

Interview with a Passenger on the Qantas A330 Accident Flight of 7 October 2008

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Oct 11, 2008 - Dr. Todd Curtis of AirSafe.com interviewed Keesin Ng, a passengers on a Qantas A330 aircraft that experienced a violent in-flight upset during a flight from Singapore to Perth on 7 October 2008. About 75 passengers and crew members were injured during this event, with 14 hospitalized with serious injuries such as fractures and lacerations.

In the interview, Mr. Ng provides information that goes beyond the data released by the Australian authorities investigating the accident. Mr. Ng discussed how the passengers reacted after the first altitude upset, and how those actions helped to prevent injuries during the second upset. He also evaluated the performance of police, ground staff, and investigators after the crew declared an emergency and landed the aircraft at Longmonth, Australia, about 1,100 kilometers or 680 miles from its intended destination of Perth.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau, or ATSB, is currently investigating this event, and because of the extent of the injuries on board, the ATSB has classified it as an accident. In a media briefing three days after the accident, the ATSB reported that the Qantas A330-300 aircraft was in level flight at 37,000 feet when the pilots received messages from their aircraft's monitoring system indicating some kind of control system problem.

The aircraft reportedly had a uncommanded climb of about 200 feet, followed by a return back to 37,000 feet. About a minute after returning to cruising altitude, the aircraft abruptly pitched nose-down, to a maximum angle of about 8.4 degrees, and descended about 650 feet in about 20 seconds, before returning to the cruising level.

About 70 seconds later, there was a further nose-down pitch, to a maximum pitch angle of about 3.5 degrees, and the aircraft descended about 400 feet in about 16 seconds. During the first pitch-down event, a number of passengers and crew members were thrown about the cabin, resulting in a range of injuries. The crew declared an emergency and diverted to Learmonth, where the aircraft landed about 40 minutes after the start of the event.

Additional information about the event, including links to previous AirSafe.com podcasts about this accident and other Qantas safety events, can be found at qantas.airsafe.org.

About AirSafe.com:

AirSafe.com is a comprehensive resource for understanding aviation safety and security issues and created to provide both the traveling public and aviation safety and security professionals with both objective and timely information on aviation safety and security, especially events involving airline passenger fatalities. Since 1996, AirSafe.com has been an innovator in making critical risk assessment and risk management information to the public, enabling both airline passengers and aviation professionals to make accurate judgments about the risks of flying. Whether it is through its web sites, audio podcasts, online discussions, or published research, AirSafe.com continues to be at the forefront of getting useful aviation safety and security information to the aerospace industry and to the general public.

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