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## Real emergency delays Coen airport exercise

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COOKTOWN

Local emergency services gathered to train at a mock plane crash exercise at the Coen Airport almost got to test their skills with a real emergency earlier this month.

Emergency responders and participants were gathering for Exercise Razorback, when they received the call that campers near Pormpuraaw had not returned from a walk the previous day. "The Coen Police and State Emergency Service were put on standby, but thankfully the campers walked into their camp shortly after, allowing the airport exercise to start only an hour late," Cook Shire Council Airport Operations Manager Chris Vela said. Twenty emergency service personnel, agency observers and exercise directors took part in the October 20 exercise, as well as 10 Cape York Employment team members who played the role of crash victims. Participants were responding to a scenario in which a Dash 8 plane hit a feral pig at high speed during take-off, resulting in the fuselage breaking into several pieces and some bursting into flame.

"The exercise was a success in that it tested the airport emergency plan and highlighted different areas that will be adjusted to make the plan more efficient and it was well organised and managed by the limited resources in Coen," he said. "It also highlighted the need for more volunteers in the State Emergency Service and rural fire service to respond to a local multi casualty incident."

"On behalf of Council, I'd like to thank all the participants and especially Temira Dewis and the Cape York Employment team for providing the personnel to make the exercise more realistic," Mr Vela said.

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