



Office of Transport Safety Investigations

BUS SAFETY INVESTIGATION

INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

MALFUNCTION OF ARTICULATED BUS REAR DOOR

RYDE

3 APRIL 2014



THE OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS

The Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI) is an independent NSW agency whose purpose is to improve transport safety through the investigation of accidents and incidents in the rail, bus and ferry industries. OTSI investigations are independent of regulatory, operator or other external entities.

Established on 1 January 2004 by the Transport Administration Act 1988, and confirmed by amending legislation as an independent statutory office on 1 July 2005, OTSI is responsible for determining the causes and contributing factors of accidents and to make recommendations for the implementation of remedial safety action to prevent recurrence. Importantly, however, OTSI does not confine itself to the consideration of just those matters that caused or contributed to a particular accident; it also seeks to identify any transport safety matters which, if left unaddressed, might contribute to other accidents.

OTSI's investigations are conducted under powers conferred by the Transport Administration Act 1988 and the Passenger Transport Act 1990. OTSI investigators normally seek to obtain information cooperatively when conducting an accident investigation. However, where it is necessary to do so, OTSI investigators may exercise statutory powers to interview persons, enter premises and examine and retain physical and documentary evidence.

It is not within OTSI's jurisdiction, nor an object of its investigations, to apportion blame or determine liability. At all times, OTSI's investigation reports strive to reflect a "Just Culture" approach to the investigative process by balancing the presentation of potentially judgemental material in a manner that properly explains what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

Once OTSI has completed an investigation, its report is provided to the NSW Minister for Transport for tabling in Parliament. The Minister is required to table the report in both Houses of the NSW Parliament within seven days of receiving it. Following tabling, the report is published on OTSI's website at www.otsi.nsw.gov.au.

OTSI cannot compel any party to implement its recommendations and its investigative responsibilities do not extend to overseeing the implementation of recommendations it makes in its investigation reports. However, OTSI takes a close interest in the extent to which its recommendations have been accepted and acted upon.

Incident Overview

At approximately 1515 on Thursday 3 April 2014, two high school students fell from the rear door of a moving bus. The articulated school bus registration 2319ST was turning right from Malvina St into Buffalo Rd Ryde when a 13-year-old schoolgirl and a 14-year-old schoolboy standing in the rear vestibule area fell against the closed doors. The double doors opened outwards and they both fell onto the roadway sustaining minor injuries.

The driver of the bus was unaware of the incident and continued driving for approximately one kilometre until he was notified of what had happened by one of the students. The driver reported the incident to the Ryde depot and advised that he believed two of the passengers had sustained injuries and required medical attention.

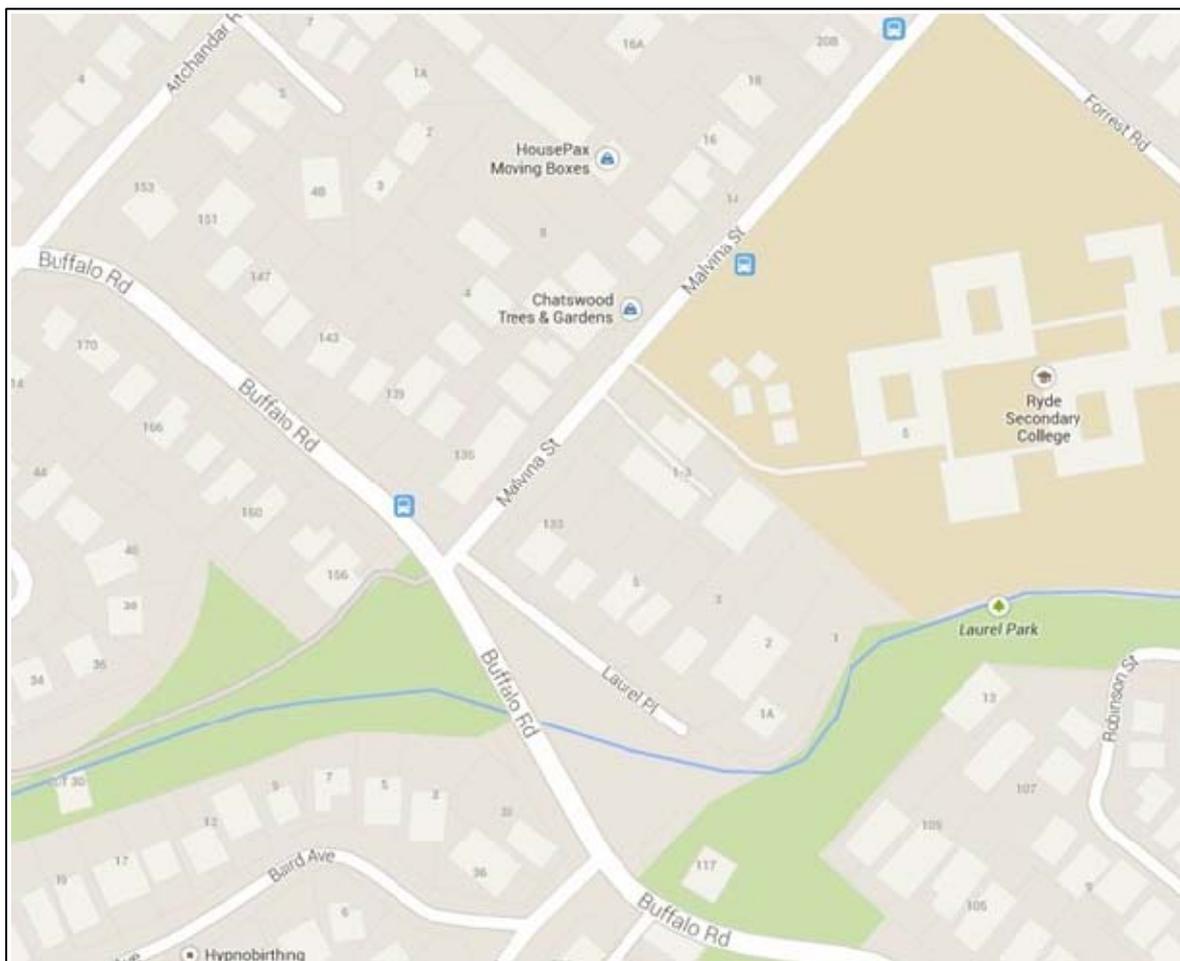


Figure 1: Incident location

The Office of Transport Safety Investigations deployed two investigating officers on the following day to the depot to inspect the bus and the door mechanism. On reviewing the preliminary incident information the Chief Investigator determined that the incident warranted formal investigation pursuant to *Section 46BA* of the *NSW Passenger Transport Act 1990*.



Photograph 2: Rear doors of bus 2319ST

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference established by the Chief Investigator require OTSI's Investigating Officer to:

- a. identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which led to the incident;
- b. advise whether the incident might have been anticipated and the effectiveness of any strategies that were in place to manage the related risks;
and
- c. advise on any matters arising from the investigation that would enhance the safety of bus operations.

Status of the Investigation

OTSI's investigation has commenced. During the course of the investigation, all Directly Involved Parties (DIPs) will be consulted and will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the Draft report before it is finalised.

Once completed, OTSI's investigation report will be tabled in both Houses of the NSW Parliament by the Minister for Transport in accordance with *Section 46D* of the *NSW Passenger Transport Act 1990*. When the Report has been tabled, it will be published on OTSI's website and will replace this Interim Factual Statement.