



The tragic scene of a helicopter crash on a property north of Cloncurry, on August 2, 2017.

Brent Acton killed in helicopter crash en route to mustering job

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OUTBACK chopper pilot Brent Acton was killed yesterday en route to a mustering job in northwest Queensland.

The father of two, 40, died when his Robinson R22 helicopter crashed into a paddock on Lanark Property, about 20km north of Cloncurry, and burst into flames about 7.15am.

The accident has rocked the small community, with police and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau to inspect the helicopter and nearby power lines to see if Mr Acton hit the lines before crashing.

It is understood Mr Acton was flying to a station further north to do some mustering.



Helicopter pilot Brent Acton has been killed mustering cattle. Source: Facebook.

The former Toowoomba Grammar School student and Cloncurry Mustering Company pilot had logged about 10,000 hours flying time.

Mr Acton, related to the Acton Super Beef family dynasty, is survived by wife Shona and two young sons.

It is understood the bush community will pay their respects to his loss at the town's biggest annual rodeo event, the Curry Merry Muster Festival, this weekend.

Cloncurry Police officer in charge and local councillor Senior Sergeant Brad Rix said it was not known if Mr Acton's helicopter hit the powerlines or if there was a mechanical failure that led to the crash.

"He was heading out to a property about 30 odd kilometres out of town to do some mustering, he wasn't mustering at the time and it's undetermined yet as to what happened," Sen-Sgt Rix said.

"The chopper has ended up on the ground, in a ball of flames, with him deceased in it.

"It is in the vicinity of powerlines but until the proper examination of the blades is done, we can't say for sure."

Sen-Sgt Rix said the powerlines had not been brought down near the crash site.

"The chopper blades will be inspected and the powerlines will be looked at a lot closer," he said.

"We can't be 100 per cent sure that he has hit them, it is a possibility that that's what happened, but it's also a possibility that there was a mechanical failure in the vicinity of the powerlines."

It is understood another helicopter flying close by saw the crash and flew to a nearby station to raise the alarm and get firefighting equipment, but Mr Acton could not be saved.

Forensic crash and scenes of crime investigations will centre around the aircraft, which is part of a fleet of 20 two-seater R22s and three four-seater R44s, with the inquiry to be overseen by the ATSB, police said.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority spokesman Peter Gibson said the Robinson R22 helicopter was common in mustering and bush pilots were trained for low flying and taught about the risk of powerlines.

A report is being prepared for the coroner.

Extracted from:

<http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/brent-acton-killed-in-helicopter-crash-en-route-to-mustering-job/news-story/73462317d5192df09b278b9e7a796c50>

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