



**Office of  
Transport Safety  
Investigations**

**BUS SAFETY INVESTIGATION**

**INTERIM FACTUAL STATEMENT**

**ARTICULATED BUS DESTROYED BY FIRE**

**GLEBE**

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**11 JANUARY 2021**

# THE OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS

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The Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI) is an independent NSW agency whose purpose is to improve transport safety through the investigation of incidents and accidents in the rail, bus and ferry industries. OTSI investigations are independent of regulatory, operator or other external entities.

Established on 1 January 2004 by the *Transport Administration Act 1988 (NSW)*, and confirmed by amending legislation as an independent statutory office on 1 July 2005, OTSI is responsible for determining the contributing factors of accidents and to make recommendations for the implementation of remedial safety action to prevent recurrence. Importantly, however, OTSI does not confine itself to the consideration of just those matters that contributed to a particular accident; it also seeks to identify any transport safety matters which, if left unaddressed, might contribute to other accidents.

OTSI's investigations are conducted under powers conferred by the *Transport Administration Act 1988 (NSW)* and *Passenger Transport Act 2014 (NSW)*. Additionally, all OTSI publications that are considered investigation reports are also conferred by these Acts. OTSI also conducts rail investigations on behalf of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (Cwlth)*. 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.

It is not within OTSI's jurisdiction, nor an object of its investigations, to apportion blame or determine liability. At all times, OTSI's investigation reports strive to reflect our balanced approach to the investigation, in a manner that properly explains what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

Once OTSI has completed an investigation, its report is provided to the NSW Minister for Transport and Infrastructure for tabling in Parliament. The Minister is required to table the report in both Houses of the NSW Parliament within seven days of receiving it. Following tabling, the report is published on OTSI's website at [www.otsi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.otsi.nsw.gov.au).

## **Incident Overview**

On 11 January 2021, articulated bus 2001ST was operating on route 438X between Abbotsford and Martin Place, New South Wales. Just before 1800, the bus driver noticed a small amount of smoke coming from under the dashboard and stopped the bus on Parramatta Road near Glebe Point Road. The driver and four passengers safely evacuated the bus and the smoke continued until flames were visible. The driver attempted to extinguish the fire using a portable fire extinguisher which was unsuccessful. The fire continued to spread and engulfed the entire bus. Emergency services attended extinguishing the fire. There were no injuries and the bus was destroyed.

Based on findings from OTSI's preliminary enquiries, the Chief Investigator determined that the incident warranted investigation in accordance with Section 133 of the *Passenger Transport Act 2014 (NSW)*.

## **Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference established by the Chief Investigator require OTSI's Investigating Officer to:

- a. identify the factors, both primary and contributory, which led to the incident;
- b. determine whether the incident might have been anticipated and the effectiveness of any controls that were in place to manage the related risks; and
- c. advise on any matters arising from the investigation that would enhance the safety of bus operations.

## **Status of the Investigation**

OTSI's investigation has commenced. During the course of the investigation, all Directly Involved Parties (DIPs) will be consulted and will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the Draft report before it is finalised.

Once completed, OTSI's investigation report will be tabled in both Houses of the NSW Parliament by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in accordance with *Section 149* of the NSW *Passenger Transport Act 2014*. When the Report has been tabled, it will be published on OTSI's website and will replace this Interim Factual Statement.