PRELIMINARY ACCIDENT REPORT

Accident and Incident Investigations Division

Accident
- Preliminary Report -
AIID Ref No: CA18/2/3/10588

Figure 1: The file picture of the ZS-CZU aircraft. (Source: Flight Zone Aviation Photography)

Description:

A Piper PA-28-180 aircraft with registration ZS-CZU was one of the three aircraft that took off on a private flight from Virginia Aerodrome (FAVG) in KwaZulu-Natal province on the afternoon of 8 June 2025. The pilots flew in a loose formation. They had planned to route along the coast to Richards Bay Aerodrome (FARB) from where they would turn inland to Ladysmith Aerodrome (FALY) to land and refuel, before continuing to Wonderboom Aerodrome (FAWB) in Gauteng province. Only one of the three aircraft (ZS-EIL) landed at FALY. The ZS-CZU and the other aircraft (ZS-KFB) flew two approaches each for Runway 29 at FALY but could not land. *FALY does not have runway lights*. Thereafter, the two aircraft (ZS-CZU and ZS-KFB) diverted to Greytown Aerodrome (FAGY). One of the requirements to land at FAGY at night is that pilots must be instrument flight (IF) rated. However, none of the pilots in the two aircraft were IF rated.

The pilot flying (PF) on the ZS-CZU aircraft stated that they entered instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) as they encountered a thick mist in FAGY; he further stated that he had no visual of the ground or runway lights. The pilot-in-command (PIC) had a map and an iPad with a navigational application in her possession which she referenced. She was able to verify that the

terrain below them at the time consisted mostly of agricultural land. The PF opted to perform a *"controlled crash landing"* by entering a controlled spiral decent. The aircraft came to rest in an upright position on a sugarcane field. The PF was not injured and the PIC sustained minor injuries to her face. The aircraft was substantially damaged.

Occurrence Details

Reference Number	**:** CA18/2/3/10588
Occurrence Category	**:** Accident (Category 2)
Type of Operation	**:** Private (Part 91)
Aircraft Registration	**:** ZS-CZU
Aircraft Make and Model	**:** Piper Aircraft Corporation, PA-28-180
Nationality	**:** South African
Place	**:** Bloemhof Farm near Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal Province
Date and Time	**:** 8 June 2025 at 1630Z
Injuries	**:** One of the crew members sustained minor injuries
Damage	**:** Substantial

Purpose of the Investigation

In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, this report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents, and not to apportion blame or liability.

All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z). South African Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.

Investigation Process

The Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AIID) of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) was notified of the occurrence involving a Piper PA-28-180 aircraft which occurred near Greytown in KwaZulu-Natal province on 8 June 2025 at 1630Z. The occurrence was classified as an accident according to the CAR 2011 Part 12 and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) STD Annex 13 definitions. The AIID has appointed an investigator-in-charge to conduct a full investigation. The investigator was dispatched to the accident site. The AIID will lead the investigation and issue the final report of this accident in accordance with the CAR 2011 Part 12 and the ICAO Annex 13.

The information contained in this preliminary report is derived from the information gathered during the on-going investigation into the occurrence. Later, an interim or final report may contain altered information in case new evidence is found during the on-going investigation that requires changes to the information depicted in this report.
The AIID reports are made available to the public at:
https://www.caa.co.za/industry-information/accidents-and-incidents/

Notes:

1. *Whenever the following words are mentioned in this report, they shall mean the following:*
   Accident — this investigated accident
   Aircraft — the Piper PA-28-180 involved in this accident
   Investigation — the investigation into the circumstances of this accident
   Pilots — the pilots involved in this accident
   Report — this accident report

2. *Photos and figures used in this report were taken from different sources and may have been adjusted from the original for the sole purpose of improving the clarity of the report. Modifications to images used in this report were limited to cropping, magnification, file compression, or enhancement of colour, brightness, contrast, or addition of text boxes, arrows, or lines.*

Disclaimer
This report is produced without prejudice to the rights of the SACAA, which are reserved.

Table of Contents

Abbreviation	Description
°	Degrees
°C	Degrees Celsius
AIID	Accident and Incident Investigations Division
AMO	Aircraft Maintenance Organisation
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre
CAR	Civil Aviation Regulations
C of A	Certificate of Airworthiness
C of R	Certificate of Registration
CRS	Certificate of Release to Service
DME	Distance Measuring Equipment
DVOR	Doppler VHF Omnidirectional Range
FAGY	Greytown Aerodrome
FALE	Kind Shaka International Aerodrome
FALY	Ladysmith Aerodrome
FAPM	Pietermaritzburg Aerodrome
FARB	Richards Bay Aerodrome
FAUL	Ulundi Aerodrome
FAVG	Virginia Aerodrome
FAWB	Wonderboom Aerodrome
Ft	Feet
GPS	Global Positioning System
hPa	Hectopascal
IF	Instrument Flight
IMC	Instrument Meteorological Conditions
Kt	Knots
M	Metres
METAR	Meteorological Aerodrome Report
MHz	Megahertz
MTOW	Maximum Take-off Weight
PAPI	Precision Approach Path Indicator
PF	Pilot Flying
PIC	Pilot-in-command
PPL	Private Pilot Licence
QNH	Barometric Pressure Above Mean Sea Level
SACAA	South African Civil Aviation Authority
SAWS	South African Weather Service
UTC	Universal Co-ordinated Time
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
VHF	Very High Frequency
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions
VOR	VHF Omnidirectional Range
Z	Zulu (Term for Universal Co-ordinated Time - Zero Hours Greenwich)

