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<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/aviation/weather-report-restriction-linked-to-lord-howe-air-crash/news-story/ad8208295f1baa187d207bab93142321>

Bad weather linked to air crash

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Restrictions on weather information to incoming flights on Lord Howe has been linked to an *accident.

Weather report restriction linked to Lord Howe air crash

An intervention by the aviation safety regulator restricting a veteran harbour master from providing crucial weather information to incoming flights at Lord Howe Island has been linked to a serious *accident.

Clive Wilson has intricate knowledge of the treacherous weather patterns and cross winds on the remote island and for decades radioed this knowledge to incoming flights. His volunteer work was encouraged by airlines, the RAAF and air ambulance services.

But three years ago the Civil Aviation Safety Authority told Mr Wilson, who had been manning the radio since 1956, it would not renew his licence to provide detailed weather observations to pilots unless he spent \$20,000 on a meteorological training course.

On Friday morning last week a 13-seater twin-turboprop King Air 200 carrying five people was seriously damaged when it ploughed into the tarmac, *destroying a propeller and damaging a wing, in an accident so *serious experts said the plane would most likely have to be *returned to the mainland by ship to be repaired.

The previous evening, in similar weather, a medical evacuation flight radioed Mr Wilson for *advice and was told it was too dangerous to land.

It circled for more than an hour before returning to the mainland.

Unlike air force and medevac pilots, many flight operators — including Port Macquarie-based Eastern Air Services, which had been flying the King Air commercially into Lord Howe since *December — no longer radio Mr Wilson for advice on conditions on the ground.

Mr Wilson said this was in part because many pilots were no longer aware he provided the service — his name and contact details were removed from the *region's pilot guide at the insistence of the Lord Howe Island airport administration amid the spat with CASA.

“That morning (of the accident) the wind was gusting up to 50 knots and my respectful advice would have been abandon what you are doing and go home,” Mr Wilson told The Weekend Australian yesterday.

“My normal conversation in those circumstances would have been ‘the conditions are difficult and unpredictable and there is a high-level of risk in attempting to approach Lord Howe under these conditions’.”

Former Qantas pilot Bill Hamilton said the action by CASA was a “textbook case of mindless bureaucracy trumping common sense” and it was “putting lives at risk”.

“Almost all of the rest of the world would see Clive's efforts as essential but we're a country where compliance with ratbag regulations take precedence over common sense,” Mr Hamilton said.

An Australian Transport *Safety Bureau spokesman confirmed a King Air 200 turboprop aircraft had lost control and had been involved in an accident on Lord Howe Island at 7.20am on October 27.

“During final approach, the aircraft encountered a strong down-draft, resulting in a hard landing with substantial damage to the right wing and propeller,” the spokesman said.

“The ATSB reviewed the incident and is not investigating.”

There were five people on board, none of whom was injured.

A CASA spokesman said the regulator would not investigate as it usually only reviewed accidents that were more serious — where injuries or deaths had occurred as a result of systemic mechanical or other problems.

Eastern Air Services did not return calls yesterday.

On its website the company was advertising seven-day holiday packages from Port Macquarie to Lord Howe Island — aboard the King Air 200 — *between October and December from \$1199 twin-share.

And they have the hide to call themselves "Safety Authorities"