

**PRELIMINARY ACCIDENT REPORT**

**Accident and Incident Investigations Division**

Accident  
- Preliminary Report -  
AIID Ref No: CA18/2/3/10607



**Figure 1:** The file picture of the ZU-PBC aircraft. (Source: Flight Zone Aviation Photography)

Description:

On Wednesday, 15 October 2025, a pilot on-board a Sling 2 aircraft with registration ZU-PBC departed on a planned navigational flight from Secunda Aerodrome (FASC) in Mpumalanga province to Margate Aerodrome (FAMG) in KwaZulu-Natal province. The flight was operated on a hire-and-fly arrangement. The pilot's planned route included a return sector from FAMG to FASC in the company of either a chief flight instructor (CFI) or an accountable manager (AM) from the approved training organisation (ATO); both individuals were present at FAMG.

At approximately 0900Z, the pilot performed a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft at FASC, and no anomalies were found. The aircraft was deemed airworthy for the flight. Later, the pilot departed for FAMG under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and was followed by the ZU-PBD, another aircraft from the same ATO that was also en route to Margate. At approximately 1120Z, a scheduled airline pilot who was monitoring frequency 129.1-Megahertz (MHz) intercepted a MAYDAY transmission which he relayed to an air traffic control officer (ATCO). The MAYDAY call was reported to have originated from either the ZU-PBC or ZU-PBD pilot. The ATCO immediately notified the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) which activated the search and rescue (SAR) operation in accordance with their standard procedures. At approximately 1652Z, the SAR teams located the wreckage of ZU-PBC on a private farm in Nottingham, KwaZulu-Natal. The aircraft was destroyed on impact, and the pilot sustained fatal injuries.

## Occurrence Details

**Reference Number** : CA18/2/3/10607  
**Occurrence Category** : Category 1 (Accident)  
**Type of Operation** : Part 94 (Private)  
**Name of Operator** : Aviation Junction (PTY) Ltd  
**Aircraft Registration** : ZU-PBC  
**Aircraft Make and Model** : The Aircraft Factory, Sling 2  
**Nationality** : South African  
**Place** : On a private farm in Nottingham, KwaZulu-Natal province  
**Date and Time** : 15 October 2025 at 1120Z (approximate time)  
**Injuries** : Fatal  
**Damage** : Destroyed

## 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) was notified of the occurrence involving a Sling 2 aircraft which occurred at Nottingham, Pietermaritzburg, in KwaZulu-Natal province on 15 October 2025 at 1120Z. 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 investigators were dispatched to the site. A notification was sent to the State of Registry, Operator, Design and Manufacturer in accordance with the CAR 2011 Part 12 and the ICAO Annex 13 Chapter 4. The States did not appoint an accredited representative and/or advisor. 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 Sling 2 involved in this accident*

*Investigation — the investigation into the circumstances of this accident*

*Pilot — the pilot 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 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 South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), which are reserved.*

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<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
°	Degrees
°C	Degrees Celsius
AIID	Accident and Incident Investigations Division
AIRMET	Airman's Meteorological Information
AM	Accountable Manager
AWS	Automated Weather Station
AP	Approved Person
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre
ATCO	Air Traffic Control Officer
ATO	Approved Training Organisation
CAR	Civil Aviation Regulations
CFI	Chief Flight Instructor
C of R	Certificate of Registration
CRS	Certificate of Release to Service
CVR	Cockpit Voice Recorder
FDR	Flight Data Recorder
FAMG	Margate Aerodrome
FASC	Secunda Aerodrome
Ft	Feet
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
IMC	Instrument Meteorology Conditions
hPa	Hectopascal
Kt	Knots
LSA	Light Sport Aircraft
m	Metres
METAR	Meteorological Aerodrome Report
MAYDAY	Emergency Call
MTG	Meteorological Satellite Third Generation
PPL	Private Pilot Licence
POH	Pilot's Operating Handbook
SACAA	South African Civil Aviation Authority
SAWS	South African Weather Service
SMS	Safety Management Systems
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SPL	Student Pilot Licence
QNH	Altitude Above Mean Sea Level
Z	Zulu (Term for Universal Co-ordinated Time - Zero Hours Greenwich)