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of Flight

1.1.1 On Saturday, 7 June 2025, three aircraft took off on a private (hire-and-fly) flight from Wonderboom Aerodrome (FAWB) in Gauteng province to Ladysmith Aerodrome (FALY) in KwaZulu-Natal where they intended to land and uplift fuel. On-board each of the aircraft were two pilots. After landing at FALY, the three aircraft were refuelled to capacity with 72.9 litres (L) uplifted to ZS-EIL, 70L to ZS-CZU and 77.9L to ZS-KFB. Thereafter, the aircraft took off to Richards Bay Aerodrome (FARB) but did not land there; they proceeded in a southerly direction along the coast for a full-stop landing at Virginia Aerodrome (FAVG). FARB and FACG are also located in KwaZulu-Natal province.

1.1.2 On Sunday morning, 8 June 2025, the pilots went on an excursion to uShaka Marine World in Durban. Upon their returned to FAVG between 1245Z and 1300Z, they refuelled the aircraft to capacity – ZS-EIL with 64L, ZS-CZU with 61L and ZS-KFB with 70L. A visual flight rules (VFR) flight plan was filed for the formation, indicating their destination aerodrome as FALY. Their first alternate aerodrome was Ulundi Aerodrome (FAUL) and the second was Greytown Aerodrome (FAGY). The flight time was entered as 2 hours and 30 minutes with a fuel endurance of 5 hours. At 1328Z, the first of the three aircraft took off from Runway 23 at FAVG, followed by the other two aircraft; they flew in a loose formation. *Their routing was the reverse of the inbound flight*. The ZS-KFB had a passenger on-board in addition to the crew (two pilots). The three aircraft flew from FAVG to FARB and turned inland towards FALY. By late afternoon, they were overhead FALY. The sunset time for Ladysmith on the day was 1511Z. The crew of ZS-CZU and ZS-KFB flew two approaches each for Runway 29, but neither was able to land; only the crew of ZS-EIL landed safely. *FALY is not equipped with runway lights*.

1.1.3 According to the ZS-CZU pilot flying (PF), they opted to divert to either FAUL or FAGY as per the flight plan; they concluded on FAGY. He stated that they climbed to flight level (FL) 075 and routed north of Greytown; they were in radio contact with Johannesburg Information on the very high frequency (VHF) 129.10-Megahertz (MHz). Johannesburg Information informed them that the area they were flying into was encountering instrument meteorological conditions (IMC). *The runway lights at FAGY need to be activated by clicking several times on the designated aerodrome frequency; FAGY only has precision approach path indicator (PAPI) lights for Runway 24. The aerodrome also has a requirement that pilot(s) must be instrument flight (IF) rated to land at night*. FAGY is also equipped with a Doppler VHF Omnidirectional Range (DVOR). The *DVOR is a ground-based radio navigation aid used in aviation to help aircraft determine their position and heading relative to a ground station. It provides pilots with bearing information, enabling them to navigate along established air traffic control routes, instrument approach procedures, and departure paths. DVORs are particularly useful for*

en route navigation and for guiding aircraft during terminal procedures and approaches. Neither of the crew members met the requirements to land at FAGY. The ZS-CZU PF requested Johannesburg Information to assist them with getting in contact with someone at FAGY to switch on the runway lights, but to no avail.

1.1.4 The PF had no visual reference to the ground as he was flying in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) in misty conditions. The ZS-CZU pilot-in-command (PIC) had a map of the area and the navigational software on the iPad at her disposal which she used to assess the terrain below them at the time; she concluded that it was mostly agricultural land. Meanwhile, the PF without informing the PIC, entered a spiral descent to execute a *"controlled crash landing"* not knowing the state of the terrain below them or the obstacles (such as high-tension wires, high ground, antennas, etc). He indicated that the circumstances at the time did not allow for any other option as it was clear that they were not going to be able to land at FAGY; moreover, diverting to Pietermaritzburg Aerodrome (FAPM) or FAUL could have result in them running low on fuel as they had about 50 minutes of fuel left in the tanks, of which 45 minutes was reserve fuel (as called for in the provisions of the Civil Aviation Regulations [CAR]). The aircraft sustained substantial damage during the forced landing on the sugarcane field. The PIC sustained minor injuries when her face impacted the instrument panel during the forced landing; the PF was not injured.

1.1.5 Figure 2 shows the iPad software application flight track (blue line). The software application, however, stopped recording when the aircraft was north-west of Greytown. The accident site was approximately 3 nautical miles (nm) south-west of Greytown.

