Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199700945

**Cessna Aircraft Company Centurion** 

23 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.

| <b>Occurrence Number:</b>  | 199700945   |                                | Occurrence Type: Accident |                      |         |       |  |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------|-------|--|
| Location:  | Cape Leveque, (ALA)   |                                |                           |                      |         |       |  |
| State:   | WA  |                                | Inv Category: 4           |                      |         |       |  |
| Date:  | Sunday 23 March 1997  |                                |                           |                      |         |       |  |
| Time:  | 1115 hours  |                                | Time Zone                 | <b>Fime Zone</b> WST |         |       |  |
| <b>Highest Injury Level:</b>   | Minor   |                                |                           |                      |         |       |  |
| Injuries:  |   |                                |                           |                      |         |       |  |
|  |   | Fatal                          | Serious                   | Minor                | None    | Total |  |
|  | Crew  | 0                              | 0                         | 1                    | 0       | 1     |  |
|  | Ground  | 0                              | 0                         | 0                    | 0       | 0     |  |
|  | Passenger   | 0                              | 0                         | 5                    | 0       | 5     |  |
|  | Total   | 0                              | 0                         | 6                    | 0       | 6     |  |
| Aircraft Manufacture<br>Aircraft Model:<br>Aircraft Registration:<br>Type of Operation:<br>Damage to Aircraft:<br>Departure Point:<br>Departure Time:<br>Destination:<br>Crew Details: | r: Cessna Airc<br>210K<br>VH-ERH<br>Charter<br>Destroyed<br>Cape Leveq<br>1115 WST<br>Broome WA | raft Comj<br>Passenge<br>ue WA | pany<br>Serial M<br>er    | Number: 2            | 1059394 |       |  |
|  |   |                                |                           | Hours                | s on    |       |  |

|                  | Hours on                |      |                    |  |  |
|------------------|-------------------------|------|--------------------|--|--|
| Role             | <b>Class of Licence</b> | Туре | <b>Hours Total</b> |  |  |
| Pilot-In-Command | Commercial              | 7.5  | 575                |  |  |

Approved for Release: Tuesday, April 15, 1997

The Cessna 210 was engaged in flying tourists between Broome and Cape Leveque. The pilot had been with the company for one and half months and had flown eight hours in the Cessna 210. A substantial portion of his previous flying experience was in Cessna 172 and 182 aircraft.

The pilot flew the aircraft to the Cape Leveque landing area at approximately 0930 WST. At around 1100, he loaded the aircraft and embarked his passengers; four adults and a five month old baby being held by his mother. The weather was fine with a light south easterly breeze. The pilot then attempted to start the engine but the starter would not energise. After consulting with the company's chief pilot, the pilot successfully started the engine.

The pilot completed his pre-takeoff checks and began the take-off run. After approximately 200 metres, the pilot's side window opened. The pilot stated that the sudden noise surprised him and that he was concerned about dust entering the cabin and upsetting the passengers. He attempted to close the window whilst continuing the take-off run.

The pilot stated that he managed to close the window but it immediately opened again. He recalled noticing in his peripheral vision that the aircraft was veering left. Evidence indicated that the aircraft veered approximately ten degrees left and continued in a straight path diverging from the runway centre. The pilot returned his attention back to the takeoff and believing the aircraft had sufficient airspeed, attempted to continue the takeoff.

He stated that just as he was pulling back on the control column to take off, the aircraft seemed to decelerate. Evidence indicated that the aircraft wheels struck freshly graded sand on the edge of the flight strip. Witness evidence and the wheel tracks in the sand indicated that the aircraft had pitched nose up and banked right with the right landing gear remaining in contact with the ground. With the throttle open, the aircraft continued for approximatley 72 metres towards scrub adjacent to the runway. The left wing struck a tree, slewing the aircraft left. The aircraft then continued sliding right before travelling forward into the scrub, impacting trees and stopping.

The pilot and passengers evacuated through the right door. The aircraft's ELT operated correctly.

It is probable that the pilot was distracted from controlling the takeoff by the sudden and unexpected noise created by his window opening. There was sufficient available runway length for the pilot to discontinue the takeoff and secure the window once stopped. The pilot could have also continued the takeoff and attended to the window once safely airborne. He decided, however, to close the window while continuing the takeoff. With his attention diverted in attempts to latch the window, he did not keep the aircraft tracking along centre of the runway. After the pilot realised that the aircraft had diverged left, he decided to continue the takeoff without regaining the runway direction. The aircraft failed to become airborne, possibly slowed by the sand along the runway perimeter.