



Pilot escapes injury in light plane crash in Katherine



Photo: The plane narrowly missed trees, and crashed into rough, rocky terrain before the pilot was rescued

A pilot has escaped injury after the plane he was flying crashed into the ground near Katherine Airport, 320 kilometres south of Darwin.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has said the pilot issued a mayday call about 4:00pm on Tuesday with his coordinates.

A short time later a Royal Australian Air Force helicopter was deployed from the nearby RAAF Base Tindal to locate and assist the pilot.

Helicopter pilot Mick Gablonski flew the RAAF search and rescue chopper to the scene, and said they were at the crash site within 10 minutes, about 12 miles east of Katherine airport.

"We launched out of here, found the aircraft and the pilot, and the pilot was assessed by a RAAF doctor," Mr Gablonski said.

He said the pilot had been standing near the crashed plane, and they were relieved to find him alive.

"Basically we thought he was very lucky, when we [saw] him standing up outside away from the aircraft, the aircraft was quite a wreckage," Mr Gablonski said.

"When you get called to an aircraft in distress and a possible crash, there's always that thought in your mind that you're going to something very, very nasty."

The crash site was in the Katherine gorge area, and was described as very rocky and uneven terrain.

"He basically made a forced landing into an area that was semi-open and obviously impacted on some trees on the way in, before coming to a stop with the tail section resting, bent up against a tree," Mr Gablonski said.

The pilot did not appear to have any serious injuries, but was taken to the Katherine Hospital as a precaution.

The plane, a RV86 wing aircraft, is likely to be written off due to the nature of the collision.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau will investigate the incident.



Extracted from:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-27/light-plane-crashes-near-katherine-pilot-uninjured/6890244>

On 28/10/15 at 06:13:37