## 1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

### 1.1. History of Flight

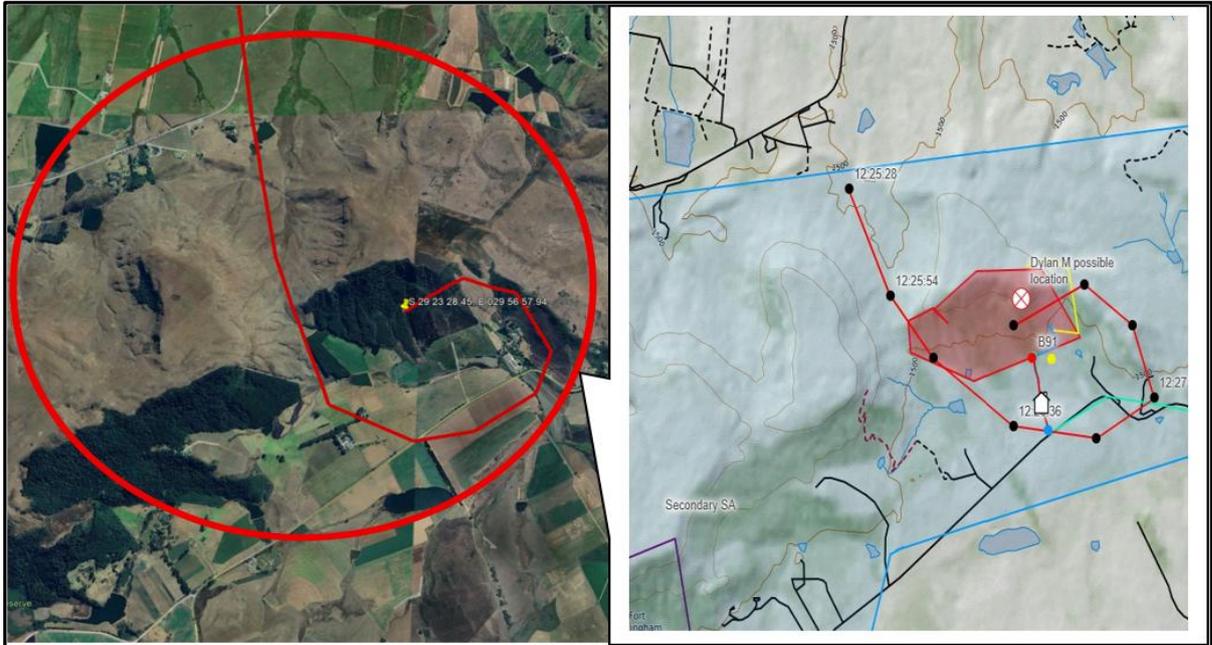
1.1.1. On Wednesday morning, 15 October 2025, a pilot on-board a Sling 2 aircraft with registration ZU-PBC took off on a navigational flight from Secunda Aerodrome (FASC) in Mpumalanga province to Margate Aerodrome (FAMG) in KwaZulu-Natal province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) by day and under the provisions of Part 94 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.

1.1.2. According to the operator, the pilot had planned the private navigational flight earlier on the same week. However, the intended flight (a hire-and-fly arrangement) was postponed due to prevailing unfavourable weather conditions along the route. Hence, the pilot continued to monitor meteorological updates using an electronic weather service application to find a suitable weather window for a safe flight operation. A day before the accident on 14 October 2025, the pilot underwent an aircraft differences training and was signed off with the aircraft type endorsed on his pilot logbook. After the differences training, he conducted post-flight checks as well as reviewed the latest weather information, which he discussed with his friends. The pilot's planned route included a return segment from FAMG to FASC which was to be undertaken in the company of either a chief flight instructor (CFI) or an accountable manager (AM) from the same approved training organisation (ATO) at which the aircraft was hired. Both individuals were already at FAMG at the time. On 15 October 2025 at approximately 0900Z, the pilot performed a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft at FASC and did not find anomalies; the aircraft was deemed airworthy. Later, the pilot departed for FAMG under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and was followed by ZU-PBD, another aircraft from the same ATO that was also en route to FAMG. During the flight whilst abeam Ladysmith, the pilot took a video of the cockpit instruments and a photo of the outside cloud conditions which he sent to the CFI, indicating that the aircraft was flying safely (see Figure 3).

1.1.3. Air traffic control (ATC) Johannesburg Area East received a relayed message from another pilot in the vicinity who reported that an aircraft had issued a MAYDAY call. Around 1120Z, a scheduled airline pilot monitoring frequency 129.1-Megahertz (MHz) also heard the distress call and passed the information on to an air traffic control officer (ATCO). The MAYDAY was believed to have originated from either the ZU-PBC or ZU-PBD pilot; both aircraft belonged to the same ATO. The ATCO immediately informed the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) which activated the search and rescue (SAR) operation. At about 1652Z, the SAR team located the wreckage of ZU-PBC on a private farm near Nottingham, KwaZulu-

Natal. The aircraft was destroyed on impact, and the pilot sustained fatal injuries.

