



INTERIM STATEMENT

AIC 19 - 1003

TRIBAL AURORA HELICOPTERS

P2-TAH

Airbus Helicopters BK117 C-1

Inadvertent VFR Flight into IMC

2.7 nm south east of Silur Airstrip, New Ireland Province

Papua New Guinea

13 September 2019



About the AIC

The Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) is an independent statutory agency within Papua New Guinea (PNG). The AIC is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from the judiciary, transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The AIC's function is to improve safety and public confidence in the aviation mode of transport through excellence in: independent investigation of aviation accidents and other safety occurrences within the aviation system; safety data recording and analysis; and fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

The AIC is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation in PNG, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving PNG registered aircraft. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The AIC performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *PNG Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As amended)*, and the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1951*, and in accordance with *Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

The object of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. AIC investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not a function of the AIC to apportion blame or determine liability. At the same time, an investigation report must include relevant factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the AIC endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why it happened, in a fair and unbiased manner.

As per the paragraph 6.6 of the International Standards of ICAO Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, if the report cannot be made publicly available within twelve months, the State conducting the investigation shall make an interim statement publicly available on each anniversary of the occurrence, detailing the progress of the investigation and any safety issues raised.

The AIC has produced this *Interim Statement* in accordance with its mandate under the *Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as amended)*, in accordance with the requirements of *ICAO Annex 13* and the *PNG Accident Investigation Commission - Policy and Procedures Manual*.

Interim Statement

On 13 September 2019, at about 01:15 UTC (11:15 local time), an Airbus Helicopter BK117 C-1, registered P2-TAH, owned by Southern Cross Aircraft Engineering and operated by Tribal Aurora Helicopters was on a VFR positioning flight from Buka Airport, Autonomous Region of Bougainville to Tokua Airport, East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea, when it impacted water approximately 2.7 nautical miles southeast of Silur, New Ireland Province.

At 02:27 UTC (12:27 local time), the Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) received information from Manolos Aviation about the accident and at 04:31, PNG Air Services Limited (ASL) notified AIC by providing an Initial Notification Incident Report.

During the investigation conducted by the AIC, all relevant information regarding the occurrence was gathered and analyzed. It included operational aspects including human factors and survival aspects, as well as other elements necessary to establish the cause, contributing factors, and circumstances in which the occurrence took place.

Currently, the Draft Final Report is being developed by the AIC, to be sent to the involved parties in accordance with ICAO Annex 13 Paragraph 6.3. The AIC will invite them to provide their significant and substantiated comments on the report in accordance with ICAO provisions.

Upon completion of the period for comments to the Draft Final Report, the AIC will release the Final Report in accordance with Annex 13 Paragraph 6.5.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hubert Namani', is written over a faint, circular official stamp or seal. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hubert Namani, LLB

Chief Commissioner

13 September 2020