



PRELIMINARY REPORT

AIC 25-1002

23 MAY 2025

OPERATOR	: Liddle's Aerial Spraying Pty Ltd
REGISTRATION	: VH-SOY
MANUFACTURER	: Cessna Aircraft Company
MODEL	: T188C
OCCURRENCE DESCRIPTION /CLASS/CATEGORY	: Impacted Terrain During Low Altitude Operations (LALT)
LOCATION	: Sangkiang Village, Ramu, Madang Province
OCCURRENCE DATE	: 23 April 2025



INTRODUCTION

Investigation AIC 25-1002

On 23 April 2025 at 10:30 local time (00:30 UTC), the AIC was notified by CASA PNG about an accident which had occurred on the same day at 08:30 local time. The occurrence involved a Cessna T188C aircraft, registered VH-SOY, owned by JANLIT Pty Ltd and operated by Liddle's Aerial Spraying Pty Ltd through hire by Ramu Agri Industries Ltd. The AIC immediately commenced an investigation into the occurrence pursuant to *Section 247 of the PNG Civil Aviation Act 2000*, and a team of investigators was dispatched to the site to carry out the on-site investigation activities the next day.

In accordance with *ICAO Annex 13, Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1*, the AIC promptly notified relevant foreign authorities of the State of:

- Airframe and Engine Manufacture: United States of America (NTSB)
- Registry: Australia (ATSB)

This investigation was conducted, and other States participation was permitted in line with the AIC's Investigation Policy and Procedures Manual, which is fully aligned with *ICAO Annex 13, Chapter 5, paragraph 5.18*.

This Written Preliminary Aircraft Accident Investigation Report was produced by the AIC, and contains facts known to the AIC before the official release date. It is released by the Commission in accordance with Recommendation 5.4.6 of ICAO Annex 13. The report is also publicly available on the AIC website <https://www.aic.gov.pg>.

The report is based on the initial investigation carried out by the AIC in accordance with PNG Civil Aviation Act 2000, Chapter 31 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1951, Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and the PNG AIC Investigation Policy and Procedures Manual. It contains factual information and updates on the investigation up to the date of the preliminary report's release. Analysis of that information, findings and contributing (causal) factors, other factors, safety actions, and safety recommendations are reserved for the Final Report .

The sole objective of the investigation and the Preliminary Report is the AIC's obligation to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and in accordance with ICAO Annex 13 and thereby promotes aviation safety. Readers are advised that in accordance with Section 219 of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 and ICAO Annex 13, it is not the purpose of the Commission's aircraft accident or serious incident investigations to apportion blame or liability. Fact-based statements in the report should not be interpreted as apportioning blame.

Factual Information

Occurrence Detail

On 23 April 2025, at 08:30 local (22:30 UTC¹), a Cessna T188C aircraft, registered VH-SOY, owned by JANLIT Pty Ltd and operated by Liddle's Aerial Spraying Pty Ltd through hire by Ramu Agri Industries Ltd (RAIL), was conducting a VFR² low-altitude agricultural flight at the Ramu sugar fields, when it impacted terrain at Sangkiang village, in the Usino Bundi District, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea.



Figure 1: VH-SOY accident site, Sangkiang village.

The pilot was the sole occupant of the aircraft and was fatally injured.

According to the RAIL (hirer), their agricultural operations are conducted between 05:00 to 10:00 or 10:30 daily, depending on the activities planned and weather conditions.

On the day of the occurrence, the pilot and ground operations staff arrived at the airstrip at 05:30 and prepared the aircraft for the day's activities. The pilot conducted preflight inspections of the aircraft, which had been refueled the night before.

The pilot was scheduled to complete five rounds of crop spraying of the RAIL sugar cane plantation.

Just before 06:00, the weather was observed to be fine, and the pilot was given clearance to commence the operation. The pilot departed Gusap Airstrip at about 06:00 with 400 litres (L) of chemical for the first round of crop spraying operations on the sugar cane fields towards

¹ The 24-hour clock, in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), is used in this report to describe the local time as specific events occurred. Local time in the area of the accident, Papua New Guinea Time (Pacific/Port Moresby Time) is UTC +10 hours

² Visual Flight Rules.

the northwest of Gusap Airstrip. The pilot returned to Gusap Airstrip and loaded another 400 L of chemical for the second round of crop spraying. The same thing was done for the third and fourth round of crop spraying.

The operator added that each spraying run normally took about 30 minutes, and the ground time for reloading was typically less than 10 minutes before the aircraft departed for the next run.

At about 08:30, while conducting the fourth round of crop spraying to the northwest, the aircraft impacted terrain at Sangkiang Village, about 10 nautical miles northwest of Gusap Airstrip.

