



Australian Government
Australian Transport Safety Bureau

OCI Office of the
Chief Investigator
Transport Safety

Near collision with road vehicle at level crossing, involving train 0348

Wallan, Victoria, on 25 April 2026



ATSB Transport Safety Report
Rail Occurrence Investigation
RO-2026-003
Preliminary – 18 August 2026

Cover photo: V/Line Corporation

This investigation was conducted by the **Office of the Chief Investigator (OCI)**, in accordance with a collaboration agreement with the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB). OCI is the operational office of Victoria's Chief Investigator, Transport Safety.

In conducting this investigation OCI staff exercised powers and performed functions under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (Cth), and this report was approved for release by the ATSB Commission under the Act.

Released in accordance with section 25 of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*

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Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders both past and present.

Preliminary report

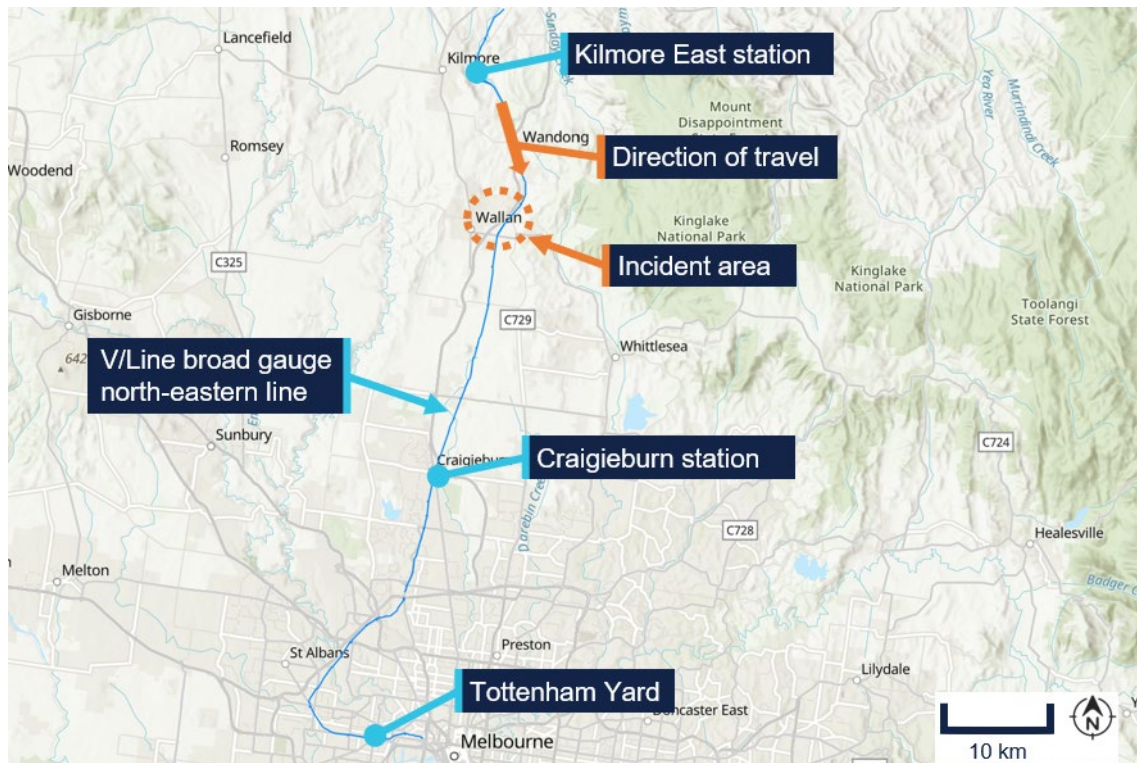
The ATSB has released this preliminary report to provide a timely update on evidence gathered and investigation activities to date. It outlines areas of further investigation but does not contain analysis or findings, which will be detailed in a final report at the conclusion of the investigation. The information in this report is released in accordance with section 25 of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*.

The occurrence

Background

On 25 April 2026, at about 1415, Southern Shorthaul Railroad (SSR) train 0348, consisting of 2 locomotives, left Kilmore East on the V/Line broad gauge line to travel to Tottenham Yard, Melbourne (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location of occurrence



Source: Digital Atlas of Australia, annotated by the Office of the Chief Investigator (OCI)

The signal passed at danger (SPAD)

