

MEDIA RELEASE

RELEASE OF FINAL REPORT INTO HELIFIX OPERATIONS LIMITED CESSNA 208B GRAND CARAVAN RUNWAY EXCURSION DURING LANDING AT ELIPTAMIN AIRSTRIP, SANDAUN PROVINCE.

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Maryanne J. Wal, today published the *Final Report* on the investigation conducted into a Cessna 208B Grand Caravan aircraft accident that occurred on 10 February 2023 at Eliptamin Airstrip, Sandaun Province.



Ms Wal stated, “On 10 February 2023, at 13:43 local time (03:43 UTC), a Cessna 208B Grand Caravan aircraft, registered P2-HFA, owned and operated by Helifix Operations Limited, was conducting a VFR passenger charter flight from Kiunga Airport, Western Province to Eliptamin Airstrip, Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea, when it experienced a runway excursion accident during its landing roll at Eliptamin and impacted a drainage embankment along the edge of the strip. There were four persons onboard: the pilot in command (PIC) and three passengers. No injuries were reported.

The AIC was notified of the accident on the day of the occurrence and immediately commenced an investigation in accordance with its mandate under the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as amended) and pursuant to ICAO Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.”

The *Final Report* stated that the aircraft was far too high when positioned overhead the airstrip, for the pilot to properly assess the surface condition of the airstrip and the wind behaviour. When the pilot conducted the final approach, he encountered turbulent winds and strong tailwinds that exceeded the operator’s permitted tailwind component for the aircraft, however the pilot was unable to discontinue the approach as he was already past the committal point. Subsequently, the pilot conducted an unstable approach and landed with a high ground speed that resulted in the aircraft getting airborne twice during the landing roll, before impacting the drainage embankment and coming to a stop. The amount of mud deposits on the aircraft’s wheels and airframe determined that the strip surface was not completely dry at the time of the accident. This would have affected the braking capacity of the aircraft during the landing roll. The investigation also found that the flight to Eliptamin was outside the operational times recommended by the operator.

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