



MEDIA RELEASE

AIC RELEASES FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT INTO DASH 8 BURST TYRE AT 20,000 feet DURING CLIMB

On 4 August 2017, a Dash 8 aircraft, registration P2-ANK (ANK), operated by Link PNG, completed a scheduled flight from Bulolo, Morobe Province to Port Moresby. The aircraft arrived at Port Moresby Jacksons International Airport at 7:30am. It had remained overnight at Bulolo. According to the Technical Log, the aircraft was serviceable when it arrived at Port Moresby.

The aircraft subsequently departed Port Moresby for Tari, Hela Province at 9:04am. At about 9:20am, while 39 nm west-northwest of Port Moresby and passing 20,000 ft during the climb, both pilots heard a bang sound, and felt the aircraft shudder. The pilots saw that the left main landing gear door *OPEN Advisory* light was illuminated. The flight attendant alerted both pilots that the left main landing gear door was open. The crew elected to return to Port Moresby for an engineering inspection of the aircraft.

The engineers found that the left main landing gear number-two tyre was deflated and damaged. When the tyre blew out in the wheel well, it caused substantial damage to the main structure on the inside of the nacelle.

The AIC investigation found that the tyre's casing plies had been broken as a result of a hard impact, from a sharp object. It is likely that the damage occurred when a jagged rock impacted the sidewall of the number-two tyre during the landing at Bulolo on 3 August 2017. The aircraft returned to Jacksons safely, but the damage was not found during post-and pre-flight inspections.

The investigation determined that the significantly damaged and weakened casing of the tyre, and the differential of the atmospheric pressure compared with the pressure within the tyre, caused the tyre to blow out, resulting in substantial damage to the left nacelle.

The investigation further determined that the Licensee of the Bulolo Airstrip had neglected its primary responsibility of properly maintaining the airstrip. Due to weather erosion over time, and the lack of maintenance, large jagged rocks had become exposed on the surface of the Bulolo strip.

On 25 October 2017, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of PNG informed the AIC that the Bulolo Aerodrome Operating Certificate (ADOC) had lapsed, and Bulolo Aerodrome was not certificated. However, moves were underway for its certification. At the time of finalising this investigation report, 4 January 2018, the Bulolo ADOC had not been renewed.

Approved:

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