

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199600715**

**Robinson Helicopter Co  
R22**

**06 March 1996**

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

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.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the Executive Director of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

**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](http://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:** 199600715                      **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** Georgina River  
**State:** QLD                      **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Wednesday 06 March 1996  
**Time:** 0800 hours                      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** None

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Robinson Helicopter Co  
**Aircraft Model:** R22 BETA  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-LOJ                      **Serial Number:** 1716  
**Type of Operation:** Commercial    Spotting - Other  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Destroyed  
**Departure Point:** Headinly Station QLD  
**Departure Time:**  
**Destination:** Carandotta QLD

**Crew Details:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Class of Licence</b>	<b>Hours on Type</b>	<b>Hours Total</b>
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	187.0	1207

**Approved for Release:** Wednesday, May 29, 1996

The helicopters main rotor blades came into contact with a tree during a low level fence inspection operation. The helicopter then descended out of control into a flooded river and submerged. The pilot and observer egressed safely from under the water.

The pilot reported that he had manoeuvred the aircraft to within about 10 metres of some tall trees beside the river, in order to give the observer the best possible view of a section of fence. At this point the helicopter yawed left and the main rotor blades struck a tree. Later the pilot said that he thought the tail rotor blades may also have struck a tree. After the tree strike the pilot had insufficient control and was unable to prevent the aircraft descending sideways into the river.

The wreckage was not recovered from the river for several weeks, due to flooding and continuing torrential rain. Later examination of the wreckage did not reveal any pre-existing mechanical fault which may have contributed to the accident. The tail rotor assembly was found to be intact and attached to the boom. No evidence was found to indicate the tail rotor blades came into contact with the tree.