- 1.1.4. The accident occurred on a mountainous bushy terrain at Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates determined to be South 29° 23' 28.45" East 029° 56' 57.94", at a field elevation of 4970 feet (ft).



**Figure 2:** An aerial view of the accident site. (Source: Google Earth)



**Figure 3:** The snapshot of the video and the picture taken by the pilot. (Operator)

## 1.2. Injuries to Persons

Injuries	Pilot	Crew	Pass.	Total On-board	Other
Fatal	1	-	-	1	-
Serious	-	-	-	-	-
Minor	-	-	-	-	-
None	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>

Note: Other means people on the ground.

1.2.1. The pilot was fatally injured during the accident sequence.

## 1.3. Damage to Aircraft

1.3.1. The aircraft was destroyed during the accident sequence.



**Figure 4:** The wreckage at the accident site.

## 1.4. Other Damage

1.4.1. None.

## 1.5. Personnel Information

Nationality	South African	Gender	Male	Age	33
Licence Type	Student Pilot Licence (Aeroplane)				
Licence Valid	No	Type Endorsed	No		
Ratings	None				
Medical Expiry Date	28 February 2029				
Restrictions	VDL (Valid only with correction for defective distant vision)				
Previous Accidents	None				

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

### Flying Experience:

Total Hours	133.2
Total Past 24 Hours	0.6
Total Past 7 Days	0.6
Total Past 90 Days	42.9
Total on Type Past 90 Days	0.6
Total on Type	0.6

- 1.5.1. According to the available records, the pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) Helicopter and a Student Pilot Licence (SPL) Aeroplane. The SPL was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 18 April 2024 with an expiry date of 17 April 2025. The pilot had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 16 February 2024 with an expiry date of 28 February 2029.
- 1.5.2. According to the available records, the pilot completed a differences training flight using the aircraft type on 14 October 2025 and acquired 0.6 hours. He was then signed off by an instructor, and the endorsement was recorded on his logbook. The pilot had submitted an aircraft type endorsement request for a Sling 2 aircraft to the Regulator, but the document had not been processed at the time of the accident.
- 1.5.3. According to the ATO, the pilot had completed a flight test for the issuance of a PPL (Aeroplane) in November 2024. The ATO was unable to provide evidence of submission of a licence application or skills test.

## 1.6. Aircraft Information

### 1.6.1. Sling 2 Aircraft Description (Source: Pilot's Operating Handbook)

*The Sling 2 is a two-seat, all-metal Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) known for its performance, versatility and ruggedness, designed for hour-building, cross-country flights and flight training. It is powered by a Rotax engine (typically Rotax 912) and features a sliding canopy, a spacious cabin with adjustable seats, and a "glass cockpit" style display. It is equipped with a conventional low-wing design and a tri-cycle fixed undercarriage.*

#### **Airframe:**

Manufacturer/Model	The Airplane Factory/Sling 2	
Serial Number	129	
Year of Manufacture	2016	
Total Airframe Hours (At Time of Accident)	Unknown	
Last Inspection (Date & Hours)	18 March 2025	2545.4
Hours Since Last Inspection	Unknown	
CRS Issue Date	18 March 2025	
ATF (Issue Date & Expiry Date)	4 October 2024	31 October 2025
C of R (Issue Date) (Present Owner)	18 August 2016 (PBC Partnership)	
Type of Fuel Used	Mogas 95	
Operating Category	Part 94	
Previous Accidents	None	

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

#### **Engine:**

Manufacturer/Model	912ULS Rotax engine
Serial Number	9142336
Hours Since New	497.8
Hours Since Overhaul	TBO not yet reached

#### **Propeller:**

Manufacturer/Model	Warp Drive
Serial Number	H19455(Blade T16628)
Hours Since New	296 hours in March
Hours Since Overhaul	TBO not yet reached

1.6.2. A review of the aircraft maintenance records, including the airframe, engine and propeller, revealed no anomalies or any recorded defects to any of the aircraft's systems. The aircraft had a valid Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 4 October 2024 with an expiry date of 31 October 2025. The Regulator had registered the aircraft under the current owner on 29 November 2022.

1.6.3. The latest maintenance inspection of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 18 March 2025 at 2545.4 hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 17 March 2026 or at 2645.4 hours, whichever comes first.

