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Safety recommendation: AIC 16-R11/16-1003

Addressed to: Wings of Hope PNG Inc.

Date issued: 16 November 2016

Investigation link: AIC 16-1003

Action status: Issued

Safety deficiency description

On 24 June 2016 the pilot of a Cessna 182 aircraft, registered N8841X, was conducting a ‘private flight’ from Yapsie to Tumolbil carrying medical supplies and a bottle of compressed propane gas. The air traffic services (ATS) flight strip showed that the pilot advised ATS that he was in the circuit area at 01:05 UTC¹ and he cancelled SAR² on the ground at 01:06.

During his interview with the AIC, the pilot stated that his final approach into the Tumolbil airstrip seemed straight forward, but as the aircraft flared, the nose-wheel heavily impacted the strip surface. The aircraft bounced, causing it to pivot about its lateral axis and strike the fuselage tail on the ground. The pilot, the sole occupant was uninjured. The aircraft could not be flown out from Tumolbil due to the damage sustained during the heavy landing.

The aircraft was registered in the USA in accordance with FAR 47 and had a valid airworthiness certificate, issued by the FAA. The owner of the aircraft was issued with a ‘Permission to Import’ certificate by the PNG Department of Transport (DoT), on 27 May 2014. It stated that permission to import was granted pursuant to Section 3 of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations Chapter 101 and in accordance with Schedule 2 of that Regulation. Schedule 2, item No.5 shows that the import of an aircraft is prohibited unless prior permission is granted by the ‘Controller of Civil Aviation’³. There was no evidence that such permission was obtained.

¹ The 24-hour clock, in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), is used in this report to describe the local time as specific events occurred. Local time in the area of the accident, Papua New Guinea Time (Pacific/Port Moresby Time) is UTC + 10 hours.

² SAR: Search and Rescue comprises the search for and provision of aid to, persons, and aircraft which are feared to be, in distress or imminent danger.

³ CAA 336 (2): Every reference to the Director of Civil Aviation or Controller of Civil Aviation in any Act, regulation, rule, order, other enactment, agreement, deed, instrument, application, notice or other document whatsoever in force at the commencement, shall, unless the context otherwise requires, be read as a reference to the Director under this Civil Aviation Act.

Between April 2014 and December 2015, the PNG DoT and CASA PNG had been corresponding with Wings of Hope PNG Inc., personnel (specifically the aircraft owner/pilot) with respect to the importation of the Cessna 182 aircraft, and the licencing and registration requirements.

The AIC found no evidence that CASA enforced the requirement to register the aircraft in PNG. There was no evidence that Wings of Hope PNG Inc., further sought to register the aircraft in PNG.

The evidence clearly points to Wings of Hope PNG Inc., actively seeking to avoid such requirement. Over many months, the owner/pilot continued to lobby DoT and CASA to allow continued operations under USA FAA provisions, citing another charity organisation Samaritan Aviation as operating under USA FAA licencing within PNG for an extended period of years.

Recommendation number AIC 16-R11/16-1003

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Wings of Hope PNG Inc., should ensure that:

- (a) all aircraft in its PNG fleet are given PNG Certificate of Airworthiness and Certificate of Registration without delay, and subjected to all its prerequisites
- (b) All maintenance of its aircraft fleet is conducted by CASA PNG licenced aircraft maintenance engineers; and
- (c) All pilots operating its PNG aircraft fleet of aircraft hold current PNG pilot licences and relevant medical certificates. , as well as undergo appropriate check and training for routes and airstrips within their intended operational scope, by a CASA approved check and training pilot.

Action requested

The AIC requests that Wings of Hope PNG Inc., note recommendation AIC 16-R11/16-1003 above, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date, and explain (including with evidence) how Wings of Hope PNG Inc., has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the AIC investigation report AIC 16-1003.



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Chief Executive Officer