

**FORM 37**

Rule 60(1)

**FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST**

*Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008*

**Court reference:** 3190/07

**Inquest into the Death of WENDY VERONICA PAGE**

Delivered On:	25th July, 2011
Delivered At:	Coroner's Court of Victoria Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street, Melbourne
Hearing Dates:	25th July, 2011
Findings of:	CORONER IAIN TRELOAR WEST
Place of death:	Sea off French Polynesia
PCSU:	Sergeant David Dimsey

**FORM 37**

Rule 60(1)

**FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST**

*Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008*

**Court reference:** 3190/07

In the Coroners Court of Victoria at Melbourne  
I, IAIN TRELOAR WEST, Deputy State Coroner

having investigated the death of:

**Details of deceased:**

Surname: PAGE  
First name: WENDY  
Address: 100 Sunraysia Drive, Miners Rest, Victoria 3352

AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 25th July, 2011  
at Melbourne

find that the identity of the deceased was WENDY VERONICA PAGE  
and death occurred on 10th August, 2007

at Sea off French Polynesia

from

1a. POLY-TRAUMA IN AN AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

In the following circumstances:

The Inquest into the death of Wendy Page was commenced on the 11th October 2007, by the then State Coroner, Mr Graeme Johnston, for the purpose of finding identity and cause of death, sufficient to register the death at the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. After the Coroner made these findings, the Inquest was adjourned to a date to be fixed in order for the circumstances of the death to be determined. As Mr Johnston is not in a position to conclude the Inquest, it is my task to make Findings in respect to the circumstances.

1. Wendy Page, aged 53 years, was of female gender and resided with her husband, Rodney Page, at 100 Sunraysia Drive, Miners Rest. Shortly after midday on the 9th August 2007 (approximately 8:00am on 10th August AEST), Mrs Page and her husband (coroners case number 3189 of 2007) boarded an Air Moorea, de Havilland Twin Otter turboprop, for a flight from Moorea Airport, French Polynesia, to Tahiti Airport. The flight consisted of 19 passengers and 1 pilot with the distance between the two islands being 17 kilometres. Eye witness accounts

indicate that the aircraft reached a height of approximately 500 feet after takeoff, before suddenly losing altitude and plunging into the sea approximately 500 metres from the runway. Rescue authorities attended shortly after the crash and recovered 16 bodies from the sea. One of these bodies was identified as that of Wendy Page, however the body of Rodney Page was not recovered, it being believed to be trapped in the wreckage that was lying at a considerable depth under the sea. All 20 occupants of the aircraft lost their lives.

2. An investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crash was undertaken by the French Bureau of Enquiry and Analysis (BEA). In their report released in December 2008, it was determined that the accident was caused by the loss of pitch, following the failure of the elevator pitch up control cable at the time the flaps were retracted. The enquiry identified three causes for the failure:

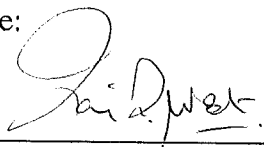
- a. Large wear of the cable to the right of a rope guide;
- b. External phenomenon, probably jet blast causing the rupture of several strands of the cable;
- c. Failure of the last strands as a result of strain during the flight when using the elevator.

3. The enquiry determined that the following factors contributed to the accident:

- a. The absence of information and training for pilots on the loss of pitch control;
- b. The operator's omission of special instructions;
- c. The failure of the manufacturer and the aviation authorities to take into account the wear phenomenon;
- d. The failure by the aviation authorities, airport authorities and operators to fully take into account the risks associated with jet blast;
- e. The rules for replacement of stainless steel cables on a calendar basis, without taking into account the activity of the airplane in relation to its type of operation.

4. I find that Wendy Page died from multiple injuries when the de Havilland Twin Otter aircraft in which she was a passenger, crashed into the sea off French Polynesia due to the failure of the elevator pitch up control cable, which occurred at the time the flaps were retracted.

Signature:



Iain T West  
Deputy State Coroner



25th July, 2011