## 1.7. Meteorological Information

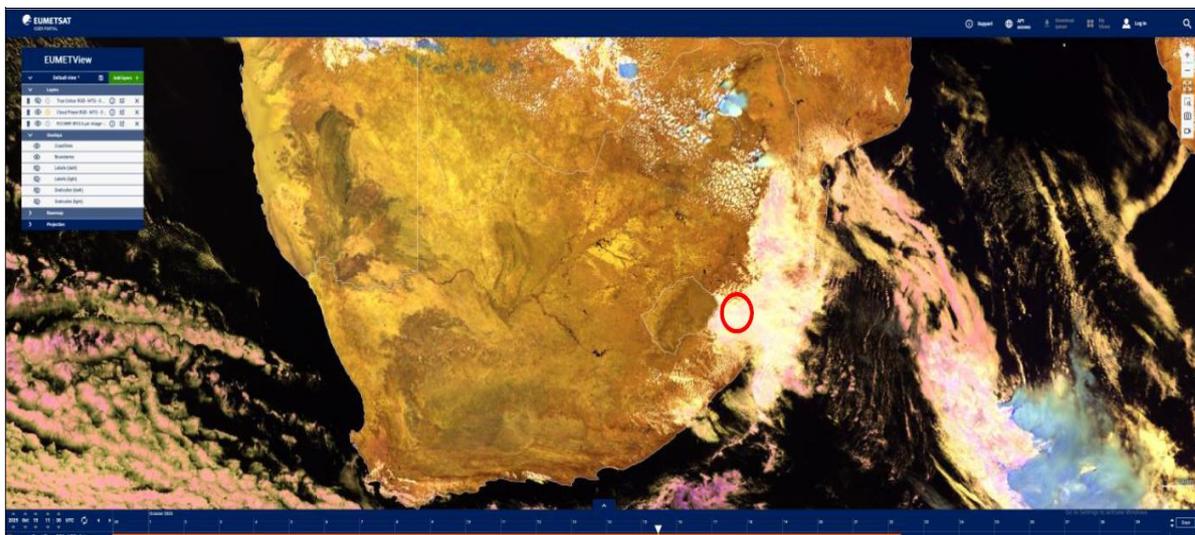
1.7.1. The weather information below was obtained from the Meteorological Aerodrome Report (METAR) that was issued by the South African Weather Service (SAWS), recorded at Pietermaritzburg Airport (FAPM) on 15 October 2025 at 1100Z. The accident site is located approximately 50 kilometres (km) from FAPM.

Wind Direction	030°	Wind Speed	01kt	Visibility	9999
Temperature	18°C	Cloud Cover	OVC 017	Cloud Base	9000 ft
Dew Point	12°C	QNH	1018 hPa		

1.7.2. According to the above weather report, the environment was conducive for instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) flight which required an instrument flight rating (IFR) endorsement on the pilot's licence.

### 1.7.3. Summary of the Weather at the Estimated Time of the Accident

Figure 5 below is a satellite image of the Cloud Phase RGB of the Meteosat Third Generation (MTG) prior to and after the accident. The satellite image shows clear skies between FASC and the north-western parts of KwaZulu-Natal; the presents of low clouds is indicated by the pinkish colour on the image. The low clouds are present in the vicinity of the accident, which is marked in a red circle.



**Figure 5:** RGB Cloud Phase satellite image before and after the time. (Source: SAWS)

**Conclusion:**

*Based on the forecast and observed data, it is evident that low cloud, mist and drizzle were present in the vicinity of the accident, resulting in the reduction of visibility to approximately 4500m. The satellite imagery confirmed the presence of extensive low cloud caused by the advection of moisture from the ocean observed on the FAPM METARs. The Cedara automated weather station (AWS) recorded high humidity, favourable for mist formation which may result in reduced visibility, as forecasted in the significant weather charts. The airman’s meteorological information (AIRMET) warnings for low cloud, mountain obscuration, reduced visibility and severe turbulence between 6500 ft and 10 000 ft were valid during the accident period. In summary, the weather conditions in the vicinity of the accident were not favourable for visual flight rules (VFR) conditions.*

**1.8. Aids to Navigation**

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

**1.9. Communication**

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

## 1.10. Aerodrome Information

1.10.1. The accident did not occur near an aerodrome; it occurred on a mountainous and bushy terrain at GPS co-ordinates determined to be South 29° 23' 28.45" East 029° 56' 57.94", at a field elevation of 4970 feet (ft).

## 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 accident occurred on a mountainous terrain with dense thick bushes. The aircraft impacted a high-rise terrain and bushes at a slightly low-nose attitude. The wreckage distribution was contained in a confined space due to the surrounding thick bush which trapped the wreckage fragments (see Figure 8).



**Figure 6:** The wreckage as it was found at the accident site.



**Figure 7:** The rear view of the wreckage.



**Figure 8:** Fragments of the wreckage caught in the surrounding trees.

1.12.2. The cockpit section was destroyed (see Figure 6). Fragments of the glass canopy were found on trees in the vicinity, indicative of an object that disintegrated and flung out in the direction of impact.

