



Rail Incident Interim Factual Statement

Opposing Movement between Coal Trains Bloomfield

20 August 2005



At approximately 11.22am on 20 August 2005, an opposing movement occurred between two coal trains near Thornton in the Hunter Valley Region of NSW. The coal trains, designated DS184 and DS233, were operated by Pacific National Limited.

The incident occurred as empty coal train DS233 exited the main line section under controlled signals and entered a single line section of track leading into the Bloomfield Colliery. Upon entering the single line section, the driver of DS233 was immediately confronted with a loaded train, DS184, which was standing stationary near a staff hut¹ awaiting a final clearance to depart the same section. The driver of DS233 was able to bring his train to a stand approximately 64 metres from the stationary DS184, thereby preventing a head-on collision. Part of DS233 remained on the main line but services on the main line were able to be diverted around DS233 and passenger services in the region were not disrupted by the incident.

OTSI was notified of this occurrence and later received preliminary investigation reports from the Australian Rail Track Corporation which controlled the train movements in question, and from Pacific National. An OTSI investigator subsequently deployed to the incident site and was provided with a detailed briefing on the method of train control through the section.

The Chief Investigator subsequently determined that the serious nature and safety implications of this incident warranted investigation by OTSI in accordance with the provisions of Section 67 of the *Rail Safety Act 2002* (NSW). On completion of the investigation, the Minister for Transport will table the report as required by Section 68 of the Act.

¹ A staff hut contains equipment for the control of train movements on single line tracks.