



Office of Transport Safety Investigations

BUS SAFETY INVESTIGATION INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

BUS FIRE OF TV 5179

SYDNEY AIRPORT, MASCOT, SYDNEY

4 DECEMBER 2016



Image source: Channel 7 News

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 incidents and accidents 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 (NSW)*, and confirmed by amending legislation as an independent statutory office on 1 July 2005, OTSI is responsible for determining the 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 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 (NSW)* and *Passenger Transport Act 1990 (NSW)*. Additionally, all OTSI publications that are considered investigation reports are also conferred by these Acts. OTSI also conducts rail investigations on behalf of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (Cwlth)*. 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 our balanced approach to the investigation, 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 and Infrastructure 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.

Overview

Approximately 1500 on Sunday 4 December 2016, the driver of a Carbridge Pty Ltd bus TV 5179 was alerted by an engine warning light on the driver's dashboard. The driver continued the service, stopping at Terminal 2 and 3 at Sydney Airport before entering the Blue Emu carpark. The driver requested all bus passengers to disembark and then proceeded to park the bus in a holding area within the same carpark. The driver left the bus to enquire about a replacement vehicle. A short while later, the driver returned to the bus and realised it was on fire. The driver immediately contacted the emergency services and the Sydney Airport Fire Brigade responded to the fire. Due to the intensity of the fire, bus TV 5179 and an adjacent parked bus were destroyed.

Notification and Response

Carbridge Pty Ltd reported the incident to OTSI in a timely manner. At the time of reporting, OTSI decided the incident did not warrant further investigation based on the information provided by the bus company.

On 6 February 2017, OTSI received further information relating to the incident. Based on OTSI's review of the new information received, the Chief Investigator determined that the incident warranted formal investigation in accordance with Section 46BA of the *Passenger Transport Act 1990*.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference established by the Chief Investigator require OTSI's Investigator in Charge to:

- a. identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which led to the incident;
- b. advise whether the incident may have been anticipated,
- c. report on the effectiveness of any strategies that were in place to manage the related risks; and,
- d. 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 provide information and commentary, which will contribute to ensuring that the investigation and its report are inclusive and comprehensive.

Once completed, OTSI's investigation report will be tabled in both Houses of the NSW Parliament by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in accordance with Section 46D of the *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.