### 1.13. Medical and Pathological Information

1.13.1. To be discussed on the final report.

#### 1.14. **Fire**

1.14.1. There was no pre- or post-impact fire during the accident sequence.

#### 1.15. **Survival Aspects**

1.15.1. The aircraft impacted the terrain in a slightly low-nose attitude which destroyed the cockpit, compromising the safety of the occupant. The pilot was restrained by the safety harness at the time of the accident; this prevented him from being ejection from the aircraft.

#### 1.16. **Tests and Research**

1.16.1. To be discussed in the final report.

#### 1.17. **Organisational and Management Information**

1.17.1. This was a hire-and-fly operation that was conducted privately under the provisions of Part 94 of the CAR 2011, as amended.

1.17.2. The ATO was issued the ATO Certificate on 15 July 2024 with an expiry date of 31 July 2029. The ATO had an approved training programme as required by the Regulator. The ATO was assisting the pilot with his SPL training for the fixed wing aircraft. On the day of the accident flight, the ATO had authorised a hire-and-fly aircraft on the basis that the pilot had completed a differences training flight and had also submitted a CA 61-09.7 form to the Regulator.

1.17.3. The flight authorisation sheets of the accident flight were not signed by the instructor as required by the ATO. The ATO representative indicated that PPL holders are not always required to obtain instructor sign-off for hire-and-fly operation. The pilot did not have a valid fixed wing licence, only a PPL Helicopter. After the accident, the ATO could not provide evidence that the pilot's eligibility for fixed wing training had been properly verified.

#### 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

2.2.1. The pilot had a Student Pilot Licence (SPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator on 18 April 2024 with an expiry date of 17 April 2025. There were no records that showed that the pilot had either a valid SPL or a PPL Aeroplane.

2.2.2. The pilot had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 16 February 2024 with an expiry date of 28 February 2029.

2.2.3. The pilot had approximately 133.2 total hours of which 0.6 hours were acquired on the aircraft type during familiarisation a day before the accident. The aircraft type was endorsed on his logbook; an application for the aircraft type endorsement was submitted to the Regulator on the same day of the accident, before the flight.

2.2.4. The aircraft was issued an Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate by the Regulator on 4 October 2024 with an expiry date of 31 October 2025. The Regulator had registered the aircraft under the current owner on 29 November 2022.

2.2.5. The last maintenance inspection of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 18 March 2025 at 2545.4 airframe hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 17 March 2026 or at 2645.4 airframe hours, whichever comes first. The total aircraft hours that were recorded before the flight were 2621.7; however, the exact total

airframe hours at the time of the accident could not be determined as the flight folio record was not located at the accident site.

- 2.2.6. The approved person (AP) who maintained the aircraft had an Approved Person Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 8 December 2024 with an expiry date of 7 December 2026. The aircraft was endorsed on the AP's Operational Certificate.
- 2.2.7. The flight was operated as a private hire-and-fly by the pilot who had an expired SPL Aeroplane and a valid PPL Helicopter.
- 2.2.8. The ATO could not provide evidence that the pilot's eligibility for fixed wing training had been properly verified.
- 2.2.9. Meteorological information obtained at the time of the accident indicated that the weather conditions in the vicinity of the accident site were not suitable for visual flight operation. The official weather report recorded low cloud, mist and drizzle with visibility reduced to approximately 4500m. Satellite imagery and local weather observations further confirmed high humidity and widespread low clouds, creating conditions conducive to mist formation.

### **3. ON-GOING INVESTIGATION**

- 3.1. The AIID investigation is on-going, and the investigators will investigate other aspects of this accident 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 Recommendation/s**

- 4.2.1. It is recommended that the ATO improve the hire-and-fly policies specifically for pilots who are accumulating hours towards the issuance of a higher licence. Flight planning should be validated by a flight instructor on duty.

4.2.2. It is recommended that the Director of Civil Aviation (DCA) conducts a comprehensive audit of the approved training organisation (ATO) to verify full compliance with the requirements of Part 141 for ATO certification.

This audit should, in chronological order, ensure that:

- All pilots' licences, medical certificates and relevant endorsements are valid and verified prior to any flight operations.
- All authorisations, verifications and endorsements are securely recorded and retained in accordance with Part 141 record keeping and audit requirements to facilitate traceability and oversight.

These measures will ensure that operational practises within the ATO align with the regulatory standards, thereby enhancing oversight, accountability and overall flight safety.

## **5. APPENDICES**

5.1. None.

**This report is issued by:**

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