

## Mobile phone helps police find location of plane wreckage

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Jan. 28, 2015, noon



Pilot Robert Greig was killed when the plane he was flying crashed in the escarpment west of Austinmer on Tuesday night.

A Balgownie pilot killed in a plane crash on the Illawarra escarpment late Tuesday was communicating with a second pilot who flew in tandem shortly before the accident.

Experienced airman Robert Greig set out from Wedderburn Airfield about 7.30pm in a camouflage-coloured "home built-style" light aircraft.

He navigated rain and heavy fog and became separated from the second pilot.

The men spoke mid-air, but Mr Greig gave no sign he was on fatal course, Wollongong Local Area Commander Supt Kyle Stewart said.

"We are advised by the pilot that was accompanying Mr Greig that there was no indication the aircraft had any kind of structural trouble," he said.

Kyle Stewart said the second pilot alerted police to the difficulties of the flight soon after he landed at The Illawarra Regional Airport as intended.

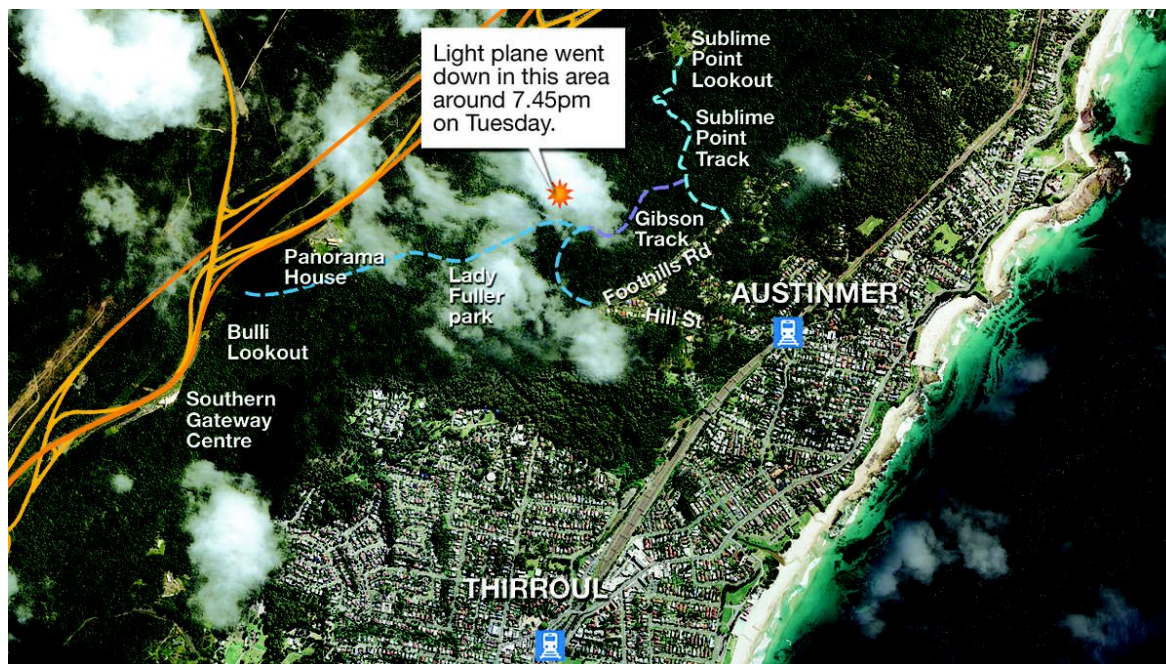
"He was unaware (Mr Greig) was in trouble until he was unable to contact him."

Search teams located the plane wreck on the escarpment floor about 600 metres west/south-west of Austinmer Scout Camp about 8am this morning, while Mr Greig's family waited for news close by.

Supt Stewart said a mobile phone carried by the father-of-two helped to pinpoint his location.

Rain and a low fog hampered the search effort Tuesday night and this morning, despite numerous northern suburbs residents contacting police to report seeing and hearing the crash.

The search was called off around midnight, then recommenced at 6.30am this morning.



Police Rescue and Forensic Services police entered the bush from Foothills Road about 9am on buggy to begin what is expected to be a long and complicated retrieval operation.

The wreck was found in slippery, wooded terrain.

"Given the ... really inhospitable terrain it will take us some time to complete our crime scene examination and to remove Mr Greig's body from the location," Supt Stewart said.

Supt Stewart said the aircraft would not have carried any sophisticated instrumentation or black box that could give investigators insight into how the crash occurred.

Mr Greig, 57, had been flying planes for four decades and had amassed thousands of hours in the air, police have been told.

The question of why he and the tandem pilot set out in Tuesday night's "marginal" conditions, remains.

"That's something that will be clearly subject to our investigations, Supt Stewart said.

"It would have been a very complex manoeuvre to have pilots flying in the conditions that they were flying in last night had they not been equipped appropriately to do so, and/or trained appropriately to do so."

Police are seeking witnesses or people who heard the crash to make themselves known via Crimestoppers - 1800 333 000.

Extracted from:

<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/2845961/pilot-flying-with-another-plane-before-fatal-crash>

On 28/01/15 at 14:42:05