

MEDIA RELEASE

PNG ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION RELEASES FINAL REPORT ON HELICOPTER ACCIDENT OCCURRED NEAR SILUR, NEW IRELAND PROVINCE

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) Mr. Hubert Namani today announced that the AIC released an Investigation Final Report on a helicopter accident occurred on 13th September 2019 near Silur, New Ireland Province.

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

“There were two persons on board: 1 pilot and 1 passenger. The passenger was the sole survivor. The helicopter submerged and the final resting position of the wreckage was not identified.

“At 12:27 local time, the AIC received information about the accident from an Air Operator, which was later confirmed by a notification from PNG Air Services Limited (currently Niusky Pacific Limited). The AIC immediately commenced an investigation, as required by the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As Amended) and aligned with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.”

The Final Report of the investigation established that the helicopter departed Buka to Tokua as the planned destination. During flight, the pilot encountered deteriorated weather conditions and he tried to divert. However, the weather was further deteriorating as the flight progressed, to an extent in which the pilot was unable to maintain visual references.

As the pilot was manoeuvring to recover visual references, the helicopter descended and impacted the water approximately 2.7 nm South East of Silur Airstrip, New Ireland Province.

Mr Namani further explained that *“the pilot descended to 200 ft probably in attempt to go below the cloud base. As the pilot was manoeuvring to regain visual references, he was unable to maintain effective control of the flight parameters of the helicopter and impacted into the surface.”*

The Final Report of the investigation is available on AIC's website www.aic.gov.pg