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OFFICE OF
TRANSPORT
SAFETY
INVESTIGATIONS

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Rail Safety Investigation

Interim Factual Statement

Freight Train Passed Signal at Danger and Derailed Near Lidcombe 4 November 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 proceedings 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

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

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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 12.12AM on 4 November 2005, Brisbane to Melbourne freight service 4BM7 passed Signal ST 419G at stop without authority and derailed at a set of catch points whilst traversing the section between Lidcombe and Berala. 4BM7 was operated by Interail Australia Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Queensland Rail National. The catch points are positioned after Signal ST 419G to deliberately derail any train that passes the signal at stop without authority and mitigate the risk of collision with other rail traffic.

4BM7 consisted of two locomotives and 34 container wagons and had been traversing a loop line leading from Lidcombe onto the Main South Line at the time of the incident. The leading locomotive of 4BM7 derailed all wheels before coming to rest at a precarious angle on top of an eight metre embankment. The second locomotive derailed all wheels on the leading bogie but remained upright.



Photograph 1: Signal ST 419G

There were no injuries resulting from the derailment. The crew of 4BM7 and the Signaller at Strathfield Signal Box were breath tested after the incident, returning negative results.

The NSW Fire Brigade, NSW Police and RailCorp Emergency Services attended the scene. An OTSI investigator also deployed to the scene.

Following a risk assessment, other trains were allowed to pass the derailed locomotives at reduced speed. Rerailing of the locomotives was completed on 5 November 2005.

Status of the Investigation

OTSI has initiated an investigation into the circumstances of this incident in accordance with s67 of the *Rail Safety Act 2002* (NSW). The purpose of the investigation is to establish why Freight Service 4BM7 passed signal ST 419G at stop without authority, causing the resultant catch point derailment.

OTSI's investigation into the incident continues and is being assisted by Interail Australia Pty Ltd and RailCorp.

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).