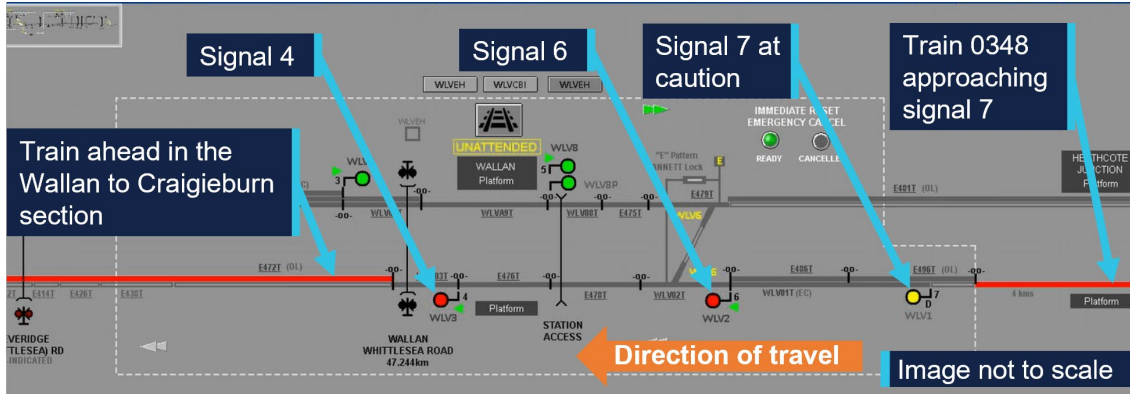
The status of signals and the movement of trains were captured by a signalling system event recorder. The signalling system playback showed that the train approached Wallan¹ at about 1427 and received a yellow aspect (caution indication) at distant signal 7 (Figure 2).² Signal 7 was at caution because a train ahead was in the Wallan to

¹ Wallan is located on the lands of the Taungurung people, who are part of the Kulin Nation.

² When the driver observes a distant signal at caution, the train must be slowed to a precautionary speed to allow the train to be safely stopped at any home signal applicable to the same line at that location that may display stop.

Craigieburn section. The train passed signal 7 at about 49 km/h at 1428 and then approached home signal 6, which showed a red aspect (stop indication). Signal 6 was located about 1 km from signal 7. The driver slowed the train to about 15 km/h on the approach to signal 6.

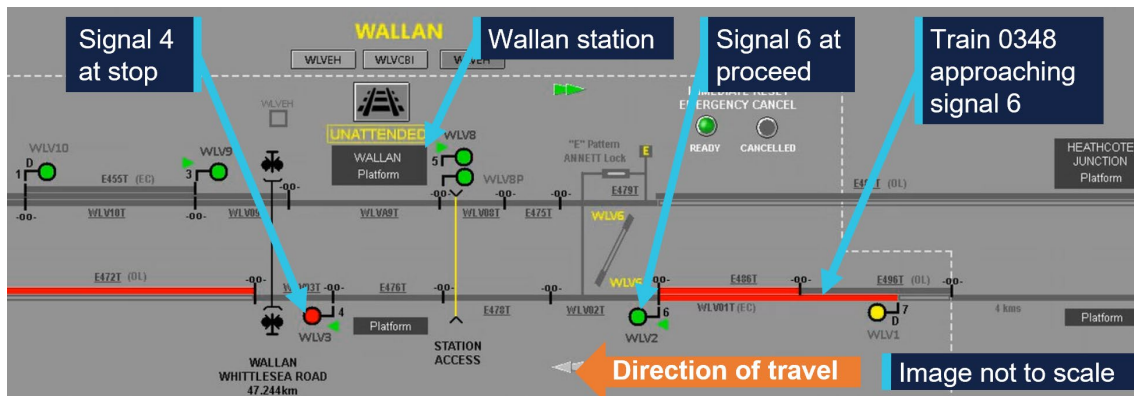
Figure 2: Signalling system playback at 1427 showing signal 7 at caution



Source: V/Line, annotated by OCI

The driver received a green aspect (proceed indication) on signal 6 at about 1430 (Figure 3) and proceeded past the signal towards Wallan station.

Figure 3: Signalling system playback at 1430 showing signal 6 at proceed



Source: V/Line, annotated by OCI

On passing through Wallan station at about 1431 the driver sighted home signal 4 showing a red aspect (stop indication). In response, they made a brake application and sounded the train horn. The train was about 150 m from signal 4 and travelling at about 85 km/h when train braking was applied. About 7 s later the train passed signal 4 at stop and proceeded towards the Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing (Figure 4). The crossing was about 90 m past signal 4.

Figure 4: Train 0348 proceeding towards Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing



Source: V/Line (CCTV image), annotated by OCI

Near collision with road vehicle

The Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing was equipped with flashing lights, bells and boom barriers. The crossing lights started to flash about 1 s after train 0348 was detected having passed signal 4. CCTV showed a road vehicle entering the level crossing, travelling from east to west, at about the same time as the level crossing lights started to flash (Figure 4).

The train entered the level crossing about 4 s after passing signal 4. The road vehicle had travelled about 15 m past the crossing when the train entered the crossing (Figure 5). The boom barriers remained raised as both the road vehicle and train passed through the crossing.

