

Pilot's miraculous escape from plane crash near Nowra

By **ROBERT CRAWFORD**

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The Ambulance Rescue helicopter at the scene of Thursday's plane crash north of Nerriga. The photo was taken from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority Dornier search and rescue aircraft.

An intensive care paramedic on the Ambulance Rescue Helicopter that rescued the pilot of a crashed plane west of Nowra has told of the man's miraculous escape.

Paramedic David Zids was part of the rescue team that located the 22-year-old at the wreckage of a 1970s Cessna 206 in bushland near Touga in the Morton National Park around 1pm.

The man was treated at the scene and was airlifted to Wollongong Hospital with minor injuries including a cut above his eye.

"He's a very lucky man," Mr Zids said.

"He was out of the plane walking around when we got there.

"I've been to a number of plane crashes over the years and this is certainly one of the better outcomes I've seen.

"He was a bit anxious but apart from that and a cut above his eye, he got out with virtually no injuries. Incredible."

Mr Zids said the helicopter crew had initially been searching in the Wombeyan Caves area,

before the man contacted rescue authorities on his mobile phone and his position was pinpointed.

“He was lucky he was able to put the plane down in a small clearing but hit trees at the end of the clearing which virtually destroyed the plane,” he said.

“He managed to get out and clear the plane. He was extremely lucky.

“When we arrived we initially couldn’t find him, he had walked a short distance from the crash site. Then we found him and he was fine.

“He was walking and talking and we flew him to Wollongong as a precaution and for treatment.”

It is believed the man, who was the sole occupant of the plane, was following a flight plan set out for him by a flight instructor and was travelling from Cootamundra to Bankstown when he suffered engine failure.

The man reportedly made a distress call at 11.35pm, believing he was near Wombeyan Caves.

The crash site was found in a bushland clearing at Touga - just north of Nerriga about 60 kilometres from where the initial call was made.

Extracted from:

<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/2629194/man-walks-away-from-plane-crash-barely-scratched/>

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