

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199703875**

**Hughes Helicopters
Hughes 500**

27 November 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.

Occurrence Number: 199703875 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 61km NW Nowra, Aerodrome
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Thursday 27 November 1997
Time: 1345 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

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

Aircraft Manufacturer: Hughes Helicopters
Aircraft Model: 369D
Aircraft Registration: VH-NLJ **Serial Number:** 480300D
Type of Operation: Commercial Fire Control
Damage to Aircraft: Destroyed
Departure Point: Fitzroy Falls NSW
Departure Time: 1330 ESuT
Destination: Fitzroy Falls NSW

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	250.0	2700

Approved for Release: Wednesday, December 17, 1997

The helicopter was involved in bushfire control when the pilot reported that the engine suddenly lost power at a height of about 150 ft above trees. Attempts to restart the engine were unsuccessful and a forced landing was carried out amongst small trees. Substantial damage was incurred during the forced landing and the pilot sustained minor injuries. The helicopter was subsequently destroyed by the bushfire.

The pilot later reported he had refueled the helicopter with 300 lbs of fuel about 15 minutes before the accident. Fuel checks at the time indicated that the fuel was not contaminated. The remainder of the fuel, the fuel filter and refueling equipment at the base, were subsequently checked after the accident and were reported to be clean. As the engine was extensively damaged by the bushfire, the reason for the failure was not determined.

