Australian Government
Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Engine failure and rejected take-off involving Saab 340B, VH-ZPN

Adelaide Airport, South Australia, on 8 October 2025

ATSB Transport Safety Report
Aviation Occurrence Investigation
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Cover photo: Adelaide Airport

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Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders both past and present.

Interim report

The ATSB has released this interim report to provide a substantive update on investigation progress and to outline areas of continuing focus. It contains a detailed description of the occurrence and contextual information but does not include analysis or findings, which will be detailed in a final report at the conclusion of the investigation. The information in this report is released in accordance with section 25 of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*.

The occurrence

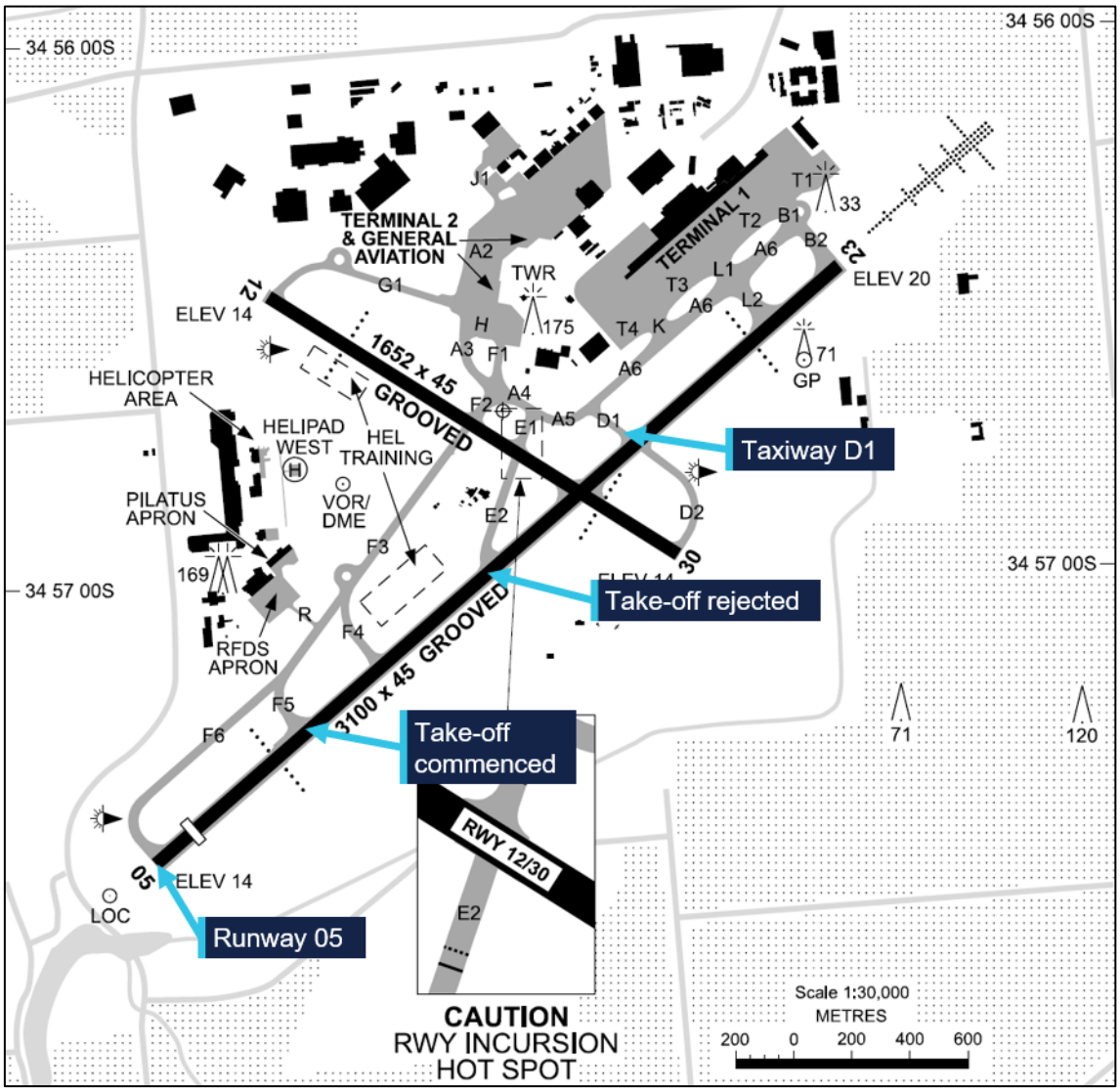
On the morning of 8 October 2025, a Saab 340B aircraft, registered VH-ZPN and operated by Regional Express Airlines (Rex), was being prepared for a scheduled passenger air transport flight from Adelaide, South Australia, to Broken Hill, New South Wales. On board were 2 flight crew, 1 flight attendant, and 23 passengers.

