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Our Ref: AIC 25-R07/24-1003

**Safety recommendation: AIC 25-R07/24-1003**

**Addressed to: North Coast Aviation Limited**

**Date issued: 16 May 2025**

**Investigation link: AIC 24-1003**

**Action status: Issued**

## Introduction

At 11:20 local time on 22 December 2024, North Coast Aviation notified the PNG Accident Investigation Commission that one of their aircraft, a Pilatus Britten-Norman BN2B-26 Islander aircraft, registered P2-SAM on a VFR<sup>1</sup> single pilot charter flight from Wasu to Nadzab, Morobe Province, had not arrived at Nadzab. A COSPAS SARSAT<sup>2</sup> signal had been received by the PNG Rescue Coordination Centre and a Distress Phase had been declared with initial search procedures commenced.

The AIC immediately commenced an investigation.

## Occurrence

On 22 December 2024, at 10:28 local time (00:18 UTC<sup>3</sup>), a Pilatus Britten-Norman BN2B-26 Islander aircraft, registered P2-SAM, owned and operated by North Coast Aviation Limited (NCA), on a VFR single pilot charter flight from Wasu to Nadzab, Morobe Province, collided with terrain 20 nm southwest of Wasu, (32 nm north of Nadzab). All persons on board were fatally injured upon impact. The aircraft was destroyed by impact forces and an intense post-impact fire.

## Safety deficiency description

The investigation noted that the *NCA Route Guide Area 3 Routes 1 and 2 and 3 and 4* differed from the *NCA Route Guide* supporting charts for Area 3 in the *NCA Oz Runways Electronic Flight Bag app*.

Furthermore, the *Route Guide* did not cover an alternate route from Wasu to Nadzab via Kabwum and the 20 Mile Gap northeast of Lae for use in the event that the tracks southwest of Wasu and the Saidor Gap were impassable.

<sup>1</sup> Visual Flight Rules.

<sup>2</sup> A satellite system designed to detect and locate activated distress beacons transmitting in the frequency band of 406.0-406.1 MH. Source: ICAO/IMO IAMSAR MANUAL.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

The AIC understands that due to environmental and visual conditions it may be prudent or expedient for a pilot to take different tracks in the general area specified in the Route Guide.

However, the guide must ensure no confusion and also should provide guidance for alternate routes; in this case east and south of Wasu as distinct from the NCA preferred routes west and south of Wasu.

### **Recommendation number AIC 25-R07/24-1003 to North Coast Aviation Limited**

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) recommends that North Coast Aviation Limited (NCA) should ensure that there is no possibility of route guidance confusion between the *NCA Route Guide* and the *NCA Oz Runways Electronic Flight Bag app Route Guide* in the IT tablets located in each of the operator's aircraft for flight operations and provide route guidance for alternate routes. For example, a route east and southeast of Wasu as distinct from the NCA preferred routes west and south of Wasu for use in the event of the tracks southwest of Wasu and the Saidor Gap being impassable.

### **Action requested**

The AIC requests that the North Coast Aviation Limited (NCA) note recommendation AIC 25-R07/24-1003 and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date and explain (including with evidence) how NCA has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.

**STATUS: ISSUED.**



Maryanne J. Wal  
*Chief Commissioner*

16 May 2025