

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199301330**

**Bell Helicopter Co
Longranger**

12 May 1993

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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.

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: 199301330 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Waddy Point (seaward side of Nth Fraser Island)
State: QLD **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Wednesday 12 May 1993
Time: 2020 hours **Time Zone** EST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Bell Helicopter Co
Aircraft Model: 206L-1
Aircraft Registration: VH-JOW **Serial Number:** 45213
Type of Operation: Non-commercial Aerial Ambulance
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Nambour QLD
Departure Time: 2120 EST
Destination: Waddy Point, Fraser Island QLD

Approved for Release: Wednesday, March 9, 1994

The helicopter was operating a Night VFR medical evacuation flight. The patient to be evacuated was a 15 year old adolescent who had suffered a dislocated elbow.

Initial advice of the requirement for the evacuation was telephoned by the tasking hospital at about 2030 EST and after obtaining weather forecasts and readouts of the present weather in the area of the destination, the aircraft departed for the short flight to the hospital at 2108.

At the hospital the pilot checked with the medical staff as to the need to conduct the evacuation and was advised that the flight was necessary. After emplaning a doctor the aircraft departed for its destination.

As the flight proceeded the pilot checked the weather conditions at the island with persons at the destination and at a location to the south of the destination. Checks were also made through the Flight Service operator with the meteorological radar service in Brisbane. The weather report received from the destination indicated a complete overcast with a south-easterly wind of 15-20 kts and no rain.

The flight continued along the eastern side of Fraser Island and the pilot reported that he had the lights at the destination in sight. Enroute, over the island, the helicopter was forced to descend to about 1000 feet to remain below the overcast. As the helicopter approached the destination it entered rain and the pilot commenced a descent. The rain became heavier and the pilot lost sight of all but one of the three light sources at the destination. He continued with the descent and decided that because of the conditions he would be unable to conduct a turn to clear the area.

The helicopter subsequently struck a tree and began to vibrate. After it struck another tree the pilot closed the throttle and flared the helicopter, which came to rest upright about 400 m prior to the threshold of the Orchid Beach airstrip.

Weather reports received by the pilot prior to and during the flight indicated that visual flight was possible to the destination. However, the reports also indicated that the heavy showers to the north of the destination were moving to the south.

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS:

There was pressure on the pilot to complete the evacuation.

The weather conditions in the area of the destination deteriorated rapidly.

The pilot continued with the flight into non-visual conditions.