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Safety recommendation: AIC 20-R12/AIC 19-1001

Addressed to: Air Services Limited

Date issued: 12 August 2020

Investigation Link: AIC 19-1001

Action statues: Active

Introduction

On 11 August 2019, the PNG AIC was informed by Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited (ASL) of an accident involving a Bell 427 helicopter, registered P2-HSG, owned and operated by Niugini Helicopters.

On the same day, PNG instituted an investigation into the occurrence by initially authorizing the commencement of the investigation, and the appointment of an Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) in accordance with PNG Legislation, Civil Aviation Act (as amended 2016) and ICAO Annex 13 standards.

Occurrence

On 11 August 2019, at about 11:25 local time (01:25 UTC), a Bell 427 helicopter, registered P2-HSG, owned and operated by Niugini Helicopters, was conducting a VFR flight from Kokopo, East New Britain Province to Kimbe, West New Britain Province, when it impacted the water, over a reef, about 3.1 nm North West of Baluma township.

The pilot, the sole occupant of the helicopter sustained minor injuries and egressed the aircraft. He was reported to have been rescued about 40 minutes after the accident.

Safety deficiency description

Papua New Guinea is a contracting state to the Convention on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and is responsible to provide the search and rescue services in accordance with *ICAO Annex 12*.

Provisions for Search and Rescue (SAR) were initially added to *Civil Aviation Act 2000, as amended in 2016*. These were sections 8A and 8B (*Refer to Appendix D, 5.4.3*). Since the introduction of these provisions, the state of PNG did not have a designated Search and Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC). The AIC first identified this deficiency through a previous accident investigation reference *AIC 17-1004*,

involving a Britten Norman BN-2A Islander aircraft, registered P2-ISM which occurred in Morobe Province on 23 December 2017.

On 17 April 2018, AIC issued a safety recommendation *AIC 18-R03/17-1004*, to the then Minister for Civil Aviation, which stated:

The Accident Investigation Commission recommends that the Minister for Civil Aviation, in compliance with Sections 8A and 8B of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As Amended in 2016), should ensure that a rescue coordination center is established, maintained and operated, to coordinate and conduct aviation search and rescue operations in PNG. This will also ensure compliance with ICAO Annex 12, thereby specifically complying with Section 8A (1) (B) (ii) of the Act.

On 9 July 2018, the Minister for Civil Aviation formally delegated the function of Rescue coordination Centre (RCC) to PNG ASL.

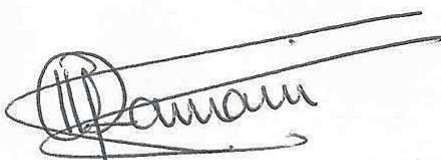
The investigation determined that PNGASL RCC was not fully established at the time of the release of this draft report.

Recommendation AIC 20-R12/19-1001 to Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that PNG Air Services Limited should ensure that the RCC is fully compliant with CAR Part 176, and it is staffed 24 hours a day by trained personnel proficient in the use of radiotelephony communication.

Action requested

The AIC requests that PNG Air Services Limited note recommendation *AIC 20-R12/19-1001*, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date but no later than 10 November 2020, and explain including evidence, how PNG Air Services Limited has addressed the safety deficiency in the safety recommendation. **STATUS: ACTIVE**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hubert Namani', with a large circular flourish at the end.

Hubert Namani, LLB

Chief Commissioner

12 August 2020

PNG Air Services Limited (NiuSky Pacific Limited) response

The AIC did not receive a response from NiuSky Pacific Limited (NSPL) within the 90-day period provided.

The AIC sent a courtesy follow up email on 23 June 2021. NSPL responded on the same day stating: '*RCC is in full operations under the regulatory oversight of CASA PNG*'.

AIC assessment

The AIC has assessed the response provided by NSPL and notes that NSPL acknowledges the identified safety deficiency and recommendation. However, there was no evidence provided to the AIC to show that the RCC is fully compliant with *CAR Part 176*, and it is staffed 24 hours a day by trained personnel proficient in the use of radiotelephony communication.

The AIC has assigned the response an *unsatisfactory* rating.

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



Hubert Namani, LLB

Chief Commissioner

23 August 2021