



Office of
Transport Safety
Investigations

BUS SAFETY INVESTIGATION

Interim Factual Statement

Bus Fire m/o 9994
Green Valley, NSW

8 August 2022



About the Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI)

OTSI is an independent NSW authority which contributes to the safe operation of bus, ferry and rail passenger and rail freight services in NSW by investigating safety incidents and accidents and transport safety risks, identifying system-wide safety issues and sharing lessons with transport operators, regulators and other stakeholders.

OTSI is empowered under the *Transport Administration Act 1988* to investigate rail, bus, and ferry accidents and incidents in accordance with the provisions of the *Passenger Transport Act 1990* and *Marine Safety Act 1998*. It also conducts rail investigations on behalf of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (Cth).

OTSI investigations are independent of regulatory, operator or other external entities. OTSI investigates using a 'no-blame' approach to understand why an occurrence took place and to identify safety factors that are associated with an accident and incident, to make recommendations or highlight actions that transport operators, regulators and government can take to prevent recurrence and improve safety.

Evidence obtained through an OTSI investigation cannot be used in any subsequent criminal or disciplinary action. However, a regulator can undertake its own investigation into an incident OTSI has investigated and coronial inquiries can obtain access to OTSI information.

OTSI does not investigate all transport safety incidents and accidents but focuses its resources on those investigations considered most likely to enhance bus, ferry or rail safety.

Many accidents result from individual human or technical errors which do not involve safety systems so investigating these in detail may not be justified. In such cases, OTSI will not generally attend the scene, conduct an in-depth investigation or produce an extensive report.

OTSI may request additional information from operators or review their investigation reports which may lead to a number of actions, such as the release of a Safety Advisory or Alert to raise industry awareness of safety issues and action.

OTSI investigators normally seek to obtain information cooperatively when conducting an investigation. However, where it is necessary to do so, OTSI investigators may exercise statutory powers to conduct interviews, enter premises and examine and retain physical and documentary evidence.

Incident overview

On 8 August 2022, the bus m/o 9994 was operating route 805 Liverpool to Cabramatta, NSW, when the driver noticed smoke in the passenger cabin.

At approximately 1815¹, the driver safely evacuated all passengers onboard at The Valley Plaza bus stand, Green Valley. Shortly after the evacuation, flames became visible inside the bus before spreading and rapidly engulfing the vehicle. Fire and Rescue NSW attended the incident and extinguished the fire. The bus was destroyed. No people were injured during the incident. A nearby vehicle and a bus shelter sustained damage from the heat and smoke generated by the incident.

Scope of the investigation

Based on findings from OTSI's preliminary enquiries, the Chief Investigator determined that the incident warranted investigation in accordance with Section 46 of the *Passenger Transport Act 1990* (NSW).

The scope of the investigation includes, but is not limited to:

- The design, construction, and maintenance of the bus electrical architecture.
- Documentation relating to the critical design decisions of high current circuits, including conductor suitability and circuit protections.
- Standards relating to bus body construction and electrical systems.
- The design, construction, and fire resistance of bus body materials.
- Industry emergency response procedures and training captured in Safety Management Systems.

The Chief Investigator has required the Investigator in Charge (IIC) to:

- Identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which led to the incident
- Determine whether the incident might have been anticipated and the effectiveness of any controls that were in place to manage the related risks
- Advise on any matters arising from the investigation that would enhance the safety of bus operations.

The IIC will consult with all Directly Involved Parties (DIPs) throughout the investigation.

Publication of the investigation report

OTSI produces a written report on every investigation for the Minister for Transport, as required under section 46BBA of the *Passenger Transport Act 1990*.

Investigation reports strive to reflect OTSI's balanced approach to the investigation, explaining what happened and why in a fair and unbiased manner. All DIPs will be given the opportunity to comment on the draft investigation report.

¹ Time in this report is in 24-hour Australian Eastern Time.

The final investigation report will be provided to the Minister for tabling in both Houses of the NSW Parliament in accordance with section 46D of the *Passenger Transport Act 1990*. The Minister is required to table the report within seven days of receiving it.

Following tabling, the report is published on the OTSI website and information on the safety lessons promoted to relevant stakeholders. The published report will replace this Interim Factual Statement.