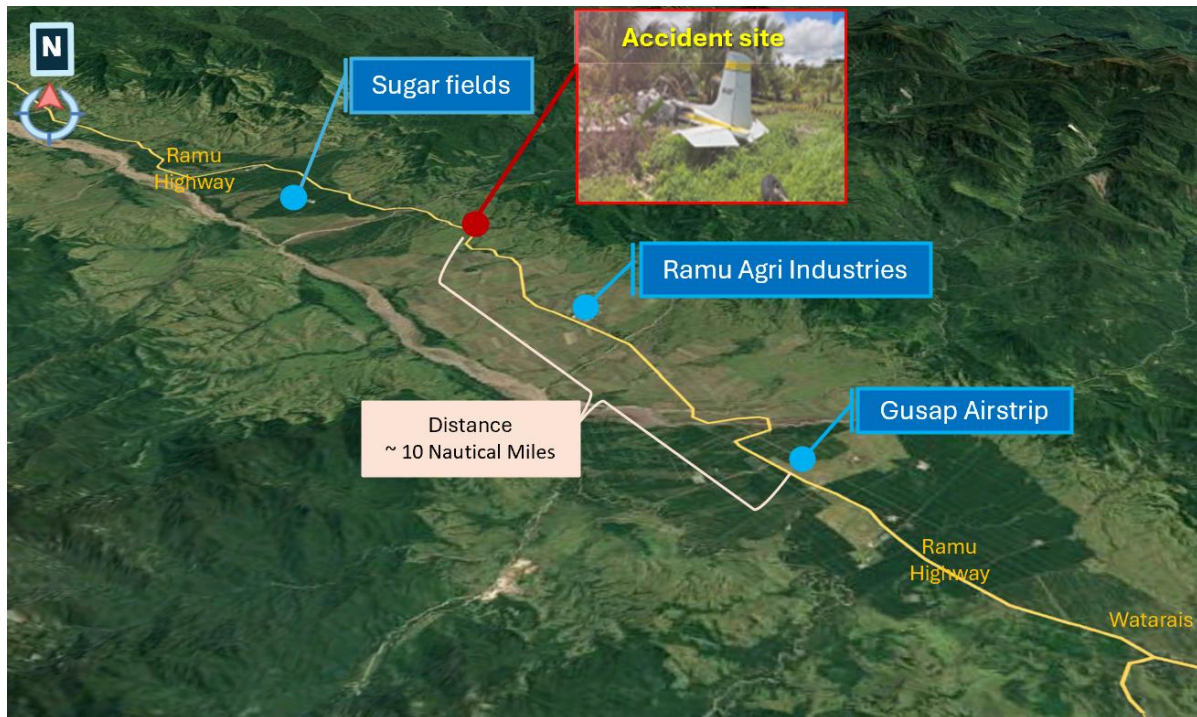


Figure 2: Accident site in relation to Gusap Airstrip and the sugar fields.

During interviews with eyewitnesses that were present at the location of the accident, the aircraft was engulfed in flames upon impact. Local bystanders attempted to put out the fire and rescue the pilot, however, smoke and intense flames made it challenging. While in the process of rescuing the pilot, the locals were supported by RAIL medical personnel who were driving by in an ambulance at the time of the accident.

Interviews with the RAIL medical team revealed that the pilot was evacuated from the aircraft with the help of the locals.

RAIL's safety officer on board the ambulance stated that after successfully evacuating the pilot from the burning wreckage, they transported the pilot to RAIL's clinic. However, on arrival at the clinic, the medical team's attempts to resuscitate the pilot were unsuccessful, and the pilot succumbed to the injuries from the smoke inhalation and severe burns to his body.

Wreckage

The aircraft sustained significant damage as a result of impact forces and a severe post-impact fire. A summary of the damages is as follows:

- Propeller: Detached from the engine
- Engine: Dislodged forward from its mounting
- Left Main Landing Gear Assembly detached from the undercarriage
- Right Wing:
 - Severe fire damage from the wing root to the fuel tank
 - Mainwheel assembly destroyed
- Fuselage/Cockpit: Extensive fire damage to the cabin area
- Left Wing: Wingtip snapped off upon impact

Figure 3 shows the wreckage from all four sides (front, rear, left, right), documenting the wreckage.



Figure 3: Aircraft Wreckage



Figure 4: Evidence of fire

According to assessments conducted at the accident site, the environment around the areas of impact sustained damage.

AIC Comment

The investigation is continuing and intends to understand the reason for the accident. The investigation will also include but not limited to the operations, systems, performance, maintenance, and serviceability and organisational aspects, design and manufacture.

The investigation analysis and findings will be included in the Final Report.

Safety Actions

At the time of the issue of this Preliminary Report, no safety actions have been reported.

Recommendations

At the time of the issue of this Preliminary Report, no safety recommendations have been issued by the AIC.

General details

Date and time:	23 April 2025, 08:30 (22:30 UTC)	
Occurrence category:	Accident	
Primary occurrence type:	Impacted terrain during low level agricultural activities	
Location:	Sangkiang Village, Ramu, Usino Bundi District, Madang Province	
	Latitude: 5° 55' 24.36"S	Longitude: 145° 50' 22.29"E

Type of Operation, Injury, and Damage details

Type of operation	VFR Agricultural Aerial Works	
Persons on Board	Crew: 1 (Pilot)	Passengers: Nil
Injuries	Crew: Fatal	Passengers: Nil
Damage	Aircraft destroyed impact forces and a severe post-impact fire.	

Crew details

Pilot	
Nationality	Filipino
Gender	Male
Age	40
License type	CPL Aeroplane

Aircraft details

Airframe	
Aircraft manufacturer and model:	Cessna Aircraft Company, T188C
Registration:	VH-SOY
Serial number:	T18803847
Year of Manufacture	1981
Engine	
Engine manufacturer and model	Teledyne Continental, TSIO-520-T
Engine Serial Number	515259
Propeller	
Propeller Make and Model	McCauley, D3A34C402
Propeller Serial Number	779695

This Preliminary Report is released by;
Accident Investigation Commission
Ministry of Civil Aviation
Papua New Guinea



23 May 2025



CAPTAIN ARIA BOURAGA
COMMISSIONER / DEPUTY CHAIRMAN



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