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Our Reference: AIC 16-R12/16-1002

Safety Recommendation: AIC 16-R13/16-1002

Addressed to: The Secretary, PNG Department of Health

Date issued: 8 December 2016

Investigation link: AIC 16-1002

Action status: Issued

Safety deficiency description

A BN-2T Islander aircraft, registered P2-SBC (SBC) was on a charter flight from Tekin to Kiunga, with 12 persons on board. At 14:31 local (04:31 UTC), SBC arrived at Kiunga Aerodrome and the pilot cancelled SARWATCH. During the final approach, approximately 1,200 metres from the threshold of runway 07, the aircraft was observed to pitch up steeply and roll to the right, then descend in a steep nose-down attitude. The aircraft impacted the ground almost vertically.

The aircraft's centre of gravity was significantly aft of the aft limit. When landing flap was set, full nose-down elevator and elevator trim was likely to have had no effect in lowering the nose of the aircraft. Unless the flaps had been retracted immediately, the nose-up pitch may also have resulted in tail-plane stall, exacerbating the pitch up. The wings stalled, followed immediately by the right wing dropping. Recovery from the stall at such a low height was not considered possible. The accident was not survivable.

The PNG Chief Pathologist conducted an autopsy on the body of the deceased pilot, which revealed multiple fractures and massive body trauma caused during the impact. Examination of internal organs did not reveal any additional significant pathology.

The PNG Chief Pathologist sought toxicological testing of samples taken from the deceased pilot, from State Government Forensic Laboratories in Australia. However, those laboratories declined to assist. Therefore, in his report to the AIC, the PNG Chief Pathologist was unable to assist the AIC with a section detailing toxicology results.

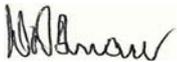
Recommendation number AIC 16-R13/16-1002 to PNG Department of Health

The Accident Investigation Commission recommends that the PNG Department of Health should urgently establish a Forensic Toxicology Laboratory facility to support the work of the PNG Chief Pathologist.

Until such a facility is available to support the Chief Pathologist, the Department of Health is urged to obtain a commitment from a PNG based commercial Forensic Medicine Laboratory, or other International Forensic Medicine Laboratory. These Laboratories must meet the requirements of the Chief Pathologist, to conduct testing of samples taken from deceased personnel who were at the controls of a transport vehicle, that was involved in a fatal accident.

Action requested

The AIC requests that the Secretary, PNG Department of Health should note recommendation AIC 16-R13/16-1002 above, and provide a response to the AIC to Alan Stray, PSM, Manager – Operations Investigation astray@aic.gov.pg within 90 days of the issue date (8 March 2017), and explain (including with evidence) how the Department of Health has addressed, or plans to address, the safety deficiency identified in the AIC investigation report AIC 16-1002.



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Chief Executive Officer