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Our Ref: AIC 26-R01/25-1002

Safety recommendation: AIC 26-R01/25-1002

Addressed to: Ramu Agri Industries Limited

Date issued: 16 April 2026

Investigation link: AIC 25-1002

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 23 April 2025, at 08:30 local (22:30 UTC¹), a Cessna T188C aircraft, registered VH-SOY, was conducting VFR low-level agricultural operations at the Ramu sugar fields when it impacted the ground at Sangkiang village in the Usino Bundi District, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea.

The aircraft was owned by JANLIT Pty² Ltd of Tully, Queensland. Liddles Aerial Spraying Pty Ltd of Innisfail, Queensland operated the aircraft in Australia and contracted (hired) the aircraft and pilot to RAMU Agri Industries Ltd (RAIL) in PNG. RAIL was the PNG Operator of VH-SOY.

The pilot was the sole occupant of the aircraft and was fatally injured. According to RAIL, at about 08:30, during the third round of crop spraying to the northwest, the aircraft impacted the ground at Sangkiang Village, located about 10 nm northwest of Gusap Airstrip. The aircraft was destroyed by impact forces and a post-impact fuel-fed fire.

As a result of the investigation into the accident, the PNG Accident Investigation Commission issued the following recommendations to address concerns identified in this report.

Safety deficiency description

The investigation determined that Ramu Agri Limited (RAIL) had changed the pilot assigned to the Gusap operation after the *Permit to Fly (PTF)* application was submitted. The original application, which included the nominated pilot's Licence and Medical documentation, had already been provided to CASA PNG for assessment prior to the change.

According to CASA PNG, the Australian pilot [named], CPL(A), was the individual presented in the application for *Permit To Fly No. 02/2024*, which authorised the foreign-registered aircraft VH-SOY to operate in Papua New Guinea for the period specified on the PTF.

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 around the accident, Papua New Guinea Time (Pacific/Port Moresby Time) is UTC +10 hours

² Liddles Aerial Spraying operates a fleet of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters with bases in Mareeba, Tully and Innisfail in Queensland, Australia, providing aerial spraying services to the agricultural industry.

CASA PNG confirmed that it did not receive any formal notification from RAIL regarding the pilot change. CASA PNG further advised that, had such a notification been submitted, it would have triggered a review of the replacement pilot's licence and medical credentials to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. Any identified discrepancies could then have been addressed directly with the accountable organisation.

Recommendation AIC 26-R01/25-1002 to Ramu Agri Industries Limited (RAIL)

Date Issued: 16 April 2026

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Ramu Agri Industries Limited (RAIL) should formally notify the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of PNG of any change in flight crew after a *Permit to Fly* is granted and ensure that pilot qualifications and experience are reviewed and approved prior to continuation of flight operations.

Action requested

The AIC requests that the Ramu Agri Industries Limited (RAIL) note recommendation *AIC 26-R01/25-1002* and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date but no later than 15 July 2026 and explain (including with evidence) how RAIL has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.

STATUS: ISSUED.



Maryanne J. Wal

Chief Commissioner

16 April 2026