Figure 5: Train 0348 enters Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing



Source: V/Line (CCTV image) annotated by OCI.

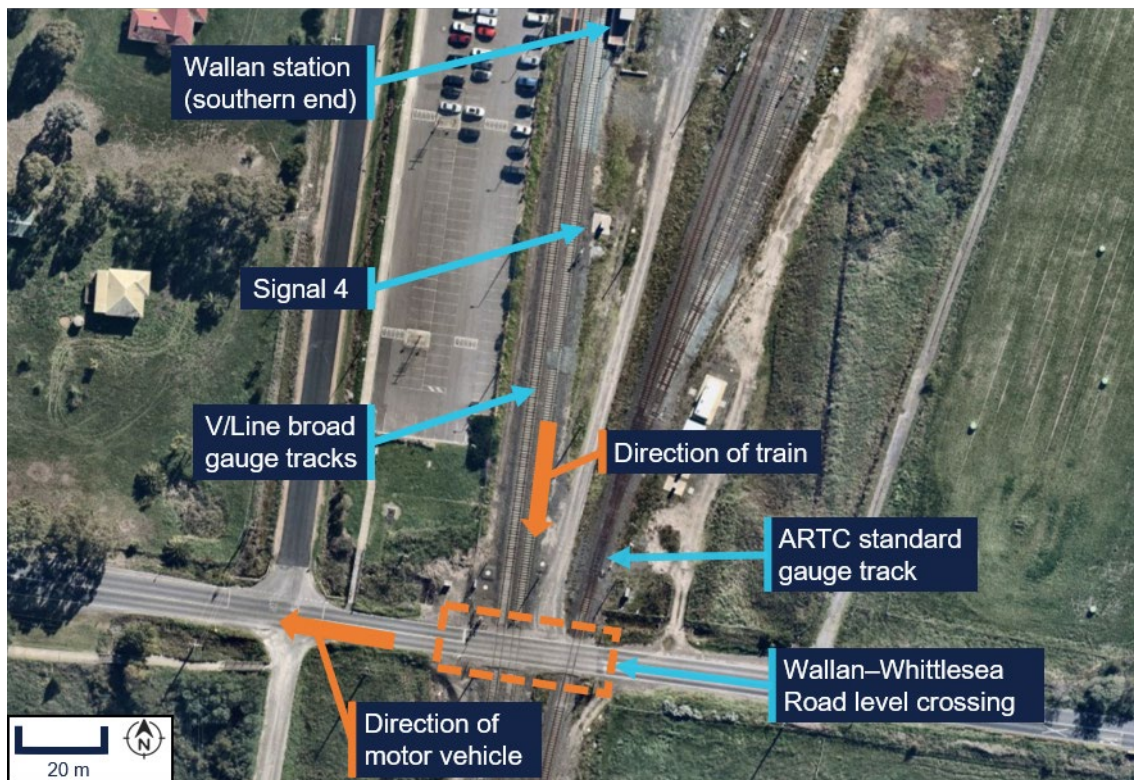
Train 0348 came to a stop about 270 m on the Melbourne side of the level crossing and the road vehicle continued in a westerly direction. At about 1432, the train driver made a radio call to the V/Line train control centre (Control) to report the incident.

Context

Infrastructure

The near collision incident occurred near Wallan railway station, about 44 km north of Melbourne. Rail infrastructure through the location consisted of 2 adjacent broad gauge unidirectional lines and standard gauge lines to their east (Figure 6). The broad gauge track was managed by V/Line, and the standard gauge track by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). When signals were at proceed, the maximum permitted speed for train 0348 through Wallan railway station and the level crossing was 100 km/h.

Figure 6: Rail infrastructure from Wallan railway station to the level crossing



Source: Nearmap, annotated by OCI

The level crossing at the Wallan-Whittlesea Road was located about 150 m south of Wallan railway station. The road, managed by the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning, crossed the 2 V/Line tracks and a single ARTC track. It consisted of single carriageways in eastbound and westbound directions. The crossing was about 33 m between the stop lines for road vehicles.

The protection equipment at the level crossing for road vehicles consisted of boom barriers, flashing lights, warning bells and warning signage on each side of the crossing (Figure 7). Active advance warning signs were fitted at the level crossing on the side of the road, about 150 m prior to the crossing on each approach. V/Line was responsible for the level crossing control equipment for trains on the broad gauge tracks.

Figure 7: Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing, looking west



Photograph of level crossing, taken 6 days after the incident.
Source: OCI

Signalling system

A 2-aspect block signalling system³ was in place for train operations on the V/Line network between Kilmore East and Craigieburn. Signals at Wallan changed automatically depending on the occupation of sections of the track by trains, without intervention of train control or a signaller. The signalling system at Wallan used axle counter equipment to detect the location of trains and was not fitted with any type of automatic train protection.

