

MEDIA RELEASE

PNG AIC CHIEF COMMISSIONER ISSUES RESPONSE TO ERRONEOUS AND MISLEADING STATEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Mr. Hubert Namani made an announcement on Sunday 2nd August 2020 in the context of the investigation conducted by the AIC into an aircraft accident occurred on 26th July 2020 near Papa Lealea, Port Moresby, NCD.

Mr. Namani said “On 26th July 2020, the AIC was informed by PNG Air Services Limited (PNG ASL), about the activation of an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) near Papa Lealea, Port Moresby, National Capital District.

After confirming the accident, the AIC commenced an investigation as mandated by the *Civil Aviation Act 2000 (As Amended)* and aligned with *Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*. The sole objective of the investigation is to establish the causes, contributing factors and circumstances of the accident in order to propose recommendations to enhance safety in the aviation system. AIC investigations are conducted with complete independence from any other Statutory organisation or aviation stakeholder.

The high levels of professionalism and integrity of the AIC have been acknowledged by foreign accident investigation authorities. As a result of my leadership and hard work of the AIC Board of Commissioners, Management and staff, the AIC is now admitted as one of the 18 members of the prestigious *International Transportation Safety Association (ITSA)*.

The *International Civil Aviation Organization*, which is the *United Nations* agency custodian of the international standards for the aviation system also acknowledged AIC in the report emanating from the *56th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation Asia and Pacific Region* held in Kathmandu, Nepal in August 2019, which stated in part:

...out of all the 14 PSIDS (Pacific Small Island Developing States), only Papua New Guinea has established an independent authority for the investigation of aircraft accidents and serious incidents.

Over the weekend I found a post made by a Susan Merrell on social media, in which she directly attempted to implicate me in the circumstances surrounding the accident that occurred on 26th July in Papa Lealea. Her original post stated in part:

How is Yamasombi's brother in law, Hubert Namani, Civil Aviation Manager at Jackson's airport mooted to be implicated in the saga of the plane crash at Papa Lealea along with Yamasombi's nephew, a former PNGDF officer?

The post was later edited and the relevant part now states:

How is Yamasombi's brother in law, Hubert Namani of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) mooted to be implicated...

As the Chief Commissioner and Chairman of AIC's Board, I find the post misleading, erroneous and highly defamatory.

I caution the public to not entertain such discussions and circulate these posts as they are fallacious and a sham designed and fabricated by supporters of the drug syndicate to unduly influence investigations and or discredit men leading the investigations.



I call on the public to be responsible and allow the AIC and all State agencies to do their work.

I have confidence in the leadership of Commissioner of Police, David Manning, and his Deputy Commissioner, Donald Yamasombi, who have both come up the ranks to lead the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

In the middle of their major Transnational Crime Investigation they have provided the necessary support to the Commission to allow unrestricted access to the aircraft and pilot for our Investigators, which has been key to the development of on-site activities and to gather information at the initial stages of the investigation conducted by the AIC.

We will not hesitate to make a Complaint against the publishers to the Police under *Section 21 of the Cybercrime Code Act 2016*, whereby publications made on electronic systems or devices that are made publicly available as defamatory materials intentionally and without lawful excuse or justification or in excess of a lawful excuse or justification, or recklessly is a criminal offence and is punishable.

The AIC is internationally recognized for its no blame aircraft accident investigations and performs its investigation to the highest international standards and best practices recognized by the *International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)* under *Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation* and it endeavours to maintain its integrity and that of its Board of Commissioners, Management and Staff.

We are focused on our mission towards continuous improvement of aviation safety.”