

25 February 2003

Immediate Use

## SEARCH FOR MISSING PILOT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Australian Search and Rescue is coordinating a search for a light aircraft with a 27-year-old male pilot on board that failed to arrive at its destination in northern Western Australia yesterday afternoon.

The pilot was intending to fly from Newman in the north-west of Western Australia to Halls Creek in the state's far-north in a single-engine Cessna 210. The pilot left Newman at about 12 noon (WST) and was scheduled to complete the 800 km flight by about 5pm (WST).

Australian Search and Rescue is appealing to anyone who was flying or travelling by road in the region or who lives in the area who may have seen a single engine light aircraft yesterday afternoon to contact AusSAR on 1800 815 257.

The aircraft was reported overdue to AusSAR at 6pm (WST) last night and two search aircraft have flown the flight path between Newman and Halls Creek without locating the plane. A check of airstrips in the area has also failed to locate the aircraft.

From first light this morning in Western Australia, 14 fixed wing aircraft will begin searching a 10,000 square nautical mile region between Newman and Halls Creek.

The pilot was unfamiliar with the region and had limited experience in the aircraft he was flying.

The weather in the search area is unsettled with isolated thunderstorms and showers.

Further information:

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