Signal 7 at Wallan was a 'distant signal' and could display either a yellow or green light. If the signal displayed a yellow light, as was the case for train 0348, the train was required 'to be slowed to a precautionary speed to allow the train to be safely stopped at any home signal applicable to the same line at the location that may display stop'.⁴

The home signals at Wallan (signals 4 and 6) could each display a stop indication (red light) or a proceed indication (green light).

The train and crew

SSR train 0348 comprised 2 coupled locomotives, operated by a crew of 2 SSR drivers. SSR was a business unit of Consolidated Rail Holdings Pty Ltd (Holdco). The leading locomotive was B80 and the trailing locomotive was P12 (Figure 8).

³ A system of train operation designed to prevent more than one train being in the block section at any one time.

⁴ 1994 Book of rules and operating procedures, Section 2 Fixed signals. Revision 7.

Figure 8: Train 0348 passing through Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing



Source: V/Line

Locomotive B80 was fitted with a Hasler electro-mechanical strip chart recorder that recorded information associated with the movement of the train. The locomotive was also equipped with a train radio that recorded the train's speed and position using a global positioning system. The train lights and horn were functioning as it passed through the level crossing.

Recent other SPAD at Wallan

Another SPAD occurred at Wallan on 11 April 2026, involving freight train 9342 operated by Qube Logistics. In this instance, the train passed signal 4 (which was at stop) but was stopped by its driver before entering the Wallan–Whittlesea Road level crossing.

Further investigation

To date, the following activities have been undertaken:

- inspections of the incident site
- examination of signalling system and train event recorder data
- review of recorded communications between involved parties
- interviews with involved parties.

The investigation is continuing and will include further review and analysis of factors potentially related to:

- train operations
- signalling systems at Wallan
- level crossing protection following a signal passed at danger.

A final report will be released at the conclusion of the investigation. Should a critical safety issue be identified during the investigation, relevant parties will be immediately notified so appropriate and timely safety action can be taken. Some of the information in this report may be refined as the investigation progresses.

General details

Occurrence details

Date and time:	25 April 2026 – 1431 Australian Eastern Standard Time	
Occurrence class:	Serious Incident	
Occurrence categories:	Signal Passed at Danger	
Location:	Wallan, Victoria	
	Latitude: 37.41926° S	Longitude: 145.00483° E

Train details

Track operator:	V/Line Corporation	
Train operator:	Southern Shorthaul Railroad	
Train number:	0348	
Type of operation:	Freight	
Departure:	Kilmore East, Victoria	
Destination:	Tottenham Yard, Victoria	
Persons on board:	Crew – 2	Passengers – 0
Injuries:	Crew – 0	Passengers – 0
Damage:	None	

About the ATSB

The **Australian Transport Safety Bureau** is Australia's national transport safety investigator. Established by the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (TSI Act), the ATSB is an independent statutory agency of the Australian Government and is governed by a Commission. The ATSB is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers.

The ATSB's function is to improve transport safety and public confidence, in aviation, marine and rail, through:

- the independent 'no blame' investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences
- safety data recording, analysis, and research
- influencing safety action.

The ATSB's sole focus is the prevention of future accidents and the improvement of transport safety, and prioritises investigations that have the potential to deliver the greatest public benefit.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the TSI Act and Regulations and, where applicable, international agreements.

Rail safety investigations in Victoria

Rail safety investigations in Victoria are conducted by the **Office of the Chief Investigator (OCI)** in accordance with a collaboration agreement with the ATSB.

OCI is the operational office of the **Chief Investigator, Transport Safety**, a statutory position established in the *Transport Integration Act 2010* (Vic) to provide independent, no-blame investigation of transport safety matters in Victoria.

Under the collaboration agreement with the ATSB, OCI staff exercise powers and perform functions under the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (Cth), and reports are approved for release under the TSI Act by the ATSB Commission.

Purpose of safety investigations

The objective of an ATSB safety investigation is to improve transport safety through:

- identifying safety issues for action by organisations with the responsibility for managing that safety risk
- influencing safety action through engaging with stakeholders, communicating findings, and fostering awareness of safety issues and concerns.

In accordance with the TSI Act, the ATSB does not investigate for the purpose of taking administrative, regulatory or criminal action, and cannot apportion blame, assist in determining liability, or, as a general rule, assist in court proceedings.

About ATSB reports

ATSB safety investigation reports are developed in accordance with ATSB procedures and guidelines, and with regard to applicable international standards and instruments.

Reports must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the investigation's analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material

that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

An explanation of ATSB terminology used in this report is available on the [ATSB website](#).