

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199603644**

**Bell Helicopter Co  
Jetranger**

**09 November 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.

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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](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:** 199603644                      **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** 20km SE Tumut  
**State:** NSW    **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Saturday 09 November 1996  
**Time:** 0845 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Bell Helicopter Co  
**Aircraft Model:** 206B  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-PLI    **Serial Number:** 3287  
**Type of Operation:** Commercial      Aerial Agriculture - Other  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** 20 km S.E Tumut. NSW  
**Departure Time:** 0800 ESuT  
**Destination:** 20 km S.E Tumut. NSW

**Crew Details:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Class of Licence</b>	<b>Hours on Type</b>	<b>Hours Total</b>
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	1978.0	3645

**Approved for Release:** Wednesday, December 18, 1996

The Bell 206 helicopter was engaged in aerial spraying of a property. The pilot had earlier carried out a ground inspection with the land owner to confirm the areas to be sprayed, and to identify obstacles. He then conducted an aerial survey before commencing spraying operations.

Because one of the treatment areas contained powerlines, the pilot decided to spray this area first. He planned to work from east to west, spraying on northerly tracks. This required the helicopter to descend over powerlines crossing the southern end of the treatment area. The height of the powerlines increased towards the western edge of the treatment area. Light coloured shade cloth covered part of the northern section of the area, forming a visual backdrop to the powerlines for much of their length.

The pilot descended to commence the 12th and final spray run along the western boundary, an area which did not have a shade cloth background, making the powerlines less distinct. He failed to notice the increased powerline height, which resulted in the helicopter, travelling at about 20 kts, colliding with a powerline at a height of about 30 ft.

A powerline passed between the landing skids and the fuselage, striking the forward cross tube. The helicopter pitched down, resulting in the main rotor blades slicing off the tail boom as the main rotor assembly separated from the mast, before the fuselage struck the ground. The pilot reported that the engine continued running after ground impact but there was no fire. Protected by a full safety harness and helmet, the pilot was able to escape from the wreckage with the assistance of a bystander. The helicopter's Emergency Locator Transmitter did not activate.

