



Office of Transport Safety Investigations

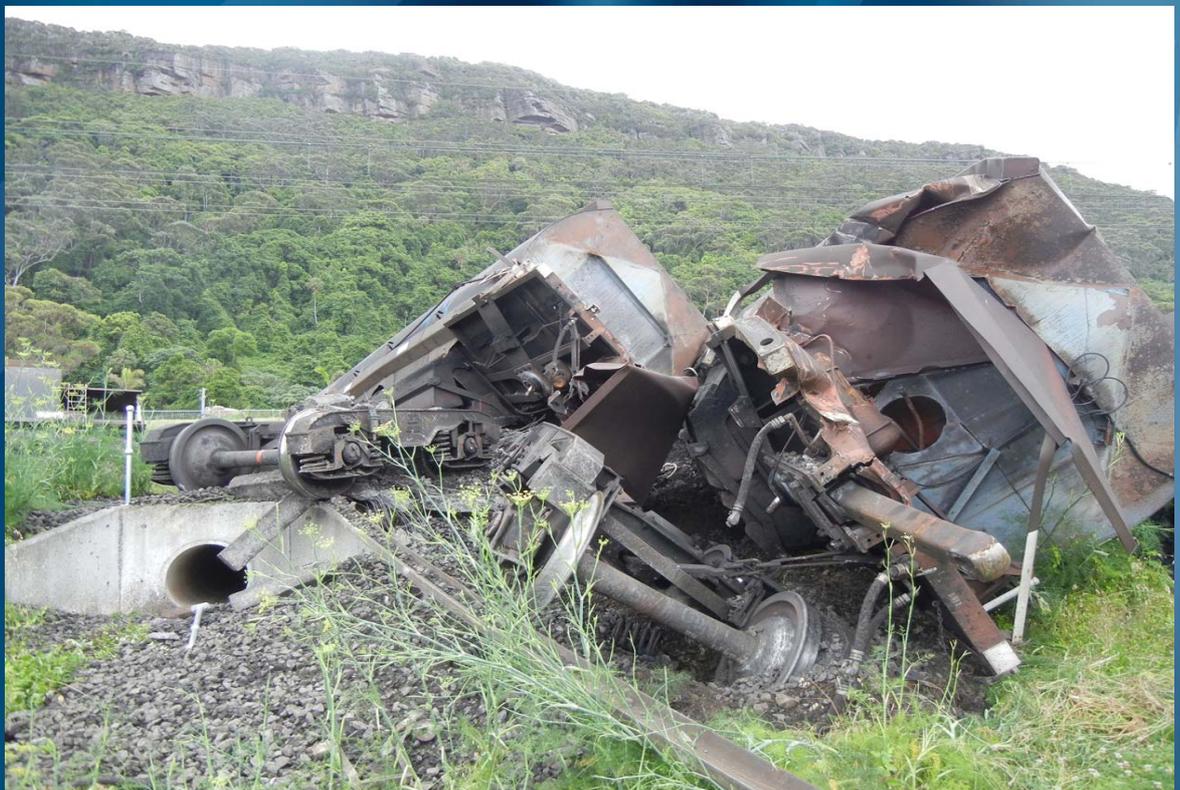
RAIL SAFETY INVESTIGATION

INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

DERAILMENT OF PACIFIC NATIONAL SERVICE MC92

CLIFTON

23 NOVEMBER 2011



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 Rail Safety Act 2008 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. In addition, a mechanism exists through which OTSI is provided with formal advice by the Independent Transport Safety Regulator (ITSR) in relation to the status of actions taken by those parties to whom its recommendations are directed.

Incident Overview

At approximately 11:58pm on 23 November 2011, the Driver of Pacific National coal service MC92 from Helensburgh to Inner Harbour reported that his train had lost brake pipe air pressure and come to a stand at Clifton in the Illawarra Region of NSW. MC92 was a push-pull service with two locomotives, one attached at each end of a rake of 45 loaded coal wagons. It was travelling in the Down direction on a single line section of track between Coal Cliff and Scarborough on the South Coast line some 62 km south of Sydney.

The subsequent inspection of the train revealed that eight wagons (the eighth to the fifteenth inclusive) were derailed with six wagons overturned onto their sides. Both locomotives and all other wagons remained on the track.

There were no injuries. However, approximately 360 metres of track was severely damaged as a consequence of the derailment.



Figure 1: Derailed wagons and track damage

Emergency response and notification

The Driver of MC92 notified the RailCorp Signal Complex at Wollongong of the incident at 12:08am.

OTSI was notified of the incident by RailCorp's On Call officer at 12:32am and two OTSI Investigators deployed to the site at daylight to conduct a preliminary inspection.

After reviewing the results of the preliminary inspection, the Chief Investigator determined that the incident warranted formal investigation pursuant to Section 45A of the *Transport Administration Act 1988* and Section 67 of the *Rail Safety Act 2008*.

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 caused the derailment;
- b. advise as to whether the derailment might have been anticipated and the effectiveness of any strategies that were in place to manage the related risk/s; and
- c. advise on any matters arising from the investigation that would enhance the safety of rail 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 74 of the *Rail Safety Act 2008*. When the Report has been tabled, it will be published on OTSI's website and will replace this Interim Factual Statement.