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**Safety recommendation: AIC 20-R15/20-1004**

**Addressed to: Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA PNG)**

**Date issued: 12 August 2020**

**Investigation link: AIC 20-1004**

**Action status: Issued**

### **Accident Background**

On 19 March 2020, at 03:10 UTC (13:10 local time), a Cessna 208 Caravan aircraft, registered P2-MAF, owned and operated by Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) PNG Limited, conducted a VFR non-scheduled passenger flight operation from Kompam to Yenkisa, Enga Province. During its landing roll at Yenkisa strip 32, the aircraft suffered a runway excursion. During investigation interview, the pilot explained that towards the end of the final approach, while on flaps 30 and at an airspeed of 71 kt, he determined that he had come too close to a protruding tree that stood in his flight path. The tree was about 100 m from the threshold.

### **Safety deficiency description**

RAA had last carried out a survey of Yenkisa Airstrip in May 2019. The survey was done in accordance with CASA PNG AC139-6 which involved the assessment of the four different Airstrip OLS. Section 3.2 Take-off Climb/ Approach Surface, paragraph 3.2.1 states that each runway should have a take-off, climb and approach surface which should:

- a) Rise from the end of the runway strip; and*
- b) Be obstacle free above a gradient of 1:20 (5%); and*
- c) Extend horizontally 600m from the inner edge; and*
- d) Have sides that are splayed outwards at the rate of 1:20 (5%); and*
- e) Not turn before 300m from the inner edge, if a turn is necessary.*

The survey carried out by RAA involved measuring the Approach surface OLS using a combination of a laser rangefinder to measure a horizontal 160m clearway before the threshold, and an inclinometer used at an angle of 2.86° from the threshold of the runway to measure the 1:20 (5%) gradient slope. Obstacles seen to be penetrating the measured OLS were trees just before the 32 strip threshold.

Locals within the community were subsequently advised by RAA to clear the trees that posed as an obstruction along the approach OLS. RAA informed AIC that the Yenkisa local airstrip maintenance officer reported that the trees were cut, but was unable to provide supporting evidence to the investigation.

According to RAA records, a subsequent airstrip inspection was carried out at Yenkisa Airstrip on 21 February 2020. The inspection rendered the airstrip as "OK". However, RAA stated that the inspection was conducted by a mechanic who was not equipped with the specific survey tools.

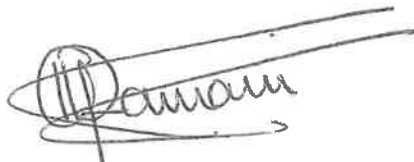
The AIC identified that the obstructing trees were never cut since the survey, and on the day of the accident, the trees were still penetrating the approach OLS.

#### **Recommendation number AIC 20-R15/20-1004 to CASA PNG**

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) recommends that the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA PNG) should ensure that airstrips are maintained in accordance with the provisions of rules and regulations including but not limited to CAR Part 139 and AC 139-6 to the extent applicable.

#### **Action requested**

The AIC requests that CASA PNG note recommendation AIC 20-R15/20-1004, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days, but no later than 10 November 2020, and explain including with evidence how CASA PNG has addressed the safety deficiency identified in Safety Recommendation AIC 20-R15/20-1004.



**Hubert Namani, LLB**  
*Chief Commissioner*

12 August 2020

## **Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea (CASA PNG) response**

The AIC did not receive a response from CASA PNG within the provided 90 days period.

On 2 July 2021, CASA PNG provided a response to the AIC indicating that they acknowledged the Safety Deficiency, however, they did not accept the Safety Recommendation assignment. The response indicated that CASA PNG is not responsible for ensuring the maintenance of airstrips. They also stated that CAR Part 139 is not applicable to airstrips and that AC 139-6 is only used as a guide for aircraft operators to assess the airstrips under their operational scope.

### **AIC assessment**

The AIC has assessed CASA PNG response to safety recommendation AIC 20-R15/20-1004 and acknowledges that CASA PNG is not responsible for the oversight of maintenance of airstrips in PNG. The AIC also notes that CAR Part 139 is not applicable to airstrips and AC 139-6 is intended to provide guidance to Operators for assessment of airstrips.

The AIC assigns CASA PNG's response as *fully satisfactory* rating.

The AIC notes that the issue of appropriate oversight of maintenance of airstrips remains.

The AIC recorded the **Status of the AIC Recommendation: CLOSED.**



**Capt. Aria Bouraga, MBE**  
*Acting Chief Commissioner*

**9 July 2021**