



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT

Reference No.

SI/775/1024

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 283 (1)

1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE

18 km east-southeast of Jandakot W.A.	Height a.m.s.l. 900 feet	Date 1.8.77	Time (Local) 1055 hours	Zone WST.
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2. THE AIRCRAFT

Make and Model Piper PA-28/180	Registration VH-BOX	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 16.9.1976
Certificate of Registration issued to 1	Operator	Degree of damage to aircraft Destroyed
		Other property damaged Nil
Defects discovered Nil		

3. THE FLIGHT

Last or intended departure point Jandakot	Time of departure 1047 hours	Next point of intended landing Kalgoorlie	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
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4. THE CREW

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
	Pilot	41	Private	104	239	Fatal

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

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
	Passenger	Fatal		Passenger	Fatal

6. RELEVANT EVENTS

The pilot did not hold an instrument rating and was therefore restricted to flight under the Visual Flight Rules (VFR). At about 0730 hours he attended the Jandakot Briefing Office and, after obtaining the relevant meteorological forecasts, submitted flight plan details for a VFR flight to Kalgoorlie. The forecast indicated frontal activity over the area and predicted that the cloud base would be 1000 feet above ground level with rain and showers; general visibility of 8 km in rain decreasing to 4000 metres in heavy showers. Cumulo-nimbus clouds were forecast to be embedded in the frontal activity. At 0844 hours the pilot transmitted that VH-BOX was taxiing; he was advised by Jandakot Tower that visual meteorological conditions (VMC) did not exist "towards the foothills", and he did not proceed. At 0903 hours the pilot checked with the controller who advised that he doubted if VMC existed "over the foothills". At 0907 hours Jandakot Airport was closed to VFR flights: the cloud base about this time was 1000 feet and the visibility 1000 metres in heavy rain. At 0930 hours the pilot returned to the Briefing Office and enquired about the weather. The passage of the front occurred at 0945 hours. At 0956 the weather conditions started to improve and at 1003 the airport was opened to VFR flights. At 1009 the pilot transmitted that VH-BOX was taxiing and asked for advice of the weather trend; he was advised there was rain "over the foothills" but rapid improvement could be expected. He did not taxi and at 1028 hours he again checked with the controller; he was advised that the foothills were now visible and the visibility was some 8 km. VH-BOX then taxied at 1030 hours; became airborne at 1044 hours; was observed and transmitted departure at 1047 hours intending to proceed via Armadale and Mount Dale. This was the last transmission received from the aircraft.

At approximately 1055 hours an aircraft was heard some 3 km east of Armadale; the engine sound was rising and decreasing and the impression was gained of high aircraft speed. The aircraft was then heard to crash. The area was covered by cloud and rain was falling. VH-BOX struck the ground at high speed in a steep nosedown, right wing down attitude. Examination of the wreckage did not reveal any evidence of any defect or malfunction which may have contributed to the accident. It is probable that the gross weight of the aircraft exceeded the maximum permissible; the centre of gravity was within the prescribed limits.

7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE

The probable cause of the accident was that the pilot entered weather conditions in which he was not able to maintain the visual reference required for him to retain control of the aircraft.

Approved for
publication

(G.V. Hughes)

Delegate of the Secretary

Date 10.5.78

DEFINITIONS

ACCIDENT - An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all those persons have disembarked and in which

- (a) any person suffers death or serious injury as a result of being in or upon the aircraft or by direct contact with the aircraft or anything attached to the aircraft; or

Note. - Specifically excluded are: death from natural causes and fatal or serious injury to any person on board whether self-inflicted or inflicted by another person, or to ground support personnel before or after flight, or fatal or serious injury which is not a direct result of the operation of the aircraft, or which concerns stowaways.

- (b) the aircraft suffers substantial damage or is destroyed; or

- (c) the aircraft is missing or is completely inaccessible.

FATAL INJURY - Any injury which results in death within 30 days.

SERIOUS INJURY - Any injury other than a fatal injury which

- (a) requires hospitalisation for more than 48 hours, commencing within seven days from the date the injury was received; or
- (b) results in a fracture of any bone (except simple fractures of fingers, toes or nose); or
- (c) involves lacerations which cause severe haemorrhages, nerve, muscle or tendon damage; or
- (d) involves injury to any internal organ; or
- (e) involves second or third degree burns, or any burns affecting more than five percent of the body surface.

MINOR INJURY - Any injury other than as defined under "Fatal Injury" or "Serious Injury".

DESTROYED - Consumed by fire, demolished or damaged beyond repair.

SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE - Damage or structural failure which adversely affects the structural strength, performance or flight characteristics of the aircraft and which would normally require major repair or replacement of the affected component. The following types of damage are specifically excluded: engine failure; damage limited to an engine or its accessories, or to propeller blades; bent fairings or cowlings; small dents or puncture holes in the skin; damage to wing tips, antennas, tires, or brakes.

MINOR DAMAGE - Damage other than as defined under "Destroyed" or "Substantial Damage".