



NO 95-106

TRAIN 258

COLLISION WITH PEDESTRIAN

NEAR NGARUAWAHIA

28 FEBRUARY 1995

ABSTRACT

On 28 February 1995, at approximately 2240 hours, Train 258, a freight from Te Rapa to Westfield passed through the area immediately north of the Waikato River rail bridge in Ngaruawahia. Circumstantial evidence indicates it was this train which collided with a pedestrian who was crossing the line outside the driveway to his house at that time. The pedestrian was killed by a train at some time after 2230 hours in that area. No safety deficiencies which would have prevented this accident were revealed by the investigation.

TRANSPORT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

RAIL ACCIDENT REPORT NO. 95-106

Train Type and Number: Express Freight 258

Date and Time: 28 February 1995, 2240 hours NZDT

Location: 100 m north Ngaruawahia river/rail bridge,
560 km North Island Main Trunk

Type of Occurrence: Collision with pedestrian

Persons on Board: Crew: 1
Passengers Nil

Injuries: Crew: Nil
Other # 1 fatal

Nature of Damage: Nil

Information Sources: Transport Accident Investigation
Commission field investigation

Investigator in Charge: R Chippindale

Pedestrian

1. NARRATIVE

- 1.1 At approximately 2240 hours on 28 February 1995, Train 258, a freight from Te Rapa to Westfield passed through the area immediately north of the Waikato Rail/River bridge in Ngaruawahia.
- 1.2 Circumstantial evidence indicates it was this train which collided with a pedestrian who was crossing the line towards the driveway to his house at that time. The pedestrian was killed by a train at some time after 2230 hours in that area. He was with friends immediately prior to that time and left them to cross the main road and the double rail track towards the drive into his home.
- 1.3 The first train to pass over the line following that time was 258 at 2240 hours. Some evidence of a collision with a person was later found on the locomotive of that train but it was not conclusive.
- 1.4 The point at which the tracks were crossed is only some 50 m from a road level crossing which is protected by flashing lights and bells. The bells are however time switched not to operate after 2230 hours. Nevertheless there is the normal miniature St Andrews Cross prior to the crossing (to advise the Locomotive Engineer (LE) of a level crossing ahead) and the LE of Train 258 said he sounded the locomotive's horn when he sighted the cross as was his normal practice.
- 1.5 Prior to this point a northbound train is hidden from sight by the steel bridge superstructure and a curve in the line. Information from his family indicated that the pedestrian preferred to cross the tracks to the north of the level crossing as he considered it was less hazardous due to the difficulties in sighting an approaching northbound train. He had similar concerns about sighting northbound road traffic which was hidden by the hump in the road bridge and he therefore believed it preferable to cross both the road and the rail track in line with the driveway to his house. The northern end of the road bridge is almost due west of the northern end of the rail bridge.
- 1.6 While it would be human nature for the victim to have stayed with his friends and walked until he was opposite the entrance to his home before crossing the unfenced tracks, the level crossing nearby would have provided a surer footing and crossed a single line only. In addition the crossing was well lit by a number of street lights whereas the probable path of the pedestrian was in the shadow of a group of trees and across an area of poor footing for a pedestrian where the single line branched into double track.