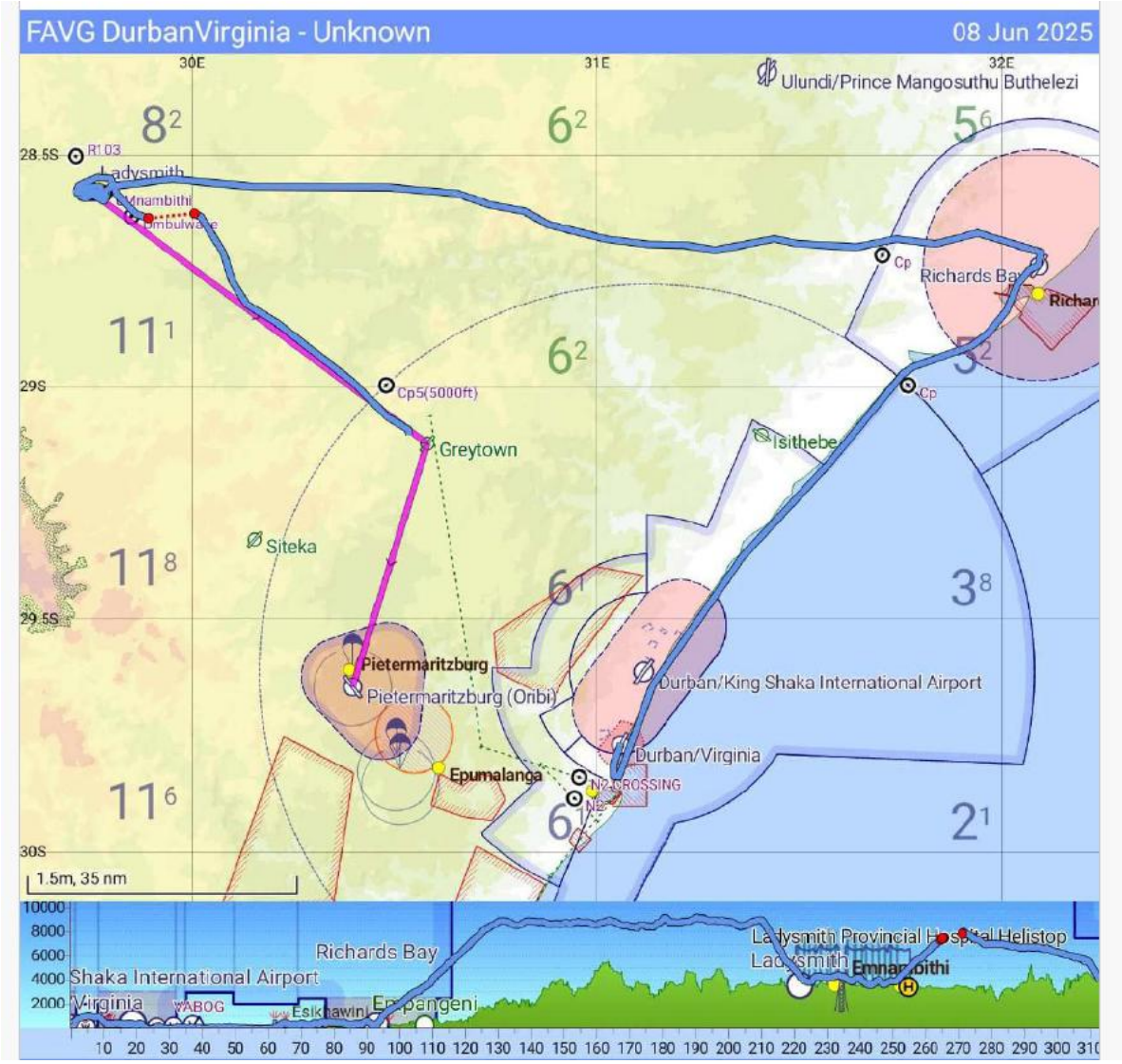

Figure 2: The flight track that was downloaded from the iPad.

1.1.6 After the accident, the PF called one of the pilots on the ZS-EIL aircraft to inform him that they had crashed on a sugarcane field, south-west of Greytown. Thereafter, at 1631Z, he informed the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (ARCC) about the accident. An official search for the aircraft commenced, and the PF was contacted to send a pin location to the ARCC. The local police and emergency services personnel were also notified about the accident. The emergency services were the first to arrive at the scene at 1810Z, 2.8 nautical miles (nm) west of FAGY and 33nm north of FAPM.

1.1.7 The accident occurred during nighttime at Bloemhof Farm, approximately 3nm south-west of Greytown at Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates determined to be 29°06’13.60” South 030°32’13.22” East, at an elevation of 3 821 feet (ft).

Figure 3: The position of ZS-CZU with reference to FAGY and Greytown. (Source: Google Earth)

1.2 Injuries to Persons

Injuries	Pilot	Crew	Pass.	Total On-board	Other
Fatal	-	-	-	-	-
Serious	-	-	-	-	-
Minor	1	-	-	1	-
None	1	-	-	1	-
Total	**2**	**-**	**-**	**2**	**-**

Note: Other means people on the ground.

