**Client Name:** Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB).

**Description of Works:** PMG undertook the recovery of the flight recorders from an Israel Industries Westwind 1124A aircraft that had ditched at night in the ocean 5 km to the South West of Norfolk Island in 2009. The works were undertaken under contract for the ATSB who sought the data contained on the recorders to finalise their investigation of the incident.

A containerised dive spread, decompression chamber, ROV spread and salvage support equipment was loaded on board PMG’s 32 metre offshore support vessel “PMG Pride”, at PMG’s Townsville marine facility. The vessel then departed Townsville for a 7 day steam to Norfolk Island.

The Pacific Marine Group project team comprised of a project manager, 6 person marine crew, and 6 person dive team, along with 2 ATSB personnel and an AFP officer, who were accommodated on board the “PMG Pride” for the duration of the salvage operation.

The plane was located at the coordinates supplied by ATSB using the vessels sounder and then confirmed using the ROV where the wreckage was viewed sitting on a sandy bottom in 49m of water.

The initial ROV survey confirmed the wreckage positioning to be relatively unchanged from previous ROV surveys carried out by ATSB, the last of which were conducted in early 2015. This saw the forward fuselage section (the cockpit and cabin section) having been separated from the rear of the plane in line with the front edge of the
wings and having come to rest under the port side wing, with the nose angled rearwards.

The recovery of the rear section of the plane was achieved in two dives where soft slings were chocked around the engine pods and then rigged to the dyneema winch rope running over the vessels A frame.

The wreckage was lifted to the surface and then aboard the stern of the vessel where plasma cutting equipment was utilised to extract the recorders.

Both the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and the Flight Data Recorder (FDR) were recovered, as required under the contract, and as a bonus the Electronic Location Transmitter (ELT) was also able to be recovered.

At the completion of the salvage the casualty fuselage section was repositioned on the seabed at it’s original location and a diver deployed to release the rigging. The operation was successfully completed in 1 day, over a period of 12 hours.

After recovery, the recorders were handed over to the ATSB investigators that were on-board the recovery vessel. The recorders were then transported to the ATSB facilities in Canberra for data extraction and analysis.

The data on the recorders was used to assist the ATSB investigators further understand the sequence of events leading to the ditching of the aircraft.

Time: Nov 2015
Contract Value: $465k
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