

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## PNG ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION RELEASES PRELIMINARY REPORT ON AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT NEAR PAPA-LEALEA, CENTRAL PROVINCE

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Mr. Hubert Namani today announced the public release of a *Preliminary Report* on the investigation regarding the aircraft accident occurred on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020, involving a Cessna 402C aircraft registered VH-TSI near Papa-Lealea, Central Province.

Mr. Namani said “On 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 12:46 local time, a twin-engine Cessna 402 aircraft Australian registration VH-TSI impacted trees during an aborted take-off at an uncommissioned field near Papa-Lealea, Central Province.”

Mr. Namani explained that “At about 09:30 that day, the aircraft departed Mareeba, Queensland, Australia and tracked towards the North North-East with a track set slightly left of Jacksons International Airport. The pilot stated that after departure, he switched off the transponder.

“According to the pilot statement, as he approached the uncommissioned field for landing, the outboard section of the left wing was clipped by a tree and separated from the aircraft and he managed to continue with the approach and touched down on the field at about 12:20.

“The pilot stated that the aircraft was refuelled and loaded with cargo by persons waiting on the ground.

“The pilot also stated that the field offered enough distance for take-off and at about 12:40, he commenced his take-off roll from the Southern end of the field. However, as the aircraft took off, he noticed that the airspeed indicator was not working and that the aircraft could not achieve a positive rate of climb. The pilot subsequently aborted the take-off and the aircraft touched down about 850 m into the field, colliding with trees during its landing roll.”

The pilot reported he was the sole occupant of the aircraft, and sustained minor injuries. The aircraft was substantially damaged.

The AIC became aware of the occurrence at around 18:00 local time the day of the accident and subsequently contacted Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited (ASL), being informed by ASL that all PNG registered aircraft were accounted for. However, ASL advised AIC that they received an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) distress signal and provided the ELT distress coordinates to the AIC.

A team of investigators was dispatched to the area, locating the crash site on the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020. When AIC investigators arrived, the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) police along with Australian Federal Police (AFP) were already at the site conducting police inquiries. The AIC investigators subsequently commenced an onsite investigation.

Mr. Namani explained: “The AIC is a Statutory organisation independent from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of PNG (CASA PNG), providers of air services and providers of aviation related services, as established by *Section 6(c) of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As Amended)*, and aligned with *Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*.”



Under the provisions of the *Section 219 of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As Amended)* and aligned with *Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*, the AIC is conducting an investigation to determine the circumstances and causes of the occurrence with a view to avoid similar occurrences in the future, rather than ascribe blame to any person.

Facts established during AIC investigations, should not be interpreted as apportioning blame. Consequently, AIC reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purpose.

Mr. Namani added: "In accordance with the national legislation and international obligations, the AIC conducts investigations with complete independence from any judicial, police or administrative investigation that can be conducted for purposes other than safety."

As part of PNG international obligations as a State signatory to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* a *Preliminary Report* shall be issued within 30 days from the date of an accident or a serious incident. The AIC makes *Preliminary Reports* publicly available in its website [www.aic.gov.pg](http://www.aic.gov.pg)

Mr. Namani explained that "the *Preliminary Report* is entirely based on the evidence gathered at the initial stages of the investigation. Further stages of the process will include operational, technical, environmental and human aspects as appropriate to determine circumstances, causal and contributing factors and to identify opportunities for safety enhancement in the aviation system."