



Office of Transport Safety Investigations

RAIL SAFETY INVESTIGATION

INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

**RUN 67-R SPAD AND OPPOSING MOVEMENT
NORTH STRATHFIELD - FLEMINGTON**

2 SEPTEMBER 2006

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.

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 17, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9322 9200

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 Overview

At approximately 1:10am on 2 September 2006, an opposing movement occurred between empty CityRail passenger service 67-R and Pacific National freight service 5YN2 on the 'Goods' Line between North Strathfield and Flemington during rail cleaning operations.

The incident occurred after the driver of CityRail service 67-R passed Signal ST164 on the bi-directional Down Relief (Goods) Line at North Strathfield at stop, without authority, and continued along the line (See Figure 1). It was the intention of the Area Controller at Strathfield Signalling Centre to route 67-R to Strathfield Station after rail cleaning operations were complete, but the points had not been set for the intended movement. At the same time, freight service 5YN2 was travelling under signalled indications along the same line between Flemington and Homebush, but in the opposite direction. The Area Controller witnessed the opposing movement on his mimic panel at the signal centre and attempted to contact the drivers of both run 67-R and 5YN2 by radio to stop their trains immediately. Whilst the driver of 5YN2 stopped his train immediately, the Area Controller was unable to establish radio contact with the driver of 67-R and, together with a number of other Area Controllers, resorted to emergency stop hand signals from the balcony of the Signalling Centre as 67-R passed, in an attempt to warn the driver of the impending danger. The driver of 67-R eventually brought his train to a stand at Signal ST253, some 194 metres from 5YN2.

OTSI was notified of this occurrence and later received a preliminary investigation report from RailCorp.

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).

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference established by the Chief Investigator require OTSI's Investigator in Charge to:

- identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which caused the incident;
- identify whether the incident might have been anticipated and assess the effectiveness of any strategies (engineering or procedural) that were in place to manage the related risk/s;
- identify whether train movements at the time were being conducted in accordance with procedures established by RailCorp for such work;
- identify whether the driver's competency and route knowledge for the intended movement were adequate and in accordance with established procedures;
- identify any deficiencies with the effectiveness of the communications equipment and protocols involved in the incident;
- assess the effectiveness of emergency actions in response to the incident, and
- 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. Once completed, OTSI's investigation report will be tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Transport in accordance with Section 68 of the *Rail Safety Act 2002 (NSW)*. When the Report has been tabled, it will be published on OTSI's website.