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717 took abnormal taxi path before colliding with Fokker 100

17 JANUARY, 2017 | SOURCE: FLIGHTGLOBAL PRO | BY: MAVIS TOH | SINGAPORE

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has found that the captain of a Boeing 717's decision to use a non-standard taxi path with the help of an engineer led to a ground collision with a Fokker 100 at Paraburdoo airport in

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ATSB probes 717 and Fokker 100 taxiing collision

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The incident happened on 5 October 2016, and involved a **QantasLink** 717 (VH-NXN) which was departing on a scheduled passenger service from Paraburdoo to Perth. The captain had commenced taxiing from bay 2 for a departure from runway 24 when he sighted another 717 about to land on runway 06.

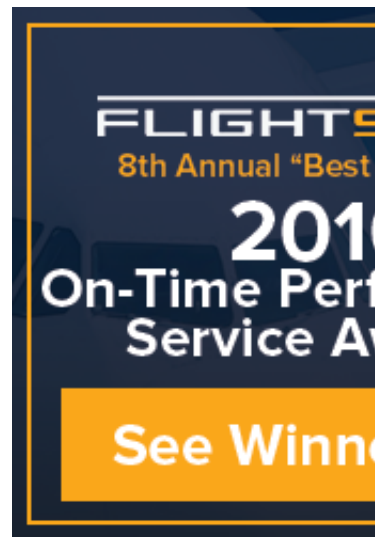
The captain quickly assessed that due to the limited apron space at the airport, he needed to taxi behind a Network Aviation F100 (VH-NHF) parked on bay 1, to allow the inbound 717 to pass and taxi to bay 2.

Figure 1: Paraburdoo Airport showing runways and parking bays



ATSB

He had asked the first officer to request ground staff to act as a wing walker to ensure sufficient clearance between the



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two aircraft. An engineer who had been working on the F100 however observed the 717 taxiing. As the aircraft taxied forward, the engineer checked the clearance between its wingtip and the tail of the F100, and gave the captain the “thumbs up” signal to indicate that the aircraft was clear.

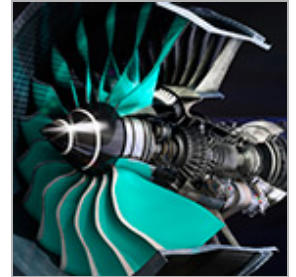
The captain of NXN assumed that the aircraft was clear and continued taxiing around the back of the F100. He then turned the aircraft sharply to the right, with the aim of leaving enough room for the inbound 717 to pass and continue onto the taxiway.

However the engineer expected NXN to taxi towards the runway. When he saw the aircraft turn right, he immediately assessed that the horizontal stabilisers of the two aircraft might collide and so tried to signal for the 717 to stop, but was no longer in the crew's line of vision

By the time the engineer ran towards the front of the aircraft to alert the captain, the 717's horizontal stabilizer had slid under the F100's, scraping the surface and causing minor damage to both aircraft.



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The ATSB also found that NXN's crew was unaware of the inbound 717 until after taxi had commenced, and that there was no procedure for the aircraft operator to notify pilots of the potential for multiple aircraft to be at Paraburdoo airport at the same time.

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