

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199701916**

**Robinson Helicopter Co
R22**

13 June 1997

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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: 199701916 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Stoney Creek
State: QLD **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Friday 13 June 1997
Time: 1710 hours **Time Zone:** EST
Highest Injury Level: Serious
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	Total
Crew	0	1	0	0	1
Ground	0	0	0	0	0
Passenger	0	0	1	0	1
Total	0	1	1	0	2

Aircraft Manufacturer: Robinson Helicopter Co
Aircraft Model: R22 BETA
Aircraft Registration: VH-POR **Serial Number:** 1377
Type of Operation: Miscellaneous Ferry
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Mareeba QLD
Departure Time: 1645 EST
Destination: Cairns QLD

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	500.0	600

Approved for Release: Thursday, July 24, 1997

The pilot reported that he departed Mareeba in company with another R22 helicopter at approximately 1645 EST. The flight was intended to proceed from Mareeba to Cairns via Stoney Creek. The pilot stated that approaching Stoney Creek (5NM west of Cairns aerodrome) they landed to assess the weather further. After consultation with Cairns approach they were advised that Stoney Creek was visible from the control tower. Both helicopters then took off to continue to Cairns. The pilot said that shortly afterwards, and before reaching Stoney Creek the weather ahead deteriorated suddenly, and the pilot decided that they would return to Mareeba. A turn to the right was commenced, and shortly afterwards the helicopter began to yaw uncontrollably to the right, and descended into trees. The passenger was uninjured and was able assist the pilot from the aircraft. The pilot then used his mobile phone to call for assistance and guide the Queensland Emergency Services rescue helicopter to the crash site. The passenger and pilot were winched from the site and flown to the Cairns Base Hospital.

Subsequent examination of the helicopter revealed no technical defect which may have contributed to the accident. The pilot described the control loss as an uncommanded yaw to the right, indicating loss of tail rotor authority. The pilot said the last time he observed the indicated airspeed it was 40 knots, and was unable to explain the uncontrolled yaw right. Although there was no discernable horizon at the time, the pilot said he was flying towards a clear area, was visual with the ground, and was clearly visible from the other helicopter which was slightly higher and to his right.

