



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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

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

Safety recommendation: AIC 24-R03/23-1004

Addressed to: Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited

Date issued: 11 June 2024

Investigation link: AIC 23-1004

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 7 June 2023, at about 15:10 local (05:10 UTC), a Cessna 206 aircraft, registered VH-MZL owned and operated by Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited, was conducting a private VFR flight from Dodomona Airstrip to Mougulu Airstrip, Western Province, Papua New Guinea, when during take-off, the aircraft ran off the edge of the runway, overturned and came to rest inverted.

There were 4 persons on board the aircraft: one pilot and three passengers. There were no injuries reported.

The aircraft was substantially damaged.

Safety deficiency description

According to the pilot, the airstrip was wet at the time of the occurrence, and prior to departure, during loading of cargo and passengers at Dodomona, he observed what he described as wind gusts but at speeds between 5 to 8 knots. The conditions indicated a tailwind on the take-off runway prior to departure.

With a tailwind during the take-off roll, the aircraft would not have generated sufficient lift as it would have, had there been no wind at all. This means that the aircraft would have had to accelerate to a relatively higher ground speed before the preferred Indicated Airspeed (IAS) could be achieved.

From on-site observations, there was an undulation observed about 180 m from the take-off initiation position which dips about 50 cm towards take-off direction.

The pilot's nominated Acceleration Check Point (ACP), as he reported was just prior to the undulation. The ACP is the point by which the pilot checks the airspeed to confirm that he has reached 70% of the rotate or lift-off airspeed. Using the specifications relating to ACPs contained in the operators operating procedures, for Dodomona, a third of the 522 m of usable runway was 175 m. Although the operating procedures state to adjust the ACP based on surface and wind conditions, it was apparent that the ACP for the accident flight was not adjusted to cater for the wet runway conditions and the wind at the time.

By the time the aircraft had reached 175 m during takeoff roll, which was a third of the length of the runway at Dodomona, the pilot was hoping to see an airspeed of 40 knots. The airspeed at that point, as described by the pilot, was much less than 40 knots forcing him to abort the take-off. However, with a tailwind during take-off, the groundspeed would inevitably be higher, likely at or over 40 kts, while the IAS in the cockpit would be less. Just a few meters following the abort, the aircraft passed the undulation. With less than 5 m between the abort point and the undulation, the aircraft would not have had sufficient space to decelerate before reaching the undulation. With a high groundspeed and corresponding momentum, the aircraft became airborne at the undulation.

As the aircraft became airborne, it travelled about 70 m with the help of the tailwind before the wheels contacted the ground again. The pilot consequently lost about 70 m of runway for which the brakes would have helped decelerate the aircraft.

With about 270 m of runway remaining and given the soft and wet condition of the airstrip surface at the time, there was very limited traction and runway for the aircraft to safely be stopped.

The AIC concluded that the pilot did not have full situational awareness which significantly affected his judgement and decision making in performing the take-off under the prevailing conditions.

The AIC notes that the pilot did not conduct flights for over five months after his last operations in PNG between 28 November 2022 and 16 December 2022, and after a single flight that he had conducted in Australia on 17 December 2022. Furthermore, it had been six months since the pilot had last operated out of Dodomona Airstrip.

Recommendation number AIC 24-R03/23-1004 to Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that the Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited should ensure that its pilots are familiarised with the different conditions and characteristics of airstrips that SBFL operates to, as well as the appropriate actions required for safe operations to those airstrips.

Action requested

The AIC requests that the Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited note recommendation *AIC 24-R03/23-1004* and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date, but no later than 8 September 2024 and explain including with evidence how Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.



Maryann J Wal
Chief Commissioner

Strickland Bosavi Foundation response to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R03/23-1004

The AIC did not receive a response from Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited (SBFL) within the provided 90 days period.

Courtesy follow-up emails were sent by AIC to SBFL with the latest being on 19 March 2025.

On 12 May 2025, after several follow ups from AIC, SBFL provided a formal response via email to *Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R03/23-1004*.

In its email response, SBFL stated that it continues to address pilot familiarisation requirements through its internal procedures and training oversight. The operator advised that:

- Airstrip check-in procedures and recurrent pilot training remain in place and are actively applied.
- The Airstrip check ins will now consist of a physical check into any one-way airstrip for pilots with less than 1,000 hours of flying experience in PNG.
- For pilots with more than 1,000 hours of PNG experience and who have been previously checked into the one-way airstrip, full verbal briefings may be provided to the pilot at the discretion of the operator, prior to operations into these airstrips.

AIC assessment of Strickland Bosavi Foundation response

The AIC reviewed Strickland Bosavi Foundation Limited's response to address *Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R03/23-1004* and notes that the actions taken by SBFL address the safety deficiencies identified in Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R03/23-1004.

While the actions described by SBFL appear aligned with the intent of the safety recommendation, in the absence of supporting documentation/ evidence, the AIC cannot independently assess the adequacy or consistency of these measures in practice.

The AIC has assigned this response a *Satisfactory In Part* rating.

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



Maryanne J Wal
Chief Commissioner
28 May 2025