fence.

The pilot reported that a rain shower was experienced some minutes after the landing. He believed that the unusual localised wind during this accident was due to the approaching rain.