At 0716:49 local time, the flight crew began the take-off roll on runway 05 (Figure 1). At 0717:01, with the aircraft's indicated airspeed at about 80 kt, the left engine torque began to fluctuate and shortly after, both flight crew noticed the aircraft yaw slightly to the left. At 0717:09, and 113 kt indicated airspeed (8 kt below V_1),[1] the left engine oil pressure warning annunciator light illuminated on the central warning panel alongside the master warning. As per operating procedures, the captain immediately called 'stopping', retarded both power levers, applied regular braking and thrust reversers, while the first officer (FO) applied forward pressure on the control column.

At 0717:17, with the aircraft decelerating on the runway, the FO notified air traffic control they were stopping, which the tower controller acknowledged, and one second later, the left engine torque gauge indicated zero. At 0717:32, the aircraft stopped on the runway near taxiway D1 with the captain observing what they assessed as steam from the left engine. The flight crew began conducting failure management actions for a left engine failure, which involved shutting down the left engine and instructing the passengers to remain seated.

[1] V_1: the critical engine failure speed or decision speed required for take-off. Engine failure below V_1 should result in a rejected take off; above this speed the take-off should be continued.

Figure 1: Adelaide Airport



Source: Airservices Australia, annotated by the ATSB

Meanwhile, a Boeing 777 on a scheduled passenger air transport flight was on approach to runway 05. At 0718:40, the tower controller advised this aircraft's flight crew that an aircraft was still on the runway and instructed them to continue their approach.

At 0720:04, after completing the engine failure management actions, the FO notified the tower controller of the left engine failure. The controller acknowledged the notification and asked whether the aircraft could move to taxiway D1. The FO advised they would comply, and shortly after, while the flight crew were taxiing to D1, the tower controller asked if they required Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) services, which the flight crew declined.

At 0720:44, the tower controller issued a landing clearance to the flight crew of the Boeing 777 aircraft. At 0721:02, VH-ZPN had stopped on taxiway D1 and the tower controller instructed them to contact the ground controller.

The ground controller observed steam or smoke from the left engine, and at 0722:20 notified the flight crew. During this time, the Boeing 777 aircraft was in the landing roll on

runway 05. Shortly after, the ground controller advised the ARFF of smoke from the left engine and requested their attendance.

At 0723:39, the tower controller issued a take-off clearance for runway 05 to the flight crew of an Embraer E190 aircraft operating a scheduled passenger air transport flight. At 0723:58, an airport worker reported oil spilling from the left engine of VH-ZPN to the ground controller, who requested the airport worker conduct a runway inspection. During this time, the Embraer took-off from the runway. The runway was subsequently closed while a runway inspection was performed.

The captain requested the ARFF check for smoke from the left engine. The ARFF initially reported a small fuel leak, with the captain notifying the flight attendant that an emergency evacuation may be required. However, upon further inspection, the ARFF advised the flight crew that the leaking fluid was oil and the flight crew decided to conduct a normal passenger disembarkation from the forward left exit. Passengers disembarked the aircraft onto the grass area adjacent to the taxiway and were subsequently transported by bus back to the terminal.

During this time, airport personnel conducting the runway inspection notified the tower controller of oil on the runway, which was subsequently cleaned, and the runway declared serviceable at 0749. Aircraft arrivals and departures from runway 05, which had been delayed during the runway inspection and clean-up, were then resumed.

Context

Pilot information

The captain held an Air Transport Pilot Licence (Aeroplane), a current class 1 aviation medical certificate, and had accrued 25,553 hours of aeronautical experience. Of this, about 14,996 hours were on the Saab 340, including 217 hours in the previous 90 days.

