

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199403319**

**Cessna Aircraft Company  
Titan  
Piper Aircraft Corp  
Chieftain**

**20 September 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.

<b>Occurrence Number:</b>	199403319	<b>Occurrence Type:</b>	Incident
<b>Location:</b>	Murray East		
<b>State:</b>	NSW	<b>Inv Category:</b>	4
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 20 September 1994		
<b>Time:</b>	0745 hours	<b>Time Zone</b>	EST
<b>Highest Injury Level:</b>	None		

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	Piper Aircraft Corp		
<b>Aircraft Model:</b>	PA-31-350		
<b>Aircraft Registration:</b>	VH-JCH	<b>Serial Number:</b>	31-8152106
<b>Type of Operation:</b>	Air Transport Low Capacity Passenger		
<b>Damage to Aircraft:</b>	Nil		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Albury NSW		
<b>Departure Time:</b>	2134 EST		
<b>Destination:</b>	Canberra ACT		

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	Cessna Aircraft Company		
<b>Aircraft Model:</b>	404		
<b>Aircraft Registration:</b>	VH-CSV	<b>Serial Number:</b>	4040217
<b>Type of Operation:</b>	Air Transport Low Capacity Passenger		
<b>Damage to Aircraft:</b>	Nil		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Canberra ACT		
<b>Departure Time:</b>	0706 EST		
<b>Destination:</b>	Albury NSW		

**Approved for Release:** Tuesday, November 22, 1994

VH-JCH was cleared by Albury Tower on the direct track from Albury to Canberra at 9000 feet. VH-CSV was on the same track flying from Canberra to Albury and believed (by Albury Tower) to be at 8000 feet. Accordingly, the pilot of VH-JCH was given a requirement to reach 9000 feet in time to avoid a conflict. This was complied with.

The pilot of VH-CSV called Albury Tower at 45 miles from Albury (10 miles prior to controlled airspace) and was cleared to Albury and to descend to 7100 feet which is the applicable route lowest safe altitude. VH-CSV then reported leaving 9000 feet. This was the first the Albury Tower controller knew that VH-CSV was at 9000 feet. The pilot was instructed to descend immediately to 8000 feet. This altitude change was probably achieved before the aircraft entered the control area and hence a loss of separation, technically, probably did not occur.

VH-CSV had originally maintained an 8000 foot cruise altitude but had later climbed to 9000 feet and advised Melbourne Flight Service of this change. The flight service officer was the only person on duty for this area of the network and a busy complicated period of work was in progress. She attempted to contact Albury Tower to pass advice of the level change but was unable to get through.

Albury Tower was also operating with one person on shift and was in a busy period. Uncontrolled airspace between Canberra and Albury between 8000 feet and 10000 feet spans a track distance of only 39 miles. Aircraft of the type involved in this incident transit that distance in a fairly short period of time. Due to the workload imposed by other tasks at both Albury Tower and Melbourne Flight Service, the co-ordination on the altitude change for VH-CSV was not achieved, although every effort was made.

#### Significant Factors

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the incident:

1. Operation of air traffic service positions by one person during busy traffic periods.
2. Co-ordination on altitude change for VH-CSV, by the flight service officer, was not achieved.

