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OFFICE OF  
TRANSPORT  
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INVESTIGATIONS

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## Rail Safety Investigation Interim Factual Statement

### Derailment of Pacific National Freight Train 7SP5 Conoble to Ivanhoe Rail Section

16 October 2005



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.

Established on 1 January 2004 by the *Transport Administration Act 1988*, the Office 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.

OTSI investigations are conducted under powers conferred by the *Rail Safety Act 2002* 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. Where OTSI investigators exercise their powers of compulsion, information so obtained cannot be used by other agencies in any subsequent civil or criminal action against those persons providing information.

OTSI investigation reports are submitted to the Minister for Transport for tabling in both Houses of Parliament. Following tabling, OTSI reports are published on its website [www.otsi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.otsi.nsw.gov.au).

OTSI's investigative responsibilities do not extend to overseeing the implementation of recommendations it makes in its investigation reports. OTSI monitors the extent to which its recommendations have been accepted and acted upon through consultation with the relevant Transport Safety Regulator.

Information about OTSI is available on its website or from its offices at:

Level 21, 201 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Tel: (02) 8263 7100

PO Box A2616  
Sydney South NSW 1235

The Office of Transport Safety Investigations also provides a Confidential Safety Information Reporting facility for rail, bus and ferry industry employees. The CSIRS reporting telephone number is 1800 180 828.

## Incident

At approximately 7.59am AEST on 16 October 2005, a freight train designated as 7SP5 and operated by Pacific National, derailed one wagon while travelling on the section of track between Conoble and Ivanhoe, in the Western Region of NSW. The train travelled a further 35 kilometres before it re-railed whilst passing over the Cobb Highway level crossing at Ivanhoe. As a result of the derailment, the track was damaged to the extent that subsequently, approximately one in every five, or 11,600, sleepers had to be replaced. Approximately 150 instances of broken or bruised rail or rail joints also had to be repaired or replaced.

7SP5 consisted of two NR type locomotives and 38 container wagons and measured 1536 metres in length. The train was loaded with 3018 tonnes of mixed container freight and was enroute from Sydney to Perth at the time of the incident. The derailed wagon was not loaded and was positioned 30<sup>th</sup> in the consist of 38 wagons.

The section of track where the derailment occurred is on the Defined Interstate Rail Network (DIRN). The DIRN comes under the jurisdiction of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) for the purposes of rail incident investigations, but in this case, the ATSB elected not to conduct a formal investigation. Because of the extent of damage to the infrastructure, the Chief Investigator of the NSW Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI) initiated a Rail Safety Investigation in accordance with s67 of the *Rail Safety Act 2002 (NSW)*.

## Terms of Reference

The terms of reference established by the Chief Investigator OTSI required the investigator in charge to:

- identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which caused the derailment;
- identify whether the incident might have been anticipated and assess the effectiveness of any strategies that were in place to manage the related risk/s;
- assess the effectiveness of emergency actions in response to the derailment, and
- advise on any matters arising from the investigation that would enhance the safety of rail operations.

## **Status of the Investigation**

The investigation is in progress and is being assisted by Pacific National and the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

When completed, the investigation report will be tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Transport in accordance with s68 of the *Rail Safety Act 2002 (NSW)*.