1.3 Damage to Aircraft

1.3.1 The aircraft sustained substantial damage to the right wing, which twisted approximately 120° and partially separated from the fuselage.

1.4 Other Damage

1.4.1 Approximately 100 square metres of sugarcane crops were destroyed during the impact sequence.

1.5 Personnel Information

1.5.1 Pilot-in-command (PIC)

Nationality	Ugandan	Gender	Female	Age	22
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)				
Licence Valid	Yes	Type Endorsed	Yes		
Ratings	Night rating				
Medical Expiry Date	31 July 2027 (Class 2)				
Restrictions	None				
Previous Accidents	None				

Note: Previous accidents refer to past accidents the pilot was involved in, when relevant to this accident.

This PIC had a 30-day extension on her Private Pilot Licence (PPL) and rating; her licence had expired on 31 May 2025 but was extended to 30 June 2025 by the Regulator (SACAA).

Flying Experience:

Total Hours	139.8
Total Past 90 Days	20.3
Total on Type Past 90 Days	15.8
Total on Type	118.5

1.5.2 Pilot Flying (PF)

Nationality	South African	Gender	Male	Age	24
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)				
Licence Valid	Yes	Type Endorsed			
Ratings	None				
Medical Expiry Date	30 September 2027 (Class 2)				
Restrictions	None				
Previous Accidents	None				

Note: Previous accidents refer to past accidents the pilot was involved in, when relevant to this accident.

Flying Experience:

Total Hours	88.2
Total Past 90 Days	Not available
Total on Type Past 90 Days	Not available
Total on Type	Not available

According to the PF's PPL and logbook, he had only flown the Cessna 172 aircraft. The Piper PA-28-180 aircraft was not endorsed on his logbook or licence; however, he was the pilot flying when the accident occurred.

1.6 Aircraft Information

1.6.1 Piper PA-28-180 Description (Source: www.globalair.com)

The Piper PA-28-180 (Cherokee) is a four-seat light aircraft built by the Piper Aircraft Corporation and designed for flight training, air taxi and personal use. The PA-28 family of aircraft comprises all-metal, unpressurised, single piston-engine airplanes with low-mounted wings and a fixed tricycle landing gear. They have a single door on the right side, with the wing used as a step to board the aircraft.

Airframe:

Manufacturer/Model	Piper Aircraft Corporation / PA-28-180	
Serial Number	28-971	
Year of Manufacture	1966	
Total Airframe Hours (at time of accident)	3 878.05	
Last Inspection (Hours & Date)	3 804.28	18 October 2024
Hours Since Last Inspection	74.77	
CRS Issue Date	17 October 2024	
C of A (Issue Date & Expiry Date)	12 September 2003	30 January 2026
C of R (Issue Date) (Present Owner)	2 July 2021	
MTOW	1 088kg (2 400lbs)	
Type of Fuel Used	Avgas	
Operating Category	Standard Normal Category (Aeroplane)	
Previous Accidents and Serious Incident	On 14 September 2021, the aircraft was involved in a serious incident during a training flight when a solo student pilot lost directional control whilst landing on Runway 11 at FAWB. The aircraft veered off to the left but the student pilot managed to steer the aircraft back onto the runway and brought it to a stop. AIID file reference No. CA18/3/2/1372 On 11 November 2021, the aircraft was involved in an accident when the nose gear broke off during landing on Runway 29 at FAWB. A solo student pilot on-board was conducting a training flight. AIID file reference No. CA18/2/3/10073	

	On 22 June 2024, the aircraft was involved in an accident on Runway 29 at FAWB when the propeller struck the runway and the aircraft veered off (the runway). The engine was removed and sent for a shock-load inspection at an approved engine overhaul facility. On 17 October 2024, the engine was reinstalled on the aircraft, and a new propeller was fitted. AIID file reference No. CA18/2/3/10466

Note: Previous accidents refer to past accidents the aircraft was involved in, when relevant to this accident.

Engine:

Manufacturer/Model	Lycoming O-360-A4A
Serial Number	L-18900-36A
Hours Since New	3 842.75
Hours Since Overhaul	1 384.38

Propeller:

Manufacturer/Model	Sensenich 76EM8S5-0-60
Serial Number	106581K
Hours Since New	74.77
Hours Since Overhaul	TBO not yet reached

