



Office of Transport Safety Investigations

FERRY SAFETY INVESTIGATION

INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

ENGINE ROOM FIRE ON BOARD *FANTASEA SPIRIT*

KISSING POINT SYDNEY HARBOUR
9 MAY 2016



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, 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.

Incident Overview

At 2020 on 8 May 2016 the Master of the Palm Beach Ferry (PBF) *FantaSea Spirit* on charter to Harbour City Ferries (HCF), was alerted by an alarm activation to a fire in the port engine room. The crew and passengers observed black smoke from the engine room area. At the time the ferry was about to disembark seven passengers at the Kissing Point ferry wharf.

The crew immediately secured the ferry, shut off the fuel lines, closed off the engine air intakes, and switched off the engine room fans. The ferry crew responded with an emergency fire hose and commenced boundary cooling of the affected area until the arrival of the Fire and Rescue NSW. The Master activated the ferries emergency fire suppression unit, however this system failed to discharge.

The Master notified Sydney Ports VIS and HCF Control on VHF radio, advising of the emergency. Fire and Rescue NSW, Water Police and Port Authority NSW Fire tugs notified by VIS all attended. Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and OTSI Duty Officers were also advised of the incident.

After the fire was extinguished, the ferry towed to the RMS compound at Rozelle under Water Police escort and secured.

OTSI has quarantined the ferry pending examination on 10 May 2016 by Investigators.

The Chief Investigator, Office of Transport Safety (OTSI) determined that a formal investigation under Section 65BA of the Transport Act was warranted.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of reference were;

- Determine the cause of the fire
- Determine the cause of the failure of the fire suppression unit to discharge
- Examine the response by crew and emergency services
- Any other safety issues arising from the investigation

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 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.