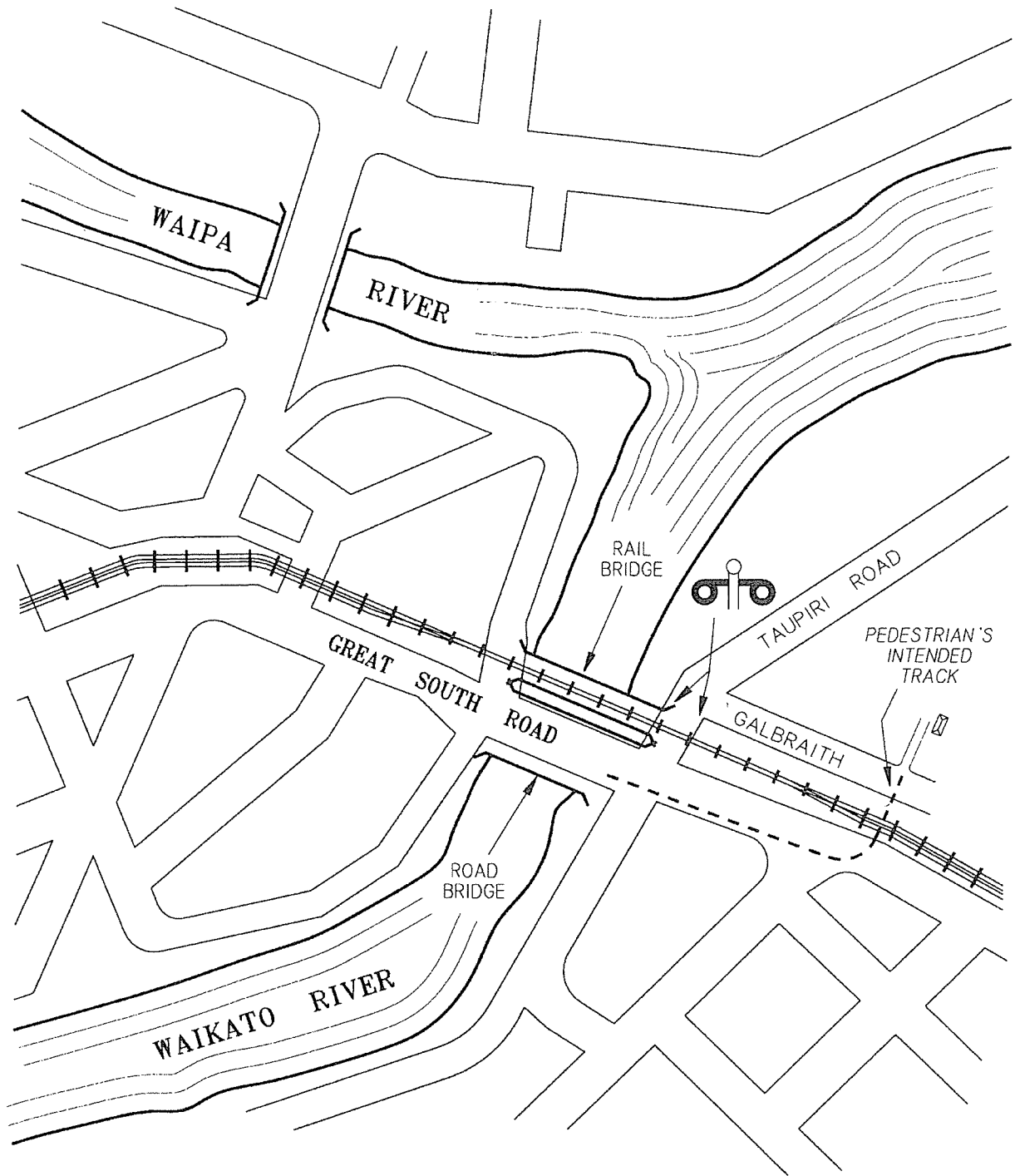
2. FINDINGS

- 2.1 The train which collided with the pedestrian was probably 258.
- 2.2 The pedestrian's judgement and physical ability was probably impaired by the consumption of alcohol.
- 2.3 There was an alternative crossing for the pedestrian within 50 metres of the accident site.
- 2.4 In accord with standard practice the crossing alarm bells were not operating as the train approached.
- 2.5 The LE did sound the locomotive's horn as the train approached the level crossing, which is immediately south of the accident site, in accordance with his normal practice.

- 2.6 The train's approach may not have been evident to the pedestrian until it was too late for him to clear the tracks.
- 2.7 Alternatively the pedestrian may have missed his footing when crossing the tracks and become incapacitated prior to the approach of the train.

16 August 1995

M F Dunphy
Chief Commissioner



SKETCH OF ACCIDENT LOCATION