



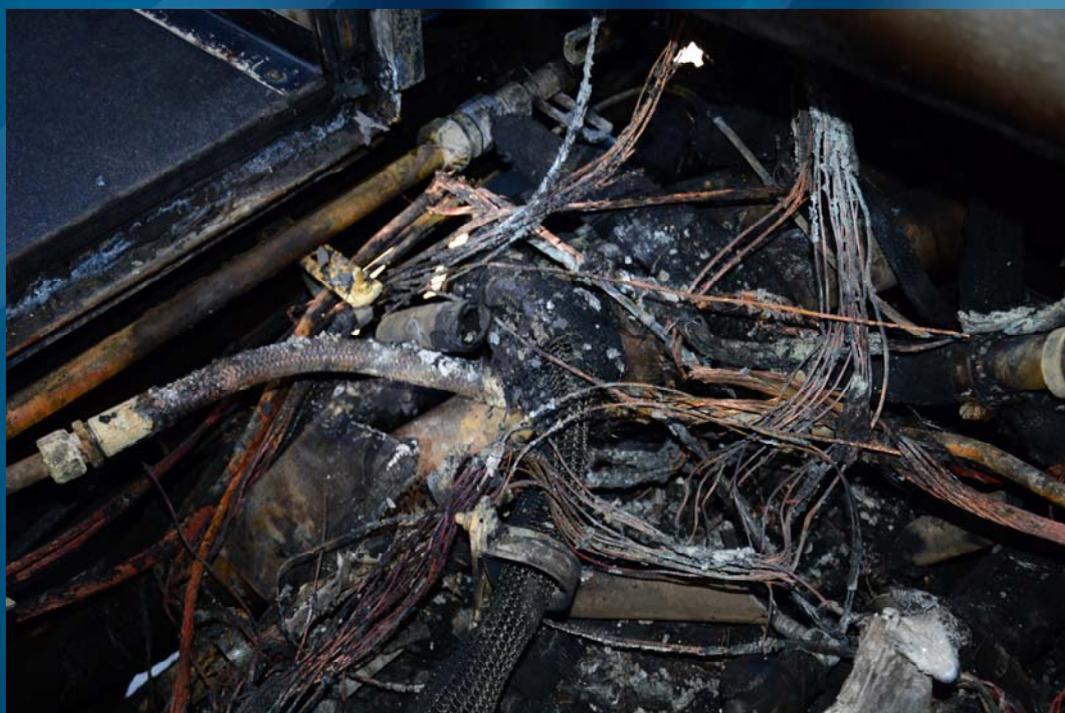
Office of Transport Safety Investigations

BUS SAFETY INVESTIGATION INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

BUS FIRE

ASHFIELD, SYDNEY

19 MAY 2015



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 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.

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.

Overview

At approximately 1402 on Tuesday 19 May 2015 a State Transit Authority (STA) Volvo model B10 bus caught fire on Parramatta Road, Ashfield, while operating a Route 461 service.

The bus driver was alerted to the smell of smoke by one of the passengers who was sitting at the rear of the bus. The driver immediately stopped and evacuated his 30 passengers directing them to walk approximately 50 metres in advance of the bus so as to be out of danger. He then contacted the STA Radio Room who in turn alerted emergency services. The driver did not attempt to extinguish the fire or open the rear hatch of the vehicle.

NSW Fire and Rescue attended at 1413, along with NSW Police. NSW Fire and Rescue was able to extinguish the fire before it breached the interior thus saving the bus from being destroyed.

Notification and Response

OTSI's Duty Officer was advised of the incident by the STA Radio Room operator on duty and the following day an OTSI Investigator was deployed to the Leichhardt Depot to undertake a preliminary investigation.

As a result of information obtained by the Investigator, the Acting 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 Acting Chief Investigator require OTSI's Investigator in Charge to:

- a. determine the cause of the fire;
 - b. examine any contributory factors identified in the process of the investigation;
- and

- c. advise on any matters arising from the investigation that would enhance the safety of public passenger 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.