1.7 Meteorological Information

1.7.1 An official weather report was obtained from the South African Weather Service (SAWS) after the accident.

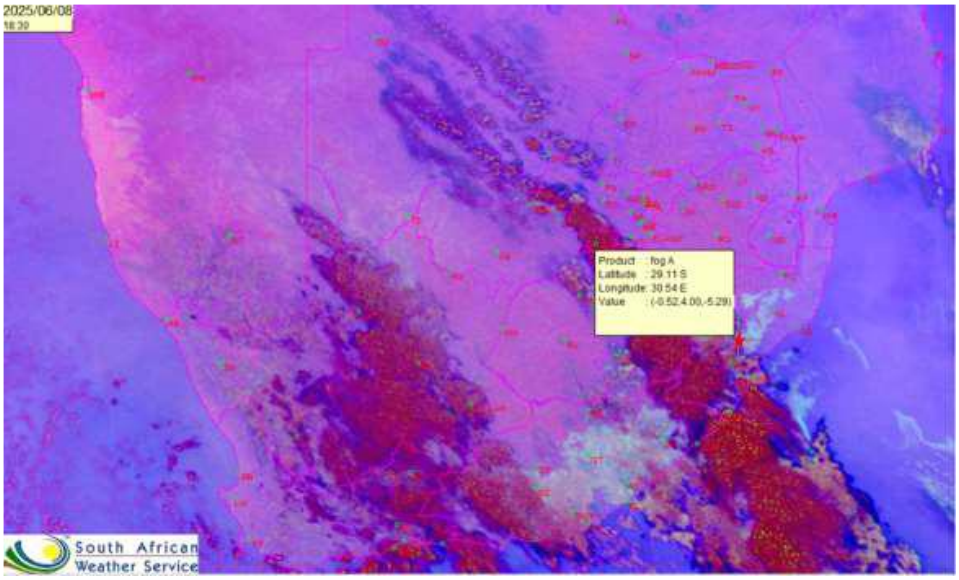

Figure 4: The MeteoSat Second Generation satellite image. (Source: SAWS)

Satellite Image

The Night Microphysical RGB satellite imagery of the MeteoSat Second Generation (MSG) from EUMETSAT recorded at 1830Z indicated low clouds (greyish colour) with possible low visibility (see imagery). There were active thunderstorms to the south/south-west of the accident site.

Significant Weather Charts

The low-level Significant Weather (SigWx) chart that was issued at 1400Z and valid for 1800Z on 8 June 2025 forecasted low-level clouds with reduced visibility (mist) (see Figure 5 low-level chart). The forecast also showed that there were embedded cumulonimbus clouds in the vicinity where visibility was expected to reduce to 3000m in thundershowers. The red star indicates the approximate estimated area of the accident.

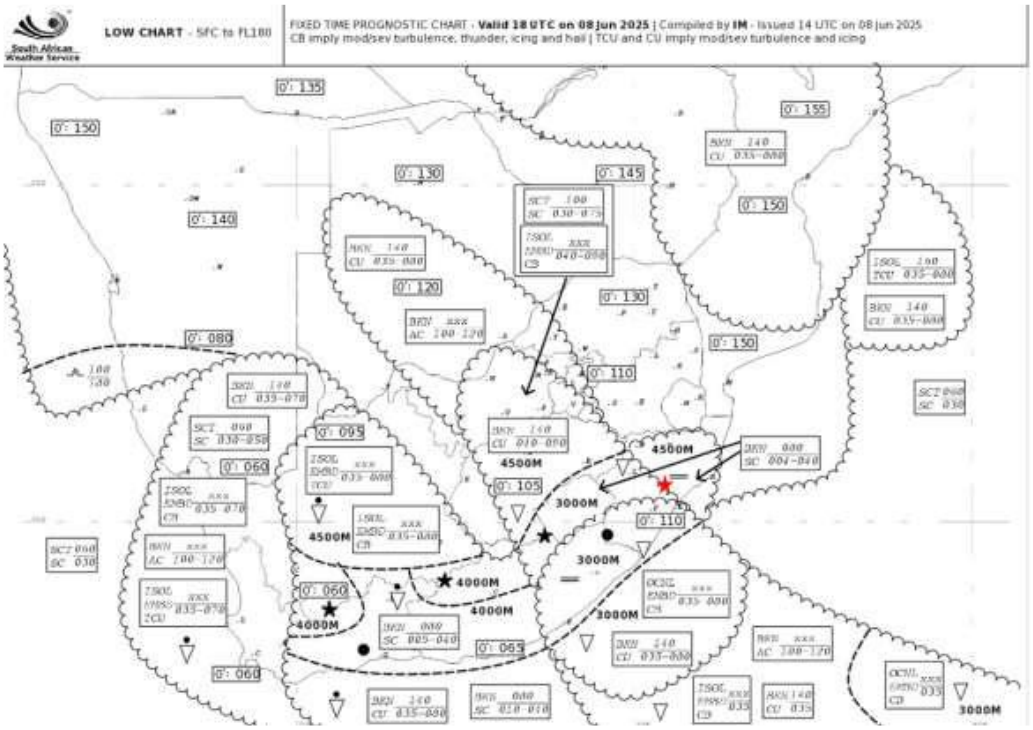

Figure 5: The 1800Z low-level SigWx chart for 8 June 2025. (Source: SAWS)

The additional low-level Significant Weather (SigWx) chart forecast that was issued at 1400Z and valid for 1800Z on 8 June 2025 also indicated embedded cumulonimbus clouds with moderate low-level turbulence from surface to 8000ft east/north-east of the accident site (see Figure 11). The red start indicates the accident area.

