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# MEDIA RELEASE

## RELEASE OF FINAL REPORT ON A BELL 407 HELICOPTER ACCIDENT NORTHWEST OF WAPENAMANDA AIRPORT, ENGA PROVINCE

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) today published the Final Report on the investigation conducted into a Bell 407 helicopter accident that occurred Northwest of Wapenamanda Airport, Enga Province, Papua New Guinea.

On 18 February 2023, at about 11:40 local time (01:40 UTC), a Bell 407 helicopter, registered P2-HSM, owned and operated by Heli Solutions Limited, while conducting a single pilot passenger charter flight from Eppo Village to Wapenamanda Airport in Enga Province, experienced a complete loss of tail rotor thrust during descent into Wapenamanda Airport. The pilot subsequently conducted an emergency landing on a garden patch, approximately 3.5 nautical miles (NM) Northwest of Wapenamanda Airport. There were six persons on board the helicopter: the Pilot, the Loadmaster, and four passengers. There were no injuries reported.

The AIC was notified of the accident on the day of the occurrence at 11:40 local time and immediately commenced an investigation in accordance with its mandate under the *Civil Aviation Act 2000* and pursuant to *ICAO Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*. A team of investigators were deployed to the accident site on 19 February 2024.

The Final Report found that the loss of tail rotor thrust was due to the snapping of four mounting studs, resulting from a failure in the mounting stud assembly. The studs and bores showed signs of excessive cyclic stress and vibrations. The investigation also concluded that several factors contributed to the accelerated wear and tear of the component, including the helicopter vibrations that were reported numerous times throughout the year. Maintenance records showed that these reported issues were partially resolved. The AIC also identified issues regarding the recording of defects by pilots and the use of the vibration analyser by maintenance personnel.

The AIC issued one safety recommendation to Heli-Solution in relation to standardising systems and protocols for defect reporting, maintenance practices, and adherence to the Manufacturer's Maintenance Manual for unscheduled maintenance.

The Final Report of the investigation is available on AIC's website [www.aic.gov.pg](http://www.aic.gov.pg)

*Authorised for release by:*

**Maryanne J. Wal**  
*Chief Commissioner*