

5 May 2002

Immediate Use

SEARCHES UNDERWAY IN QUEENSLAND

Australian Search and Rescue (AusSAR) is coordinating two large searches in central and northern Queensland for two men missing since yesterday.

Three helicopters are covering an area of 100 square nautical miles near Maryborough searching for a pilot missing in a gyrocopter which flew from Gayndah yesterday afternoon.

Queensland police handed the search to AusSAR today after a land and aerial search in rugged, hilly terrain around the local district failed to find any trace of the solo aircraft.

If nothing is sighted today, it is expected the search will continue at first light tomorrow.

Meanwhile, three army Jet Ranger helicopters, en route from Papua New Guinea to Townsville, and three fixed wing aircraft from Cairns and Thursday Island have been tasked to search for a 49-year-old man in a dory from a professional fishing boat some 40 nautical miles off Cape Grenville near Lockhart River.

The fisherman departed from the fishing vessel on the outer reef early afternoon yesterday and failed to return at the expected time last night. Police aircraft could not locate him during searching this morning.

AusSAR has plotted a 750 square nautical mile search in an area with choppy seas, two metre swells and strong winds.

The search will continue until last light and be re-assessed tonight.

Further information:

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