The first officer held a Commercial Pilot Licence (Aeroplane), a current class 1 aviation medical certificate, and had accrued 270 hours of aeronautical experience. Of this, about 91 hours were on the Saab 340, all of which were accrued in the previous 90 days.

Aircraft and engine information

VH-ZPN was a Saab 340B, manufactured in Sweden in 1995, and first registered in Australia in 2010. The aircraft was powered by 2 General Electric (GE) CT7-9B turboprop engines, equipped with Hamiton Standard 14RF-19 propellers.

The engine consists of a gas generator powering a free turbine, which is directly coupled to a propeller gearbox. The gas generator has an axial-centrifugal compressor with 5 axial stages and 1 centrifugal stage. The compressors are driven by a 2-stage gas generator turbine. The propeller is driven by a 2-stage free turbine through a reduction gearbox. Each propeller has full feathering and reversing capabilities.

Engine examination

After the incident, Rex maintenance personnel conducted a visual inspection of the engine, including disassembly of the power turbine module where various components were found damaged. The engine was subsequently sent to a GE overhaul facility in England where a teardown inspection was completed in April 2026.

The inspection confirmed that the damage was primarily associated with the power turbine module. Damaged components were collected and sent to a GE technical facility in the United States for metallurgical examination. The ATSB did not attend any of these examinations. The results of the metallurgical examination are expected by the end of September 2026.

Further investigation

To date, the ATSB has interviewed the flight crew and tower controller, obtained recorded data, air traffic control and airport procedures, and collected other relevant information. Once complete, the ATSB will obtain the engine teardown inspection reports and metallurgical examination reports for review.

The investigation is continuing and will include analysis of:

- flight crew operating procedures
- air traffic control procedures
- airport procedures
- engine manufacturer metallurgical examination
- engine data.

A final report will be released at the conclusion of the investigation. Should a critical safety issue be identified during the course of the investigation, the ATSB will immediately notify relevant parties, so that appropriate safety action can be taken.

General details

Occurrence details

Date and time:	08 October 2025 – 0717 Australian Central Daylight saving Time	
Occurrence class:	Serious incident	
Occurrence categories:	Engine failure or malfunction, Rejected take-off	
Location:	Adelaide Airport, South Australia	
	Latitude: 34.9501° S	Longitude: 138.5294° E

Aircraft details

Manufacturer and model:	Saab 340B	
Registration:	VH-ZPN	
Operator:	Regional Express	
Serial number:	340B-384	
Type of operation:	Part 121 Australian air transport operations - Larger aeroplanes-Standard Part 121	
Activity:	Commercial air transport-Scheduled-Domestic	
Departure:	Adelaide Airport, South Australia	
Destination:	Broken Hill Airport, New South Wales	
Persons on board:	Crew – 3	Passengers – 23
Injuries:	Crew – 0	Passengers – 0
Aircraft damage:	Minor	

About the ATSB

The **Australian Transport Safety Bureau** is Australia's national transport safety investigator. Established by the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (TSI Act), the ATSB is an independent statutory agency of the Australian Government and is governed by a Commission. The ATSB is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers.

The ATSB's function is to improve transport safety and public confidence, in aviation, marine and rail, through:

- the independent 'no blame' investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences
- safety data recording, analysis, and research
- influencing safety action.

The ATSB's sole focus is the prevention of future accidents and the improvement of transport safety, and prioritises investigations that have the potential to deliver the greatest public benefit.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the TSI Act and Regulations and, where applicable, international agreements.

Purpose of safety investigations

The objective of an ATSB safety investigation is to improve transport safety through:

- identifying safety issues for action by organisations with the responsibility for managing that safety risk
- influencing safety action through engaging with stakeholders, communicating findings, and fostering awareness of safety issues and concerns.

In accordance with the TSI Act, the ATSB does not investigate for the purpose of taking administrative, regulatory or criminal action, and cannot apportion blame, assist in determining liability, or, as a general rule, assist in court proceedings.

About ATSB reports

ATSB safety investigation reports are developed in accordance with ATSB procedures and guidelines, and with regard to applicable international standards and instruments.

Reports must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the investigation's analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

An explanation of ATSB terminology used in this report is available on the ATSB website.