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# MEDIA RELEASE

## PNG AIC CHIEF COMMISSIONER ISSUES INTERIM FACTUAL REPORTS ON RECENT ACCIDENTS

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Mr. Hubert Namani announced on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019 that the AIC's investigations into three recent accidents are also examining and analysing evidence in relation to the post-accident survivability aspects. The investigations include the location of the occupants in relation to injuries sustained and the post-accident search and rescue activities.

The three accidents involved: a Bell 427 helicopter registered P2-HSG that impacted water over a reef, about 3.1 nm North West of Baluma township, West New Britain Province on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019; an Air Tractor AT-502B aircraft registered P2-SET that impacted trees near the Era River, about 6.8 nm north west of Baimuru Airstrip, Gulf Province on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019; and a BK117 C-1 helicopter registered P2-TAH that impacted the water approximately 0.9 nm seaward of the coast about 4 nm south east of Silur Mission, New Ireland Province on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Mr. Namani said "Each of the investigations have found a common significant deficiency in the ability for the State to provide effective and efficient search and rescue support to the aviation industry and the travelling public as required by the *Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as Amended)*, *Civil Aviation Rule Part 176*, and *Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

"On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2018, the Minister for Civil Aviation delegated the responsibility for the establishment of a search and rescue coordination centre (SAR RCC) to PNG Air Services Limited (PNGASL) on behalf of the State and also issued a *Directive* to PNGASL to operate and maintain the SAR RCC established under *Section 8A (1) (b) and (c) of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as Amended)*.

"With that July 2018 *Directive* the Minister informed PNGASL that as regards to the funding of the RCC, he would, in consultation with the Minister for Transport & Infrastructure make a submission to the National Executive Council. He further directed that for the time being, PNG ASL was to bear the cost for the establishment of the RCC.

Mr. Namani added "The investigation has found that *The Appropriation (General Public Services Expenditure 2019) Act 2018* does not contain any funding appropriation for search and rescue operations. Under *Section 8A (2) of the Civil Aviation Act*, funding provisions exist for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and operating an RCC, which the Minister is given the power to authorise when it may be necessary. The investigation also found no evidence of a submission to the NEC, nor is there any evidence of consultation."

He said "On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018, the Minister for Civil Aviation, exercising his power to make ordinary rules under *Section 69 of the Civil Aviation Act*, promulgated *Civil Aviation Rule (CAR) Part 176* which provides rules for the certification and operation of search and rescue service organisations. However, to date the State does not have a *CAR Part 176* and *ICAO Annex 12* compliant aviation search and rescue organisation.

The AIC's investigations into these accidents and the post-accident survival aspects are continuing and includes the role and effectiveness search and rescue coordination by PNG Air Services Limited."

**Hubert Namani, LLB**  
Chief Commissioner