

Small plane missing in northern New South Wales while flying from Murwillumbah to Taree

A search is underway for a small plane that has gone missing with two people on board while flying in northern New South Wales.



Photo: The plane failed to arrive in Taree this morning. (Westpac Rescue Helicopter)

The four-seater Mooney M-20 aircraft took off from Murwillumbah at 6.30am this morning and did not arrive as planned at Taree two hours later.

Jimmy Keogh from the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service said crews were searching along the flight path. A Critical Care Medical Team is on board and working the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's (AMSA) search and rescue jet.

Weather conditions in the area are reported to be poor with low cloud.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority said the last transponder contact was about 27 kilometres west of Coffs Harbour.

Police have been door knocking around the town of Dorrigo to determine whether any locals may have seen the plane in distress.

Chief Inspector Peter Hayes said the residents had been shocked to hear a plane may have crashed nearby.

"They're very surprised, it's obviously a flight path that we're looking at and aircraft go over all the time, but you don't expect an aircraft to go down near you," he said.

Chief Inspector Hayes said bad weather had been hampering the search.

"It's very thick terrain, this is the problem, thick and hilly so visibility from the air isn't very good at all due to fog," he said.

"Until the fog clears and we can have a bit of a look as to where the plane possibly went down, that's where we stand at the moment."

The search has been suspended overnight and there are plans tomorrow for a land search in the area where the plane went off radar.

Family members of those on board have been informed.

Extracted from:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-20/small-plane-missing-northern-nsw-foster-murwillumbah/11534154>

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