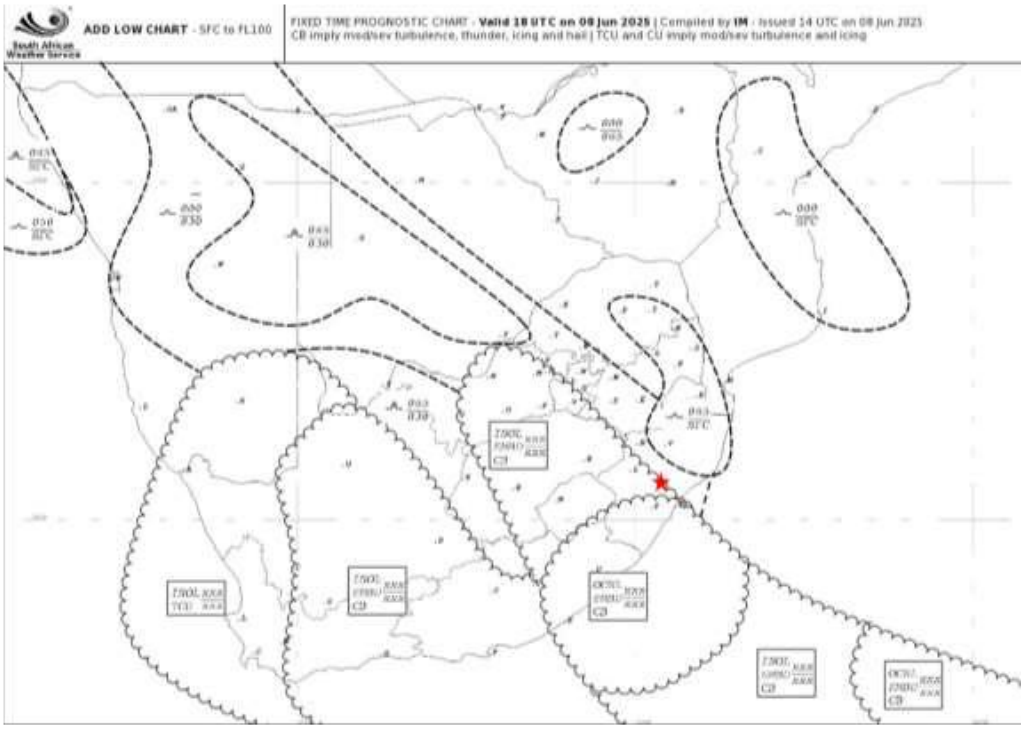

Figure 6:The 1800Z additional low-level SigWx chart for 8 June 2025. (Source: SAWS)

Upper Air Analysis

The 1200Z midday upper air ascent from King Shaka International Aerodrome (FALE) (68592) showed moist and unstable (K-index was 22) conditions. There was an inversion at the surface, and wind at the surface was moderate-to-strong southerly to south-westerly at 20 to 25 knots (kts) above 850 hectopascal (hPa) in the lower level of the atmosphere.

