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Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern

Date: May 29, 2025 @ 0827

Subject: ERA23LA298; Requested SME information and feedback into aircraft systems and procedures for the factual report.

Contact: Boeing; Aviation Safety Official/Air Safety Investigator
Collin Kightlinger @ [REDACTED]

While it is inconclusive if the trim system experienced a runaway condition or if the system was inadvertently actuated nose down during the takeoff roll, the symptoms would appear to be the same to the MP¹ and would be diagnosed as runaway nose down trim.

Per normal procedures the normal horizontal stab trim and manual trim override are checked for functionality during the *After Engine Start Checklist*. If they had not functioned normally, the MP would have asked for a troubleshooter or rejected the aircraft. When the MP discovered the MA would not rotate, the MA was above the refusal speed of approximately 108KIAS. Instead of executing the ABORTING TAKEOFF checklist, the MP should perform the asterisked memory items on the RUNAWAY NOSE DOWN TRIM checklist.

As observed by the MP in the cockpit, ground crew and the lead pilot; the control surfaces, were properly configured for takeoff with flaps at half and horizontal stabilizer at 8° nose up.

MP observed that the MA² did not rotate to the takeoff attitude. This condition should be recognized as runaway nose down trim, and the asterisked memory items should have been executed as required by the Flight Manual.

¹ MP is Boeing's reference for Mishap Pilot

² MA is Boeings reference for Mishap Aircraft

The A-4K, N143EM, was a light attack aircraft formerly owned and operated by the Royal New Zealand Air Force. This variant of the A-4 was equipped with both a tailhook and a drag chute. The drag chute was added for additional assistance in slowing the aircraft on landing or during an aborted takeoff since the brakes on the A-4 are, by today's standards, relatively small and lack anti-skid.

Runway 05L, 8491' x 200', was in use at the time of the mishap. It has E-28 arresting gear set back 2438' from the departure end of the runway. However, the arresting gear was unavailable at the time of the mishap.

Runway 23L, 8188' x 200', also has E-28 arresting gear set back 1500' from the departure end of the runway.

Runway 32R, 8979' x 200', is the longest runway at KNKT and has E-28 arresting gear set back 1500' from the departure end of the runway.

[END]