



## **OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER**

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**Safety recommendation: AIC 20-R14/20-1001.**

**Addressed to: APPLUS WOKMAN**

**Date issued: 12 August 2020**

**Investigation link: AIC 20-1001**

**Action status: Issued**

### **Introduction**

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea (CASA PNG) notified the Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) of the accident referenced in this safety recommendation. Immediately after the notification, the AIC commenced an investigation and appointed a team of investigators to carry on the process.

### **Occurrence**

On 14 November 2019 at 09:42 local time, a DJI Matrice 210 RTK remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), owned and operated by Applus Wokman (Applus), was being used to conduct an inspection of the underside of the jetty of the PNG LNG ExxonMobil Marine Terminal, about 20 km (11 nautical miles) North West of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, when it collided with one of the jetty's pylons and dropped into the sea.

The accident occurred during a flight conducted by Applus as part of the contract they had with ExxonMobil PNG to conduct aerial inspections, from 1 to 28 November 2019, of ExxonMobil's marine navigational aids and the marine terminal jetty.

The aircraft was recovered about 20 minutes after the accident. The aircraft's internal hardware and electronic systems were destroyed by salt water.

### **Safety deficiency description**

The accident occurred while the flight was being conducted from inside the cabin of the pilot boat by the RPA pilot. The pilot boat was at a distance of about 100 m from the inspection location. Maintaining clear visual reference with the low flying RPA, operating at about 5ft above sea level, would have been challenging from that distance.

The RPA pilot was operating from the cabin of a swaying pilot boat with limited view of the outside, through the window panels. The AIC determined that the decision to operate the RPA from inside the cabin posed a high risk of losing sight of the RPA.

The AIC found that the technical assistant was not performing the role of an observer as specified in CAR Part 101. In fact, the operator was conducting RPA operations without an observer. The use of an observer was necessary to maintain visual reference with the RPA and surrounding area at all times during operations.

The operator was issued with the Part 101.202 Instrument of Approval and was required to conduct all unmanned aircraft operations in Papua New Guinea in accordance with *CAR Part 101*.

### ***Recommendation number AIC 20-R14/20-1001 to Applus Wokman***

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Applus Wokman should ensure that all remotely piloted aircraft operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of *CAR Part 101* and procedures are developed to ensure that visual line of sight is maintained, and the role of an observer is included during these operations.

### **Action requested**

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission requests that Applus Wokman note the recommendation *AIC 20-R14/20-1001* and provide a response to the PNG AIC within 90 days, but no later than 10 November 2020, and explain including with evidence how Applus Wokman has addressed the safety deficiency identified in *Safety Recommendation AIC 20-R14/20-1001*.



**Hubert Namani, LLB**

*Chief Commissioner*

12 August 2020

## **Applus Wokman response**

The AIC released Safety Recommendation AIC 20-R14/20-1001 to Applus on 12 August 2020, requiring a response within a 90-day period. AIC received a response from Applus on the 10 November 2020.

The response stated that Applus has confirmed receiving the safety recommendation, and assured AIC of their commitment to conduct future remotely piloted aircraft operations in accordance with the provisions of CAR Part 101.

The response did not indicate any evidence on how Applus will address the safety recommendation, therefore, AIC requested Applus to provide the evidence.

On 14 July 2021, after follow ups and consultation with Applus, AIC was emailed with evidence that Applus have set procedures in their operations manual to address the safety recommendation.

## **AIC assessment**

The AIC has assessed the response provided by Applus and noted that the safety recommendation was supported with evidence and accepted.

The AIC assigns Applus response as *satisfactory*.

The AIC has recorded the **Status of the Recommendation: CLOSED. RESPONSE ACCEPTED.**



**HUBERT NAMANI, LLB**

*Chief Commissioner*

25 August 2021