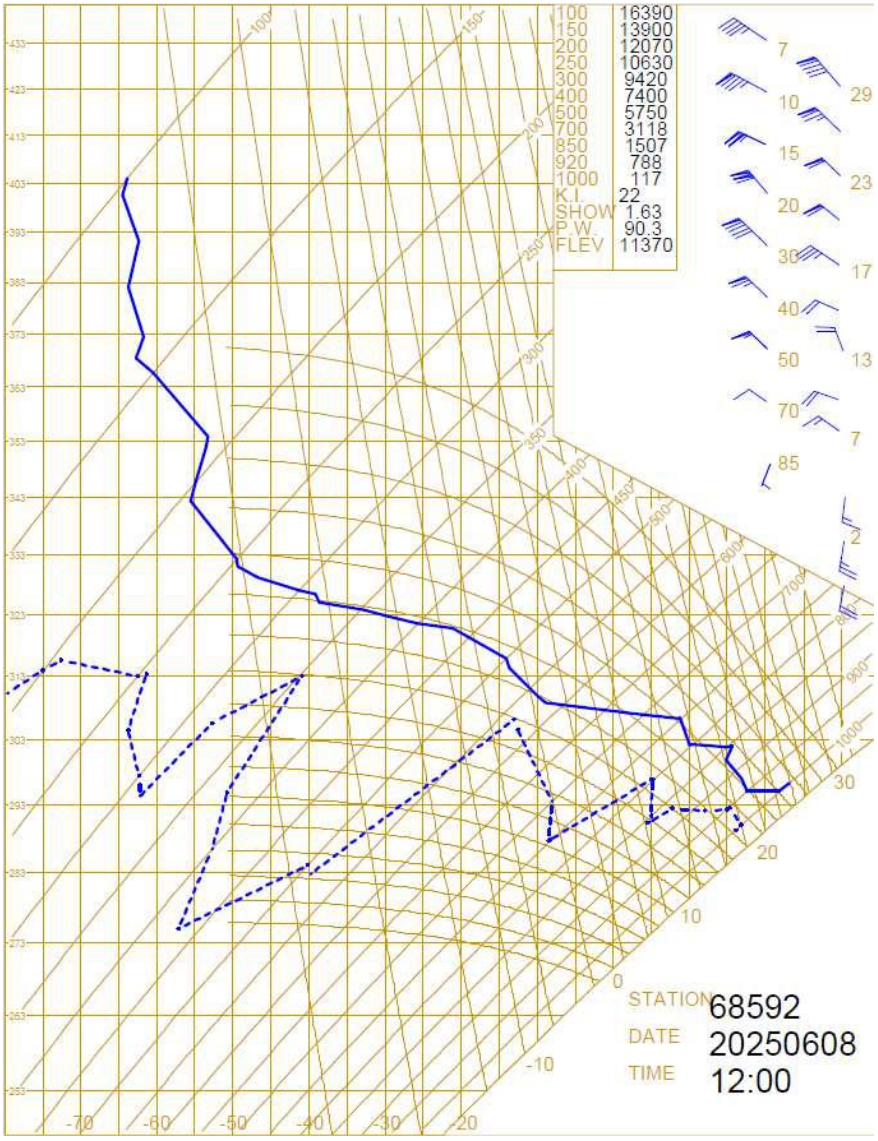

Figure 7: The 1200Z midday upper air ascent from FALE on 8 June 2025. (Source: SAWS)

1.7.2 Official sunset on 8 June 2025 in Ladysmith was 1511Z.

1.8 Aids to Navigation

1.8.1 The aircraft was equipped with standard navigational equipment as approved by the Regulator. There were no records indicating that the navigational equipment was unserviceable before the flight.

1.9 Communication

1.9.1 The aircraft was equipped with a standard communication system as approved by the Regulator. There were no recorded defects with the communication system before the flight.

1.9.2 The crew was in radio contact with Johannesburg Information on the VHF 129.10-MHz shortly before the accident occurred.

1.10 Aerodrome Information

1.10.1 The aircraft crashed 2.8nm west of FAGY, which is a licensed aerodrome.

Aerodrome Name	Greytown Aerodrome (FAGY)
Aerodrome Location	2nm South of Greytown, Kwazulu-Natal
Aerodrome Status	Licensed
Aerodrome GPS coordinates	29°07'17.47" South, 030°35'14.12" East
Aerodrome Elevation	3 531ft
Runway Headings	06/24
Runway Dimensions	1 462m x 11m
Runway Used	Not applicable
Runway Surface	Asphalt
Approach Facilities	Runway lights, PAPI lights for Runway 24, DVOR/DME (GYV – 113.50 MHz),
Radio Frequency	123.50 MHz
NOTES	1. Prior permission required. 2. Instrument rating required for night operations. 3. Night operations are strictly prohibited except for specifically authorised pilots.

1.11 Flight Recorders

1.11.1 The aircraft was neither equipped with a flight data recorder (FDR) or a cockpit voice recorder (CVR), nor was it required by regulation to be fitted to the aircraft type.

1.12 Wreckage and Impact Information

1.12.1 The aircraft impacted the sugarcane crops at Bloemhof Farm which were about to be harvested. The aircraft came to a stop in a nose-down, wings-level attitude, approximately 30 metres (m) from the first contact with the sugarcane crops which acted as an arresting medium. The right wing separated where it attaches to the fuselage and twisted approximately 120°. The access door on the right side of the aircraft could be easily opened after the accident. The left wing, propeller and part of the engine nacelle were covered by the sugarcane crops. It was possible to ascertain that a substantial

amount of fuel was still in the left-wing tank; the fuel selector in the cockpit was selected to the left tank. The aircraft came to rest 2.8nm west of FAGY and 220m from the high-tension power lines that diagonally crossed the flight path.

Figure 8: The aircraft as it came to rest.

Figure 9: The twisted right wing with the main landing gear still attached.

Figure 10: The left-wing tip is almost buried underneath the sugarcane crops.

Figure 11: The high-tension power lines were 220m from the crash site.

1.13 Medical and Pathological Information

1.13.1 Not applicable.

1.14 Fire

1.14.1 There was no pre- or post-impact fire.

1.15 Survival Aspects

1.15.1 The accident was survivable as the dense sugarcane crops arrested the aircraft during the impact sequence; the sugarcane crops were approximately 3m in height (ready to be harvested).

1.15.2 The two occupants made use of the aircraft's equipped safety harnesses. The PIC sustained minor facial injuries as she impacted the instrument panel during the accident. The PF was not injured.

Figure 12: The cockpit remained intact.

1.16 Tests and Research

1.16.1 To be discussed in the final report.

1.17 Organisational and Management Information

1.17.1 All three aircraft were hired (Hire and Fly) from a flight school at FAWB and were operated under the provisions of Part 91 (Private) of the CAR 2011.

1.18 Additional Information

1.18.1 To be discussed in the final report.

1.19 Useful or Effective Investigation Techniques

1.19.1 None.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 General

From the available evidence, the following preliminary findings were made with respect to this accident. These shall not be read as apportioning blame or liability to any organisation or individual.

