



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Reference No.

## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

SI/772/1055

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 263 (1)

## 1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

Georges River, 1.5 kilometres west of Bankstown Airport,  
New South Wales.

Height a.m.s.l.

Sea Level

Date

26.10.77

Time (Local)

1713 hours

Zone

EST

## 2. THE AIRCRAFT

Type and Model

Piper PA28-140

Registration

VH-MTA

Certificate of Airworthiness

Valid from 13.11.74

Certificate of Registration issued to

Operator

Degree of damage to aircraft

Substantial

Other property damaged

Nil

Defects discovered

The inner cable of the throttle control cable assembly, Part No. 67639-08 had sustained a compression buckling failure within the guide sleeve at the throttle lever end.

## 3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point

Bankstown

Time of departure

1705 hours

Next point of intended landing

Bankstown

Purpose of flight

Pleasure

Class of operation

Private

## 4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	53	Private	237	239	Fatal

## 5. OTHER PERSONS (All passengers and persons injured on ground)

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
	Passenger	Nil			

## RELEVANT EVENTS

During September 1977 the aircraft was presented to Venture Aircraft Sales Pty. Ltd., trading as Venture Aviation, for the purpose of undergoing a scheduled inspection which involved overhaul of the engine and propeller, and major inspection of the airframe. The reconditioning of the engine and propeller was performed by Hawker de Havilland Australia Pty. Ltd. and, in due course, they were re-installed on the aircraft by Venture Aviation. On 18 October 1977 the aircraft was flight tested by the Chief Pilot, Venture Aviation: no faults were reported.

The aircraft was next flown on 21 October 1977; on board were \_\_\_\_\_ and the Chief Pilot, Australian Flying Training School who had agreed to undertake an "acceptance" flight test commencing with a take-off, circuit, and landing. The aircraft was flown by \_\_\_\_\_ from the lefthand seat: when on final approach, arising from traffic considerations, he elected to discontinue the approach. Neither he nor the Chief Pilot were able to move the throttle beyond about fifty per cent engine power; the Chief Pilot took over control of the aircraft and completed a circuit and landing with the power available.

The throttle control system was immediately examined by Venture Aviation. The throttle control cable assembly cannot be physically inspected internally except by destruction of the components - during the examination of this assembly however, the inner cable which operates the carburettor throttle valve was free to move. The carburettor throttle valve shaft appeared to be a little stiff in operation; the carburettor was removed from the engine and forwarded to Hawker de Havilland for rectification. Subsequently it was re-installed by Venture Aviation.

At about 1530 hours on 26 October 1977 \_\_\_\_\_ and the Chief Pilot, Australian Flying Training School boarded the aircraft with \_\_\_\_\_ occupying the lefthand seat, and completed an "acceptance" flight test of forty-eight minutes duration during which the throttle control was operated through its full range of travel on more than one occasion. No faults were found. \_\_\_\_\_ then elected to fly "a couple of circuits" and \_\_\_\_\_ accompanied him as a passenger.

## 6. Relevant Events

The aircraft took off from the Runway 11 complex the wind being 050 degrees 10 to 15 knots; engine power appeared to be normal and the flight proceeded without incident. After turning onto the downwind leg of the traffic circuit, flying at a height of 1000 feet, the pilot reduced engine power and manoeuvred the aircraft to maintain separation with a preceding aircraft. Shortly thereafter when he wished to increase the engine power the throttle control appeared to catch before it moved forward and the engine responded; he then extended the downwind leg of circuit being flown in order to maintain traffic separation.

At the appropriate time the pilot reported to air traffic control that he was turning onto the base leg of the circuit; he did so, reduced engine power and partially lowered the wing flaps for the intended landing. Subsequently he attempted to increase the engine power to adjust the approach but was unable to move the throttle control. He continued the base leg and turned onto final approach for the Runway 11 complex, maintaining his efforts to move the throttle control. At a height of about 300 feet the pilot transmitted a distress call; it then appeared to the passenger that the aircraft would strike the ground well short of the airport. The pilot made a turn to the right and ditched the aircraft in the Georges River.

The aircraft overturned on landing and sank immediately. The passenger was able to escape through a broken windscreen but the pilot did not evacuate the submerged cabin. Some minutes passed before the aircraft could be pulled to the bank and the pilot rescued. He initially responded to resuscitation but died one week later from the effects of immersion.

Examination of the carburettor disclosed no evidence of defect or malfunction. There was evidence that the throttle shaft had been operated with foreign particles between the shaft and bushes. The scoring had been rectified, no further evidence of shaft restriction was found.

The throttle control inner cable had sustained a compression buckling failure within the guide sleeve at the throttle lever end. Wear on the buckled wire showed that this had occurred in two stages. Post-accident testing of the throttle cable did not produce a jammed condition: the cable had been subjected to tension forces during the impact and was found in the full throttle position. It is probable that the throttle control restriction experienced by the pilot was the result of jamming of the buckled inner cable in the guide sleeve.

## OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The cause of the accident was that the pilot, after becoming aware of the possibility of a recurrence of a throttle control malfunction, did not plan and execute the landing approach in a manner which would ensure that at all times the aircraft was within reach of a suitable landing area.

Approved for  
publication

*G. V. Hughes*

( G. V. Hughes )  
Delegate of the Secretary

Date 10.7.78