

Bus safety investigation Interim Factual Statement

Coach Fire TV287A

Revesby, NSW
10 February 2023



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 criminal or civil proceedings. While information gathered by OTSI in the conduct of its work is protected, the Chief Investigator, under the *Transport Administration Act 1988*, may disclose information if they think it is necessary for the safe operation of a transport service.

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 several 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 10 February 2023 at approximately 0850¹ Transdev coach² TV287A was on Uranus Road, Revesby operating a charter service carrying 39 primary school-aged children and two teachers from St George Christian School.

During the journey the coach made a routine stop at traffic lights on the corner of River Road adjacent to a service station. On signal and departing from the traffic lights, the driver observed smoke coming from the rear of the coach. The driver, seeking a safe place to stop, continued for approximately 300m along Weston Street where the coach stalled and stopped. All passengers onboard were safely evacuated.

During the evacuation smoke was visible inside the rear of the coach. The fire spread rapidly engulfing the vehicle. Fire and Rescue NSW attended the incident and extinguished the fire. As a result of the fire the coach was destroyed. No passengers were injured during the incident. Nearby vehicles sustained damage from 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:

- Examination of the system for planned and preventative engine maintenance for the coach.
- Examination of fire detection and suppression systems currently in use on NSW buses and coaches.

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

- Identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which led to the incident including:
 - Effectiveness of planned and preventative engine maintenance on the coach, regulatory requirements, and oversight
 - Effectiveness of any controls that were in place to manage related risks
- Review available fire detection and suppression systems currently in use on NSW buses and report on the effectiveness of such systems for a similar incident
- Advise on any matters arising from the investigation (such as additional controls or preventative actions) that would enhance the safety of bus operations.

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

¹ Time in this document is in 24-hour Australian Eastern Daylight Time

² When not specified, the term 'bus' applies to a bus or a coach type motor vehicle. For the purposes of this investigation the term 'coach' will be used.

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*.

OTSI strives to ensure its reports reflect the balanced approach it takes to each 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.

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.