



AIC Head Office,
Level 1, NAQIA Haus, Portion 81, Morea Toba Rd, 6 Mile
PO Box 1709, Boroko 111
National Capital District
Papua New Guinea

Telephone : (675) 323 2911
Facsimile : (675) 323 2139
Email : abouraga@aic.gov.pg

Safety recommendation: AIC 23-R21/23-1001

Addressed to: North Coast Aviation Limited

Date issued: 24 December 2023

Investigation link: AIC 23-1001

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 9 February 2023 at 13:30 local time (03:30 UTC), the AIC became aware through social media of an accident involving a PAC 750XL aircraft, registered P2-BJD, owned and operated by North Coast Aviation at Giramben Airstrip, Jiwaka Province. The AIC immediately commenced an investigation, and a team was deployed to the accident site on 10 February 2023.

Occurrence

On 9 February 2023, at 12:50 local time (02:50 UTC), a PAC 750XL aircraft, registered P2-BJD (BJD), owned and operated by North Coast Aviation (NCA), was conducting a VFR Charter flight from Giramben Airstrip, Jiwaka Province to Simbai Airstrip, Madang Province, when during take-off, the aircraft impacted terrain South of Giramben Airstrip.

There were four persons on board the aircraft: one pilot and three passengers; an adult male, an adult female and an infant. The pilot, adult male passenger and infant sustained seriously injured, and female adult passenger had minor injuries.

The aircraft was destroyed.

Safety deficiency description

According to the Operator, the assessment on Giramben Airstrip, prior to commencing their operation, was conducted by the pilot of the accident flight. The Operator also revealed that they did not receive any written airstrip assessment report from the pilot of the accident flight, however, they did receive verbal advice from the pilot that the airstrip was good for use after the pilot's assessment of the airstrip, and that there was availability of customers in the area.

According to NCA *Safety and Quality Manual (SQM)*, Section 3;

The primary role of the Safety Management System (SMS) is to manage safety through a continuing process of hazard identification and risk management. This also promotes procedures that support operational excellence, prevent accidents and incidents, and manage corporate risk. The SMS is proactive, predictive and data-driven in nature and its components include the collection, analysis and dissemination of safety information, for the purpose of which is to raise safety awareness throughout the Company.

The scope of the SMS is established by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who has the overall authority to establish and amend this document (Safety and Quality Manual) in consultation with the Safety & Quality Manager, being responsible for the quality of the content. It is described, documented, and communicated to employees throughout the Exposition suite of manuals. The Safety & Quality Manager serves as the primary liaison for implementation of the SMS and has direct access to the CEO on all aspects of the program.

There was no evidence provided to the investigation to show that the accountable persons for Safety Management and Quality Management System was involved during the Giramben Airstrip assessment prior to commencement operation to ensure risks associated with operating out of Giramben Airstrip was identified and mitigated to an acceptable level before operations as per the documented SMS and QMS processes were properly and fully implemented in accordance with the operator's *Safety and Quality Manual*.

Recommendation number AIC 23-R21/23-1001 to North Coast Aviation Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) recommends that North Coast Aviation Limited should enforce effective Quality and Safety oversight on its systems and processes to ensure risks associated new operations are identified and mitigated to an acceptable level before commencement of operations.

Action requested

The AIC requests that North Coast Aviation Limited note recommendation *AIC 23-R21/23-1001* and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date, nor later than 23 March 2024 and explain (including evidence) how NCA has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aria Bouraga', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Captain Aria Bouraga, MBE

Acting Chief Commissioner

24 December 2023

North Coast Aviation Limited response to Safety Recommendation AIC 23-R21/23-1001

The AIC did not receive a response from North Coast Aviation (NCA) Limited within the provided 90 days period.

On 26 March 2024, NCA responded via email to the AIC, following AIC's courtesy follow-ups, stating that they would prepare and provide a response with documented evidence of the actions NCA taken so far in to address the safety deficiencies identified in the Safety Recommendation. In the email, NCA also requested for an extension, which was confirmed to be up to the end of July 2024.

The AIC extended the due date to 31 July 2024, as requested by NCA.

On 22 July 2024, NCA responded via email, providing their corrective actions to address the safety deficiency identified in the *Safety Recommendation AIC 23-R21/23-1001*, which was contained in a letter dated 20 July 2024.

The letter stated that in response to *Safety Recommendation AIC 23-R21/23-1001*, NCA had taken the following actions:

1. Engagement of a new Safety & Quality Manager (SQM) as of October 2023. A copy of CASA PNG's Acceptance of *CAR Part 119/145* Quality & Safety Manager Letter was provided, which indicated that the SQM passed the Fit and Proper Person (FPP) assessment on 17 October 2024.
2. The SQM has in place an internal annual audit programme and has commenced internal audits to ensure NCA's conformance with its procedures and compliance with the CARs. A copy of the internal audit programme and register were provided to the AIC.
3. A Safety Training Programme has been compiled and safety trainings have commenced. A copy of NCA's Annual Safety Training programme was provided to the AIC.
4. An Annual Management Review Meeting (MRM) Programme has been put in place and communicated to all NCA Senior Persons. NCA CEO, as chairman of the MRM, conducts these meetings on a quarterly basis for NCA Senior Persons, where safety, quality and regulatory aspects of the organisation are discussed. A copy of NCA's annual MRM programme for 2024 was provided to the AIC.
5. Risk Assessments relating to its operations into the remote airstrips have been carried out and documented. NCA managers are now aware that before undertaking new tasks, they must conduct and document risk assessments in order to identify hazards and put in place controls to mitigate them. A copy of NCA's Risk Assessment Register for 2024 was provided to the AIC.

The letter also stated that NCA successfully underwent its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) renewal audit with CASA PNG from 19 – 22 February 2024 and its AOC was renewed for 24 months, which was an improvement from the previous renewal period of 6 months. A copy of the AOC, issued on 11 April 2024, was provided to the AIC.

PNG AIC assessment of North Coast Aviation Limited response

The AIC reviewed NCA's response to address *Safety Recommendation AIC 23-R21/23-1001* and notes NCA's corrective actions taken address the safety deficiencies identified in *Safety Recommendation AIC 23-R21/23-1001*.

The AIC assigned this response a *fully satisfactory* rating.

The AIC recorded the status of the AIC Recommendation: **CLOSED**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maryanne J Wal', with a large loop at the end.

Maryanne J Wal
Chief Commissioner

25 July 2024