



GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Reference No.

**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY REPORT**

AS/744/1049

Publication of this report is authorised by the Secretary under the provisions of Air Navigation Regulations 283 (1)

**1. LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE**

Murray River, 18 kilometres east of Waikerie, S. A.	Height a.m.s.l. 45 feet	Date 30.11.74	Time (Local) 1710 hours	Zone CSuT
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**2. THE AIRCRAFT**

Make and Model Cessna 172G	Registration VH-RBG	Certificate of Airworthiness Valid from 28.6.66 to 27.6.75
Certificate of Registration issued to Port Lincoln Flying Club Inc., P O Box 605, Port Lincoln, South Australia.	Operator R. W MacLean, P. O. Box 140, Cummins, South Australia.	Degree of damage to aircraft <b>Destroyed</b>
		Other property damaged <b>High tension power line and insulator</b>
Defects discovered  Nil		

**3. THE FLIGHT**

Last or intended departure point Moorook	Time of departure 1650 hours	Next point of intended landing Waikerie	Purpose of flight Travel	Class of operation Private
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**4. THE CREW**

Name	Status	Age	Class of licence	Hours on type	Total hours	Degree of injury
Richard Wayne MACLEAN	Pilot	29	Private	40	218	Minor

**5. OTHER PERSONS (All passengers and persons injured on ground)**

Name	Status	Degree of injury	Name	Status	Degree of injury
Anton Stuart MACLEAN	Passenger	Minor	Alexander John MACLEAN	Passenger	Fatal

**6. RELEVANT EVENTS**

On the day prior to the accident, the pilot had flown the aircraft from Port Lincoln to his parents' property at Moorook, some 32 kilometres east of Waikerie. As fuel was not available at Moorook, he made arrangements to fly the aircraft to Waikerie in order to refuel for the return flight from Moorook to Port Lincoln on the following day. It was also arranged that Mr. A. J. MacLean, the father of the pilot, would occupy the front right hand seat and take photographs of local features and the flooded Murray River en route to Waikerie.

After take-off, the aircraft circled Moorook and then Kingston-on-Murray after which it headed in a northerly direction until it was again over the Murray River. It then followed the river on a generally westerly heading to Wigley Flat, a small settlement some 22 kilometres east of Waikerie, and, after circling at a low height, continued along the river. As the aircraft followed a bend in the river and was turning to the right, the pilot suddenly saw a power cable immediately ahead but there was insufficient time to take avoiding action before the cable was struck. The aircraft crashed into the river below but the three occupants were able to open the doors and leave the cabin before it sank in deep water. Mr. B.S. MacLean swam to the southern bank of the river, the pilot attempted to assist his father and eventually was able to reach a tree near the southern bank, but Mr. A. J. MacLean, who was injured to a degree which probably impaired his ability to swim, was drowned.

The cable struck by the aircraft was one of three suspended across the river from a 30 ft. pole situated on the 125 ft. high cliffs at the southern bank of the river to another pole situated on the low northern bank. At their lowest point, the cables were 46 ft. above the river and, at the point where the one cable was struck by the aircraft, they were approximately 125 ft. above the river.

**7. OPINION AS TO CAUSE**

The cause of the accident was that the aircraft was flown at an unsafe height.

Approved for publication

( Frank E. Yeend )  
Delegate of the Secretary

Date

10.6.1975

## DEFINITIONS

**ACCIDENT** - An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all those persons have disembarked and in which

- (a) any person suffers death or serious injury as a result of being in or upon the aircraft or by direct contact with the aircraft or anything attached to the aircraft; or
- (b) the aircraft suffers substantial damage.

**FATAL INJURY** - Any injury which results in death within 30 days.

**SERIOUS INJURY** - Any injury other than a fatal injury which

- (a) requires hospitalisation for more than 48 hours, commencing within seven days from the date the injury was received; or
- (b) results in a fracture of any bone (except simple fractures of fingers, toes or nose); or
- (c) involves lacerations which cause severe haemorrhages, nerve, muscle or tendon damage; or
- (d) involves injury to any internal organ; or
- (e) involves second or third degree burns, or any burns affecting more than five percent of the body surface.

**MINOR INJURY** - Any injury other than as defined under "Fatal Injury" or "Serious Injury".

**DESTROYED** - Consumed by fire, demolished or damaged beyond repair.

**SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE** - Damage or structural failure which adversely affects the structural strength, performance or flight characteristics of the aircraft and which would normally require major repair or replacement of the affected component. The following types of damage are specifically excluded: engine failure, damage limited to an engine, bent fairings or cowling, dented skin, small punctured holes in the skin or fabric, taxi-ing damage to propeller blades, damage to tyres, engine accessories, brakes, or wingtips.

**MINOR DAMAGE** - Damage other than as defined under "Destroyed" or "Substantial Damage".