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Safety recommendation: AIC 19-R06/18-1004

Addressed to: Air Niugini Limited

Date issued: 4 February 2019

Investigation link: TC&I 18-1001 (AIC 18-1004)

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 28 September 2018, the Federated States of Micronesia, Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure (DTC&I) was notified of the aircraft accident referenced in this safety recommendation. DTC&I commenced an investigation and deployed investigators to Chuuk and invited the Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) to join the investigation in the capacity of the State of Registry and also a State providing experts and facilities for the investigation. The AIC team is comprised of an Accredited Representative and Technical Advisers. The US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as the State of Manufacture of the aircraft and in response to FSM National Government's request for assistance also sent a team comprised of an Accredited Representative and Technical Advisers from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Boeing. Technical Advisers from the US National Weather Service are assisting the US Accredited Representative.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSBC) as the State of Manufacture of specific components appointed an Accredited Representative and Technical Advisers to download the data from the AFIRS.

The PNG AIC has identified a significant safety deficiency, which if not rectified could result in injury or loss of life following an accident. The FSM DTC&I investigator in charge supports the PNG AIC issuing this safety recommendation.

Occurrence

On Friday 28 September 2018, a Boeing 737-8BK aircraft, registered P2-PXE, was being operated by Air Niugini Limited, on a scheduled passenger flight from Pohnpei to Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia.

At 23:17:19 UTC1 (09:17:19 local time) the aircraft impacted the water of Chuuk Lagoon about 1,443 ft (440 m) short of the runway 04 threshold, during its approach to runway 04 at Chuuk International Airport. As the aircraft settled in the water, it turned clockwise through 210° and drifted 460 ft (140 m) south east of the runway 04 extended centreline, with the nose of the aircraft pointing about 265°.

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, Pacific/Chuuk Time is UTC + 10 hours.

There were 12 crew members and 35 passengers on board. Six passengers were seriously injured, and one passenger was fatally injured.

The 12 crew members and 34 passengers exited the aircraft and were promptly rescued and brought to shore by U.S. Navy divers (who were the first on scene), Chuuk State Government boats, Red Cross, Transco, and more than twenty privately-owned boats. Local divers located the fatally injured passenger in the aircraft 3 days after the accident.

Background

The Air Niugini *Safety and Emergency Procedures Manual (SEPM)* ditching procedures from the front doors differ depending if there is a life raft deployed. *SEPM, Vol 6, 2.14.4.1* with a life raft and *SEPM, Vol 6, 2.14.4.2* without a raft

If a life raft is available it is required to be deployed from door L1 and door R1 is to be disarmed but is not to be opened.

If no life raft is available, both doors L1 and R1 are to be opened and evacuation is to be made through both L1 and R1 using life jackets. *SEPM, Vol 6, Sect 2.14.4.2*

Safety deficiency description

At the commencement of the evacuation the life raft for L1 was removed from its stowed location in the ceiling above Business Class. As it was being moved towards door L1 the life raft partially inflated (in the cabin) before it could be deployed and attempts to fully inflate it were unsuccessful. The life raft was therefore unusable and was cast adrift.

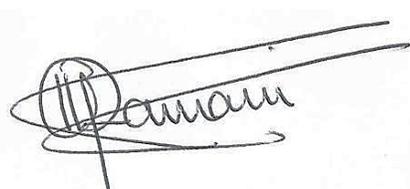
Door R1 was not opened and used in accordance with the procedures when no life raft is available at Door L1 in compliance with *SEPM, Vol 6, Sect 2.14.4.2*.

Recommendation number AIC 18-R06/18-1004 to Air Niugini Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Air Niugini Limited, should ensure that cabin crew are fully conversant with the requirements of the *Safety and Emergency Procedures Manual (SEPM), Vol 6, Sect 2.14.4.2* with respect to the evacuation procedures when no life raft is deployed from the forward exit doors.

Action requested

The AIC requests that Air Niugini Limited note recommendation *AIC 19-R06/18-1004*, and provide a response to the AIC as soon as possible, but no later than 4 May 2019 (within 90 days of the issue date), and explain including with evidence how Air Niugini Limited has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.



HUBERT NAMANI, LLB
Chief Commissioner

4 February 2019

Air Niugini Safety Action

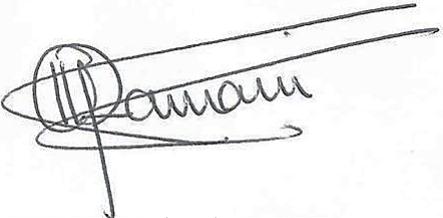
On 26 March 2019, Air Niugini Limited informed the PNG Accident Investigation Commission of its safety actions to address the safety deficiencies identified in *Safety Recommendation AIC 19-R06/18-1004*.

Air Niugini also provided documentary evidence of the safety action taken with the CASA PNG accepted² amendment of the *Standards Operating Procedures Manual, Volume 6, Section 2.13.1* to include ditching procedures. The Cabin Crew training includes evacuation procedures when no life raft is deployed.

PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) assessment of Air Niugini Limited response

The AIC has reviewed the Air Niugini Limited documents providing evidence to the AIC of the safety action taken with respect to ditching procedures and associated cabin crew training for occurrences when no life raft is deployed. The AIC is satisfied that the evidence addressed the safety deficiencies identified in the *AIC Safety Recommendation AIC 19-R06/18-1004*.

The AIC has assigned the Air Niugini Limited response a fully *satisfactory* rating, and records the **Status of the AIC Recommendation: CLOSED RESPONSE ACCEPTED**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hubert Namani', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a circular flourish on the left side.

HUBERT NAMANI, LLB
Chief Commissioner

26 March 2019.

² CASA PNG does not *approve* the Air Niugini manuals, rather it *accepts* the Air Niugini manuals.