

# Man dies in crash involving homemade ultralight plane near aero club in Maitland, NSW

By [Victoria Pengilley](#)

**A man has died in a crash involving a homemade ultralight plane near an aero club near Maitland in the NSW Hunter Region.**

## Key points:

- The Australian Transport Safety Bureau and police are investigating
- Emergency services said the plane failed to make the runway at the Royal Newcastle Aero Club
- The man has not yet been identified

Police were called to a property in Windella, about 50 kilometres from Newcastle, after 10:15am following reports a plane had crashed in a backyard.

The man, who is yet to be formally identified but is believed to be 44 years old, was the pilot and sole occupant of the aircraft.

Officers from Port Stephens Hunter Police District have established a crime scene.

The wreckage was located close to the Royal Newcastle Aero Club.



Emergency services were called to a property on Denton Close, Windella. *(Supplied: NSW Police)*

Police said they believed the plane suffered engine issues 15 minutes after take-off and the pilot had tried to return to the airbase but crashed en route.

Royal Newcastle Aero Club vice-president Trevor Bright said attempts were made to contact the pilot when smoke was spotted trailing from the aircraft.

"A radio call was given to the pilot to share that information with him and from that point, he attempted to land," he said.

"Our thoughts go to the family and friends of this pilot ... the events that unfolded were tragic," he said.

Chief Inspector Rob Post from Maitland Police said the pilot was "very experienced".

Witnesses rushed to the crash scene, removing the pilot and performing CPR until paramedics arrived, but the man could not be revived.

NSW Ambulance Duty Operations Manager Shane Harris said the ultralight plane came close to crashing into nearby homes.

"From what I understand, it's a homemade-style ultralight," Mr Harris said.



The pilot of the aircraft died in the crash

"The ultralight has failed to make the runway where it's crashed ... the single male occupant was trapped in the wreckage for a period of time."

Windella resident Lawrence Howey saw the plane spiral down behind his shed near his property.

"I noticed an aeroplane coming down a little bit lower than they normally do. You could see the plane starting to roll over."

Bystanders, including Mr Howey, tried to remove the man from the plane.

"It's very sad. I guess it's lucky he didn't run into a house."

Peter Gibson from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority said the aircraft was an Osprey 2 amphibious aircraft, bought as a kit from the manufacturer and assembled by the pilot.

He said it was not unusual for aviation enthusiasts to hand-make planes from kits.

"There would be certainly hundreds, if not around a thousand of these aircraft in the country," Mr Gibson said.

"It's done as a hobby. People enjoy the challenge of building the aircraft from scratch and understanding how it's all put together. Then there is the thrill of flying it."

He said amateur-made planes are usually checked by engineers before flying.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau and police are now investigating the cause of the crash.

A report will be prepared for the coroner.

Extracted from:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-17/man-dies-light-plane-crash-near-nsw-aero-club-maitland/12257052>

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