**Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199600597** 

Bell Helicopter Co JetRanger III

**26 February 1996** 

## Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199600597

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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.

## **Aviation Safety Investigation Report**

199600597

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: 199600597 Occurrence Type: Accident

**Location:** Carrum Downs

VIC State: **Inv Category:** 

Date: Monday 26 February 1996

Time: 1000 hours Time Zone **ESuT** 

Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Bell Helicopter Co

Aircraft Model: 206B (III)

Aircraft Registration: VH-PHZ Serial Number: 1887

**Type of Operation:** Charter **Positioning** 

**Damage to Aircraft:** Substantial

**Departure Point:** Carrum Downs Vic

0959 ESuT **Departure Time:** 

**Destination:** Carrum Downs Vic

**Crew Details:** 

	H		
Role	Class of Licence	Type Hou	rs Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	27.0	245

**Approved for Release:** Thursday, March 7, 1996

Approaching home base, towards the end of a charter flight, the pilot became concerned about a low fuel quantity indication on the fuel gauge, so he advised his company by radio that he was landing in a paddock about 7 nm south south east of Moorabbin. He also requested that fuel be brought to him.

After landing and shutting down the engine, the pilot realised that the nearest access to the aircraft by road was blocked by a canal and a fence. He therefore decided to reposition the aircraft to facilitate refuelling. After starting the engine and having hover-taxied a short distance with an estimated 20 kt tailwind and at about 10 ft above the ground, the helicopter's engine flamed out due to fuel exhaustion. The aircraft touched down, heels of the landing skids first, on uneven terrain. The main rotor severed the tail boom and the helicopter rolled over.

According to the pilot, the fuel gauge registered 45 US gallons when he commenced the charter. He believed this was sufficient fuel to complete the flight using a fuel burn off rate of 25 US gallons per hour. However, since leaving base, the engine had operated for an estimated one hour and 50 minutes, including the time spent at ground idle. Unuseable fuel is 10 pounds (1.7 US gallons). Only a very small amount of fuel was found in the tank after the accident.

No fault with the engine or the airframe has been reported to have contributed to the accident. Both of the electric fuel boost pumps were serviceable and operating at the time. The aircraft was not equipped with the optional, low fuel warning light system.

**Significant Factors** 

The following factors are considered relevant to the development of the accident:

1. The pilot did not exercise sound fuel management procedures.