



8/2022
28 March 2022

MEDIA RELEASE

Air Niugini 767 air return due to pressurization system fault

The AIC has conducted preliminary inquiries into an event reported by the public relating to an air return of an Air Niugini Boeing 767 enroute to Brisbane from Port Moresby on Wednesday, 23 March 2022. There was also a newspaper article related to the matter in the National Newspaper on Thursday, 24 March 2022. The AIC, following its inquiry on the matter, can confirm that the defects alluded to by Air Niugini in their correspondence as 'minor', are accurate.

The AIC has considered all known circumstances of the flight at the time. The crew of the flight decided to do an air return as a precautionary measure to ensure safety of the persons onboard. The risks related to the faults reported are relative to the altitude the aircraft is at when the faults were triggered. At higher altitudes, i.e., above 10,000 ft, it would have likely escalated to the point where the crew need to conduct an emergency descent. In this instance the aircraft had not exceeded 8,000 ft when the faults were observed. The crew then decided to return to Jackson Airport. The faults were identified and reported to their maintenance crew upon return, and maintenance records show that the technical issue was rectified.

The AIC has determined that the event does not warrant an investigation under the provisions of mandate and Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

When cabin pressure related faults occur, the pressure control system may not be able to keep the appropriate pressure in the cabin. In such instances, the cabin pressure may rapidly change to equalize the outside pressure. Vibrations are not uncommon during such normalizations. The faults identified show that this was likely the case for PX003 on the day. Additionally, it cannot be discounted that air and weather-related turbulence are always uncontrollable natural contributors to aircraft vibrations.

With all circumstances considered, the AIC has confirmed that Air Niugini's correspondence is accurate and that it is not an investigable event. This is, however, a reportable occurrence and Air Niugini did not report the event to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of PNG as required under Section 60 of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As Amended).

We encourage the citizens and the public to report observations to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority or the Accident Investigation Commission for appropriate assessment and corrective action steps to be taken to promote aviation safety.

More information about this investigation can be found at www.aic.gov.pg