To serve the objective of this investigation, the following sections are included in the conclusions heading:

- **Findings —** are statements of all significant conditions, events, or circumstances in this accident. The findings are significant steps in this accident sequence, but they are not always causal or indicate deficiencies.

2.2 Findings

Crew

2.2.1 The Pilot-in-command (PIC) had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was issued by the Regulator on 21 June 2024 with an expiry date of 31 May 2025. The PIC was granted a 30-day licence extension with an expiry date of 30 June 2025. She had flown a total of 139.8 hours of which 118.5 hours were on the aircraft type.

2.2.2 The PIC had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 12 July 2022 with an expiry date of 31 July 2027. There were no limitations endorsed on her medical certificate.

2.2.3 The PIC had a night rating but she was not controlling the flight controls at the time of the accident.

2.2.4 The PIC had an iPad in her possession as the aircraft was fitted with a conventional navigational instrumentation. She made use of an aviation application that she had downloaded for navigational purposes. The weather information was obtained from an application that she had on her cellular phone. The PIC could not provide the official source of the weather data used by the application.

2.2.5 The pilot flying (PF) had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was issued by the Regulator on 18 January 2025. The pilot had flown a total of 88.2 hours on the Cessna 172 aircraft. The pilot had no night rating but he was in control of the flight controls during the accident, which occurred at night.

2.2.6 The PF had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 2 September 2022 with an expiry date of 30 September 2027. There were no limitations endorsed on his medical certificate.

2.2.7 The PF was not type-rated on the Piper PA-28-180. He only had a Cessna 172 aircraft endorsed on his licence and logbook.

2.2.8 The PF opted to perform a *"controlled crash landing"* during IMC conditions without informing the PIC of his intentions.

Aircraft

2.2.9 The last maintenance inspection of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 17 October 2024 at 3 804.28 airframe hours. The aircraft had flown a further 74.77 hours since the said inspection.

2.2.10 The Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 2 July 2021.

2.2.11 The Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) was initially issued on 12 September 2003. The latest C of A had an expiry date of 30 January 2026.

2.2.12 The Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued on 17 October 2024 at 3 804.28 airframe hours. It was valid until 16 October 2025 or at 3 904.28 airframe hours, whichever comes first.

2.2.13 The aircraft was involved in an accident on 11 November 2021, as well as sustained damage to its propeller on 22 June 2024 (which required an engine shock load and a new propeller).

2.2.14 According to the recovery team, they drained 19 litres of fuel from the left tank and 36 litres from the right tank.

Environment

2.2.15 The official weather report obtained from the SAWS indicated that inclement weather conditions prevailed in Greytown at the time of the accident, which is consistent with the statement provided by the PF.

Aerodromes

2.2.16 Ladysmith Aerodrome (FALY) is licensed but has no runway lights or navigational aids.

2.2.17 Greytown Aerodrome (FAGY) was the crew's selected second alternate aerodrome on the filed flight plan. FAGY is licensed with runway lights and approach lights for Runway 24; however, the runway lights needed to be activated from the aircraft. The crew was not familiar with the procedure to switch on the lights. There was also a DVOR navigational beacon at the aerodrome. Furthermore, the aerodrome chart stated that *to land at this facility at night, pilot(s) need to be IF-rated*; neither of the crew members complied with this requirement. The accident site was 2.8nm east of FAGY (see Figure 3).

2.2.18 Pietermaritzburg Aerodrome (FAPM) was another aerodrome available as an option, but the crew was concerned whether the available fuel (at the time) was enough to get them to the aerodrome. FAPM is licensed with all the required facilities available, including air traffic control. The accident site was 33nm south of FAPM.

2.2.19 Ulundi Aerodrome (FAUL) was the crew's first alternate aerodrome on the filed flight plan. FAUL is licensed; however, the aerodrome chart states: *"For night operations, the pilot must hold a valid instrument rating and be familiar with the immediate surroundings of the aerodrome. Instrument approach procedures must be used for letdown."* The accident site was 66nm north-east of FAUL.

3. ON-GOING INVESTIGATION

3.1 The AIID investigation is on-going, and the investigator will look into other aspects of this occurrence which may or may not have safety implications.

4. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 General

The safety recommendations listed in this report are proposed according to paragraph 6.8 of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and are based on the conclusions listed in heading 3 of this report. The AIID expects that all safety issues identified by the investigation are addressed by the receiving States and organisations.

4.2 Safety Recommendations

4.2.1 The pilots of ZS-CZU should be subjected to remedial training which must include a meteorology lecture, as well as sit for an Aviation Training Organisation (ATO) drafted meteorology examination. It is recommended that the pilots rewrite the Air Law examination within the next 30 days before commencing any flight activities.

4.2.2 It is recommended that the Director of Civil Aviation reviews the actions of the ZS-EIL crew who landed after sunset at FALY and departed during official nighttime to FAWB on 8 June 2025 from an aerodrome that did not have any runway lights.

5. APPENDICES

5.1 None.

This report is issued by:

Accident and Incident Investigations Division
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of South Africa