

Tiger Moth plane makes emergency landing on Newcastle beach, pilot unharmed

By [Kevin Nguyen](#) and [Bellinda Kontominas](#)



Photo: Charlotte Zeederberg was commended for landing the vintage plane safely. (Supplied: Maitland City Council)

The pilot of a World War II aircraft has walked away unharmed after she was forced to make an emergency landing on a New South Wales beach.

Charlotte Zeederberg had set out from Luskintyre airfield near Maitland and experienced engine issues in her 1942 Tiger Moth as she was flying above Redhead Beach, about 11:30am.

She managed to nurse the vintage plane to safety on Blacksmiths Beach, but not before a few nervous moments.

"She [the plane] was coughing, coughing coughing all the way down," Ms Zeederberg said.

"I thought I would make it to Pelican airfield, but I couldn't get there."



Photo: The 1942 Tiger Moth plane landed at Blacksmith Beach. (Facebook: Wayne Franklin)

Ms Zeederberg, who has been a pilot for 12 years, was flying with two other vintage planes and radioed them to let them know she had engine problems.

She said she looked for the hardest section of sand and tried desperately to avoid a fatality.

"I found a hard piece of sand, well the hardest I could find, and brought her down slowly," Ms Zeederberg said.

"I kept on looking out for people out on the beach [to] make sure I don't crash into anybody."

She said she was "very happy now that I'm on the ground".

"It was a fine landing, all good," she said.

Pilot was 'one lucky lady' to land plane without injury

After the emergency landing, a call for assistance was made from Belmont Airport and was answered by Wayne Franklin and his tow truck.

Mr Franklin said Ms Zeederberg was "one lucky lady" and remarked she was unusually calm and "in good spirits" given the list of things that could have gone awry.

"To have an engine failure and walk away from it and be so close to the ocean, it's just remarkable," Mr Franklin said. He commended her piloting skills.

"She managed to get it as close to the airport as she could," he said.

"She had to put it down on the beach and did it safely and without putting any lives at risk and no damage to the plane at all."

Ms Zeederberg's husband, Brian, said he was relieved for both his wife and the plane, which he owns.

"It's a tail-dragger aircraft, it's difficult to put down, it's difficult to land in the first place and even more difficult to land on the beach," he said.

"Charlotte did a great job — we're very happy the aircraft hasn't been damaged whatsoever."

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority said there would be no formal investigation into the incident.

There are 292 Tiger Moths registered in Australia and there are no plans to ground them.

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