

# The West Australian

## Helicopter ditches into water near Port Hedland, 1300km north of Perth

[Chris Leitch](#) *The West Australian*  
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[Chris Leitch](#)

**A search is on for a missing helicopter pilot after the aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing in the ocean about 35km north-west of Port Hedland.**

The search-and-rescue operation co-ordinated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority was continuing on Thursday morning.

**A two-person crew was aboard the helicopter, a twin-engine EC135 operated by Aviator Group, when it ditched in the water just before midnight on Wednesday.**

The helicopter was on its way to the bulk carrier MV *Squireship* to collect a marine pilot and return them to the harbour.



MV *Squireship*, which was the destination of the helicopter.

The marine pilot on board *Squireship* witnessed the helicopter ditch into the water and immediately notified harbour control, which in turn advised AMSA just before midnight.

The AMSA also detected a distress beacon from one of the helicopter's crew members. Four flares were seen in the search area shortly after the crash.

*One of the helicopter's crew, suffering minor injuries, was rescued from a life raft by another boat crew at about 1am. He was taken to Port Hedland Hospital.*

*The second crew member, the helicopter's pilot, is still missing.*

Seven aircraft, including AMSA's Perth Challenger jet, and seven vessels including four tug boats are involved in the search.

WA Police, Volunteer Marine Rescue Port Hedland, Port Hedland Harbour Master and Vessel Traffic Services, and the helicopter pilot company are assisting.

Aviator Group's CEO Ian Vanderbeek said in a statement: "our immediate focus is on assisting with the ongoing search effort and supporting our staff and their families affected by the accident."

An Australian Transport Safety Bureau team of investigators will travel to the location of the ditching on Thursday to begin their investigation.

Extracted from:

<https://thewest.com.au/news/pilbara/helicopter-ditches-into-water-near-port-hedland-1300km-north-of-perth-ng-b88774914z>

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