



Australian Government
Australian Transport Safety Bureau

ATSB

Media on an accident site

Presented by
Rob Chopin
Investigation Specialist – Pacific

AVIATION | MARINE | RAIL



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Media interest in transport accidents

Transport accidents are particularly newsworthy

- Shock/fear factor
- They are relatable to the general public
- Potential for dramatic imagery
- Human element
- A mystery to solve - why did it happen?

ATSB media strategy

- To be trusted & transparent
- Responsive
- Credible



ATSB media strategy

Meet media needs

- Provide timely information & content
- Being helpful and open
- Being professional and respectful

Awareness of other stakeholders

- NOK sensitivities
- Government expectations
- Industry desire for information

Dealing with the media after an accident



What to expect on site

- Media will be looking to take footage
- Investigators may be asked to film footage for ATSB use in the future
- Media team will organise a stand-up, either on-site or from the Canberra office
- For most accidents media will only be on site for a day or two



Tips for investigators

If approached by the media

- Explain you are not an authorised media spokesperson
- Advise the journalist to contact the media team
- Pass details of the approach to the media team

What not to do

- Provide a personal opinion
- Speculate
- Interpret an issue or point of view
- Discuss political issues
- Become argumentative
- Discuss restricted information
- Provide personal information



ATSB spokespeople

We limit who can speak to the media

- Chief Commissioner is our primary spokesperson
- Chief Operating Officer
- Directors of Transport Safety
- Media team members
- Duty managers
- Not investigators



Why do we limit our spokespeople?

It is a skill, practice makes (near) perfect

To ensure consistency of messaging

We generally know much more than is appropriate to tell the media (restricted information)

We want to avoid speculation, giving opinions

We want to be helpful, but not too much!

Most investigators don't want to talk to media anyway...



Duty manager role

- The ATSB does not maintain a 24-hour media line
- Duty managers respond to telephone media inquiries outside of business hours
- A media team member will be available to assist/manage
- When news of an incident is breaking, ATSB will be a first point of contact for media

Duty manager guidelines

Other tips

- Stress you are a duty manager, and are only able/approved to provide limited information on background
- Provide basic factual information, don't overshare
- Take your time
- Be understanding that journalists have a job to do
- Take their details, and ask them to email the media team at media@atsb.gov.au, noting that someone from the media team will respond.

Initial statements

- We have a standard format
- Provides media content, quickly
- Helps fill the information void

Broome Cessna Conquest accident

Date

Media Contact

19/03/2026

media@atsb.gov.au

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has commenced a transport safety investigation into the accident involving a Cessna 441 Conquest twin turboprop aircraft near Broome Airport, in northern WA.

As reported to the ATSB, shortly after the aircraft took off from Broome's runway 10 it encountered a loss of engine power.

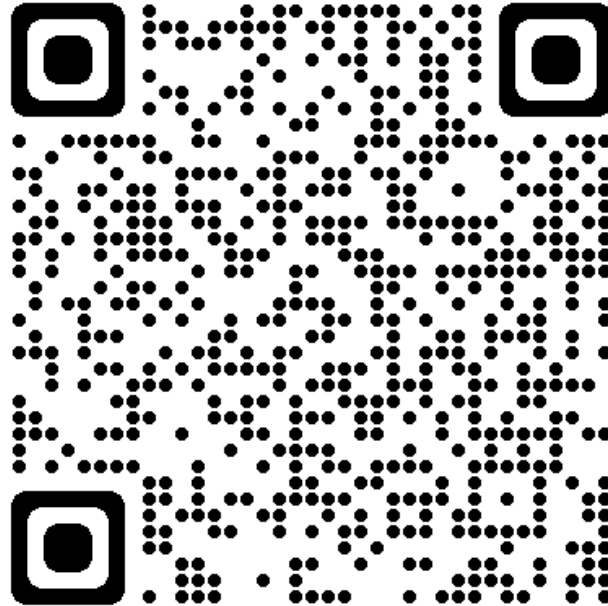
The ATSB is deploying a team of transport safety investigators, specialising in aircraft operations and engineering, and accident survivability, to the accident site from its Perth, Canberra, and Brisbane offices.

Once on site on Friday the investigation team will conduct a range of evidence-gathering activities, including aircraft examination and site mapping, and will recover any aircraft flight recorders or other components of interest for further examination at the ATSB's technical facilities in Canberra.

Investigators will also interview flight crew, passengers, and any witnesses, and collect relevant recorded information including flight tracking data and CCTV footage, as well as pilot and aircraft maintenance records, and weather information.

The ATSB asks anyone with video footage of the accident flight, or its immediate aftermath, to contact us via the witness form on our website: [atsb.gov.au/witness](https://www.atsb.gov.au/witness) at your earliest opportunity.

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