

Riverland light plane crash pilot Tim Whitrow in critical condition



Photo: The light plane was severely damaged after it crashed to the ground on Saturday. (ABC News: Matt Stephens)

A pilot who was seriously injured in a light plane crash at Renmark North yesterday has been identified as experienced pilot and South Australian winemaker Tim Whitrow.

The ABC understands Mr Whitrow was on the set of a short film when he clipped powerlines and crashed near David Street in South Australia's Riverland at about 6:15pm.

Paramedics said a 49-year-old man from Port Willunga, south of Adelaide, was flown to the Royal Adelaide Hospital in a serious but stable condition with multiple injuries.

SA Health today said he remained in a critical condition in hospital.

Renmark residents yesterday told the ABC the plane crashed into vineyards near a dam.

Taya, who did not want her full name published, was a witness of the crash and said she was with a group of people filming a movie in Renmark at the time.

"We were filming a movie in Renmark and we were just in the transportable house and Tim flew in that Saturday morning," she said.

"He was just about to fly home Saturday afternoon and he flew over the house just to say a final goodbye.

"Then I'm guessing he probably couldn't see because the sun was ... [at] eye level."

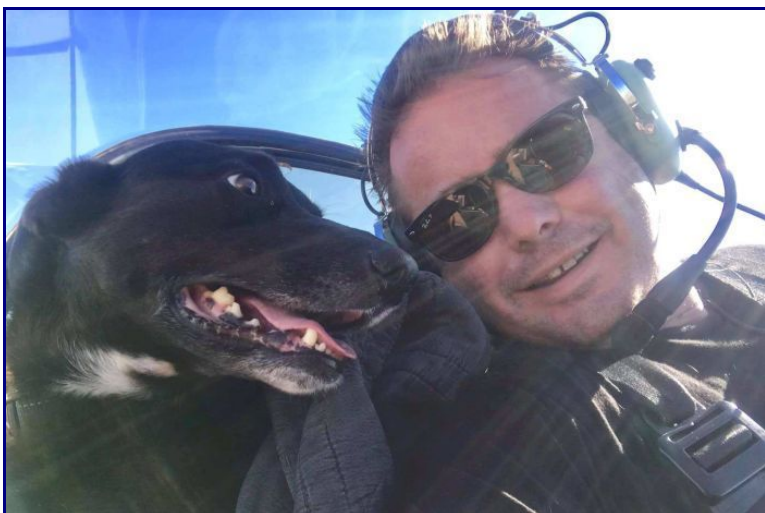


Photo: Tim Whitrow was seriously injured in the light plane crash in the Riverland. (Facebook: Tim Whitrow)

It is understood Mr Whitrow is related to Alex and James Whitrow, who are filming a feature film called Roadkill in the region.

Witness 'had a moment of shock'

Taya said she did not see Mr Whitrow make contact with the powerlines and she was "shocked" when she saw the plane crash to the ground.

"I didn't see him go through the powerlines but I saw the wing of the plane fall off and then I saw the plane just crash into the ground," she said.

"I kind of had a moment of shock ... it was just a horrific sound."



Photo: Tim Whitrow is an experienced pilot from South Australia. (Facebook: Tim Whitrow)

She said a neighbour called emergency services and two police vehicles, two ambulances and a fire truck attended the scene.

"They found a way to get him out of the seatbelt. They said that he was conscious, so they were only worried about internal bleeding."

Bob Gelston, who lives on a nearby property, said Mr Whitrow was flying quite low earlier in the day, "like he was skimming the trees".

"When I looked up the road and I saw how many emergency vehicles were coming down, I thought 'no, something's drastically happened in the street'," he said.

"I've only ever seen three ambulances in this street in 16 years.

"Even though we didn't know the pilot, or anybody who lives down that way really, it's really nice when you got a local community that just pull together; 'right job needs to be picked up — let's go and do it!'"

Police yesterday said Recreational Aviation Australia would investigate the crash.

Mr Whitrow made headlines earlier this year when he released footage of a "feisty" koala that made itself comfortable in the back seat of his car at McLaren Vale.

Mr Whitrow was checking on fruit in his family's McLaren Vale vineyard, about 40 kilometres south of Adelaide, when he noticed the animal was in his car.

He had left the car's door open, with the air conditioner on, so his dog could get in and out while he worked.

The koala eventually left the car and could be seen running across grass before climbing up a gum tree.

Extracted from:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-11-17/riverland-light-plan-crash-pilot-identified-as-tim-whitrow/11712100>

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