



Office of Transport Safety Investigations

RAIL SAFETY INVESTIGATION

INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT

**DERAILMENT OF PACIFIC NATIONAL COAL SERVICE BO552
BREEZA TO WERRIS CREEK SECTION**

29 JANUARY 2008



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*, 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.

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. However OTSI is kept informed of the extent to which its recommendations have been accepted and acted upon through advice provided in the Quarterly Report on the status of recommendations arising from OTSI investigations which is submitted to the Minister for Transport by the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) which monitors the implementation of OTSI recommendations by those organisations to whom they are directed.

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

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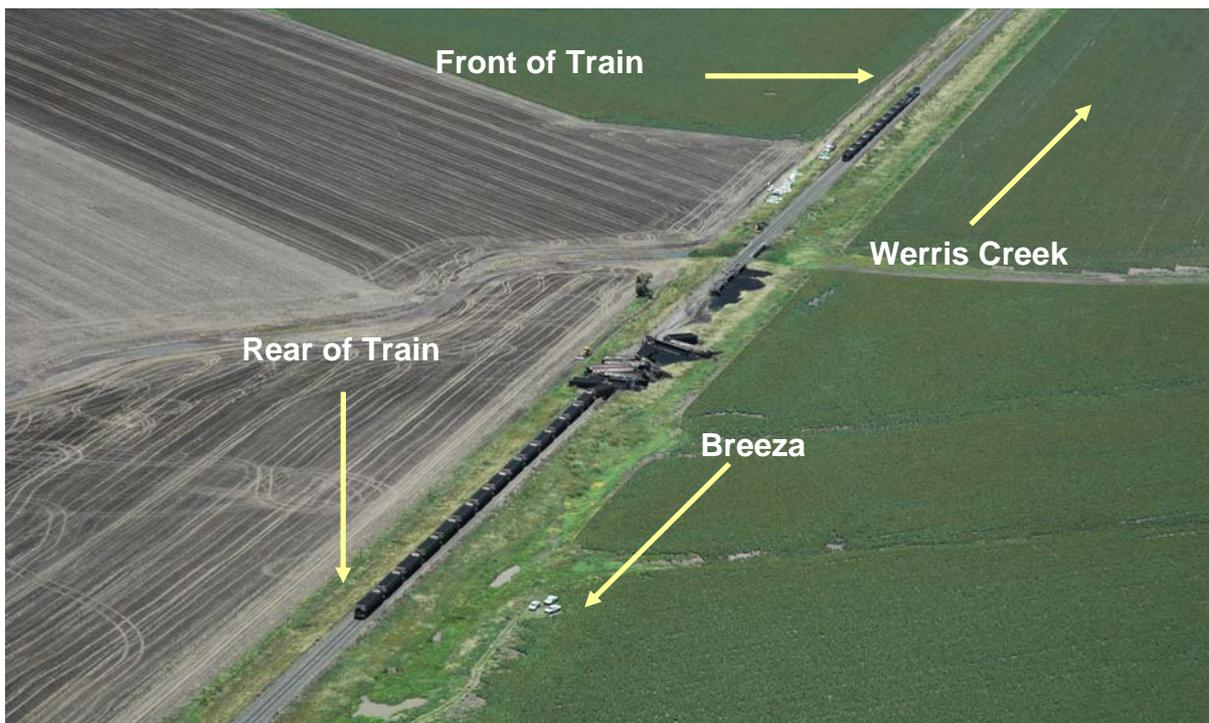
The Office of Transport Safety Investigations also provides a Confidential Safety Information Reporting facility for rail, bus and ferry industry employees. The CSIRS reporting telephone number is 1800 180 828.

Incident Overview

At approximately 4:30pm on Tuesday 29 January 2008, 19 wagons on Pacific National's coal train BO552 derailed in the rail section between Werris Creek and Breeza in North Western NSW. As depicted in *Photograph 1*, the two locomotives and nine preceding wagons parted from the remainder of the train and remained railed. 14 wagons trailing those which derailed also remained on the track.

BO552 loaded at Boggabri and was en route to Kooragang. The derailment occurred approximately 16km North West of Werris Creek on a straight section of track.

The derailed wagons suffered extensive damage (see *Photograph 2*). Fortunately, the two crew members were not injured and they acted quickly to advise Train Control of the accident and to protect their train, by placing detonators on the track behind and beyond it.



Photograph 1: Aerial view of BO552, derailed



Photograph 2: Indicative damage to derailed wagons

OTSI's Duty Officer was notified of the derailment at 5:30pm and two OTSI investigators commenced to deploy to the scene of the derailment shortly thereafter. As a result of their preliminary investigation, the Chief Investigator determined that the accident warranted formal investigation in accordance with 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:

- a. determine what caused the derailment and what factors may have contributed either directly or indirectly to the accident's causation;
- b. identify what strategies were in place to mitigate the risk of derailment within the Werris Creek to Breeza rail section and why they failed on this occasion;
- c. identify whether there are any organisational, operational or logistic safety management matters which had a bearing on the circumstances of the accident;

- d. assess the effectiveness of the emergency actions in response to the derailment;
- e. make safety recommendations, the implementation of which would prevent, or at the very least, minimise the potential for recurrence of this type of accident, and
- f. identify and provide advice in relation to any other 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.