Aviation Safety Investigation Report 198502530

Piper PA31-350

12 April 1985

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at <u>www.atsb.gov.au</u>.

Occurrence Number: Location: Date: Highest Injury Level:		Port Macquarie NSW 12 April 1985			Occurrence Type: Accident Time: N/A	
Injuries:		Crew Ground Passenger Total	Fatal 0 0 0 0	Serious 0 0 6 6	Minor 1 0 1 1	None 1 - 1 2
Aircraft Details: Registration: Serial Number: Operation Type: Damage Level: Departure Point: Departure Time: Destination:	VH-AOX Supplemental Airline Service Destroyed Port Macquarie NSW					

Approved for Release: January 5th 1987

Circumstances:

The pilot reported that shortly after the aircraft became airborne, he noted a substantial change in propeller pitch noise and an associated loss of performance. Insufficient runway remained to permit a landing straight ahead. The pilot raised the landing gear and flap, however the aircraft failed to climb and the airspeed decayed to below the safe single engine speed. The take-off attempt was abandoned and a forced landing was carried out off the end of the runway. The rear fuselage impacted heavily on a dirt bank 78 metres beyond the runway threshold, following which the aircraft passed through a fence and slid for a further 78 metres before coming to rest. No fault was subsequently found with the engines or systems of the aircraft which might have explained the reported loss of performance. Calculations indicated that the weight of the aircraft at the time of take-off was close to the maximum allowable, but the centre of gravity was aft of the rear limit. Several of the passengers indicated that the aircraft rotated sharply to an unusually high nose attitude as it became airborne. The pilot's action in raising the flap when he perceived the power loss was contrary to the emergency procedures for the type, and probably resulted in sink and a further reduction in airspeed.