Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199203458

Airbus A320 McDonnell Douglas Corporation DC-10

16 December 1992

Aviation Safety Investigation Report 199203458

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.

Occurrence Number: 199203458 Occurrence Type: Incident

Location: 64km W Griffith

State: NSW Inv Category: 4

Date: Wednesday 16 December 1992

Time: 1750 hours **Time Zone** ESuT

Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Airbus

Manufacturer:

Aircraft Model: A320-211

Aircraft Registration: VH-HYB Serial 023

Number:

Type of Operation: Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger

Scheduled

Damage to Aircraft: Nil

Departure Point: Perth WA

Departure Time:

Destination: Sydney NSW

Aircraft McDonnell Douglas Corporation

Manufacturer:

Aircraft Model: DC-10

Aircraft Registration: Serial Number:

Type of Operation: Air Transport High Capacity International Passenger

Scheduled

Damage to Aircraft: Nil

Departure Point: Sydney NSW

Departure Time: Destination:

Approved for Release: Monday, April 26, 1993

VH-HYB, on track between Mildura and Griffith, en route to Sydney, was maintaining non-standard Flight Level 380. The non-standard level was approved by air traffic control to help the aircraft avoid turbulence. UTA 147, flying on the same track in the opposite direction was maintaining Flight Level 350 but requested a climb to Flight Level 370. This request was immediately approved by air traffic control Sector 4. An adjacent controller noticed the altitude readout on UTA 147 as Flight Level 363 when both aircraft were about 10 nautical miles apart nose to nose. He immediately called out to the Sector 4 controller who was engaged in coordination. Before the UTA 147's altitude clearance could be amended to Flight Level 360, to achieve the required 2000 feet vertical separation, the pilot of UTA 147 read back "maintaining Flight Level 370". The controller immediately attempted to pass traffic information to UTA 147 but because of language difficulties, the information was not understood before both aircraft had passed with the reduced separation of 1000 feet.