

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199700786**

**Piper Aircraft Corp
Navajo**

12 March 1997

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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: 199700786 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Watson River, (ALA)
State: QLD **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Wednesday 12 March 1997
Time: 1445 hours **Time Zone** EST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-31
Aircraft Registration: VH-PNL **Serial Number:** 31-97
Type of Operation: Charter Passenger
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Cairns QLD
Departure Time:
Destination: Watson River QLD

Crew Details:

| Role | Class of Licence | Hours on Type | Hours Total |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Pilot-In-Command | ATPL | 234.0 | 2804 |

Approved for Release: Thursday, April 3, 1997

The pilot reported that during the take-off run the aircraft was not accelerating very well due to the soft wet surface.

At about 70 knots the pilot raised the nose in an attempt to get the main wheels off the runway to allow the aircraft to accelerate in ground effect. The pilot said that as soon as the aircraft lifted off it veered slightly left and was about to settle onto the ground again, so he closed the throttles and tried to maintain directional control on the ground. The aircraft entered mud and grass to the left of the runway for about 200 metres. The nosewheel then broke off, the propellers struck the ground, and the aircraft came to rest in about 8 metres. The passenger who was an engineer, had previously run the left engine as it was suspected to not be producing full power. No fault was found with the engine. During the accident takeoff the engineer had noted that the left engine was performing normally.