

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199401444**

**Boeing Co  
B737**

**31 May 1994**

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the Executive Director of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

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**NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

**Occurrence Number:** 199401444                      **Occurrence Type:** Incident  
**Location:** Cairns  
**State:** QLD    **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Tuesday 31 May 1994  
**Time:** 1527 hours                                      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** None

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Boeing Co  
**Aircraft Model:** 737-377  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-CZE    **Serial Number:** 23657  
**Type of Operation:** Air Transport Domestic High Capacity Passenger  
Scheduled  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Nil  
**Departure Point:** Cairns QLD  
**Departure Time:**  
**Destination:** Mackay QLD

**Approved for Release:** Friday, September 23, 1994

While VH-CZE was lining up a helicopter was cleared for takeoff from the southern end of the parking areas to the west of the runway. The helicopter was instructed to remain west of the flight strip and to cruise not above 500 ft.

The helicopter pilot maintained the runway heading for about one mile past the end of the runway before slowly moving left to track around the coast to his destination adjacent to the Cairns city area. When he started to move left VH-CZE was in the latter stages of the takeoff. As the crew had expected the helicopter to remain west of the centreline and it had now drifted into their path, they abandoned the takeoff. The helicopter was maintaining 400 ft at that time.

The tower controller intended that the helicopter should remain west of the runway until he instructed otherwise. The helicopter pilot was new to the area and did not fully understand the intent of the instruction.

