



Transport Accident
Investigation
Commission

Final interim report

Rīpoata Whakamutunga Mō Nāianeī

Rail inquiry RO-2026-105
Transdev Wellington Train 9379
Signal passed at danger and
collision with stop block
Khandallah, 7.74 km Johnsonville Line
6 June 2026

October 2026



The Transport Accident Investigation Commission

Te Kōmihana Tirotiro Aituā Waka

No repeat accidents – ever!

“The principal purpose of the Commission shall be to determine the circumstances and causes of accidents and incidents with a view to avoiding similar occurrences in the future, rather than to ascribe blame to any person.”

Transport Accident Investigation Commission Act 1990, s4 Purpose

The Transport Accident Investigation Commission is an independent Crown entity and standing commission of inquiry. We investigate selected maritime, aviation and rail accidents and incidents that occur in New Zealand or involve New Zealand-registered aircraft or vessels.

Our investigations are for the purpose of avoiding similar accidents and incidents in the future. We determine and analyse contributing factors, explain circumstances and causes, identify safety issues, and make recommendations to improve safety. Our findings cannot be used to pursue criminal, civil, or regulatory action.

At the end of every inquiry, we share all relevant knowledge in a final report. We use our information and insight to influence others in the transport sector to improve safety, nationally and internationally.

Commissioners

Chief Commissioner	David Clarke
Deputy Chief Commissioner	Stephen Davies Howard
Commissioner	Paula Rose, QSO
Commissioner	Aedeen Boadita-Cormican (from 19 June 2026)

Key Commission personnel

Chief Executive	Martin Sawyers
Chief Investigator of Accidents	Louise Cook
Investigator-in-Charge for this inquiry	David Manuel
Commission General Counsel	Sid Wellik

Notes about Commission reports

Kōrero tāpiri ki ngā pūrongo o te Kōmihana

Nature of this interim report

The Commission issues interim reports in the initial stages of an investigation. The interim report presents the facts and circumstances established up to this point in the Commission's inquiry. The Commission may issue an interim report in line with international guidance when inquiries are complex and ongoing or have heightened public interest.

Final report

After it completes its inquiry, the Commission will issue a final report on the incident. That report will contain an analysis of the facts of the incident, findings and recommendations. The information contained in the Commission's final report may differ from the information contained in this interim report.

Photographs, diagrams, pictures

The Commission owns the photographs, diagrams and pictures in this report unless otherwise specified.



Figure 1: Two-car Matangi train (not the accident train)
(Credit: Josh McArthur)

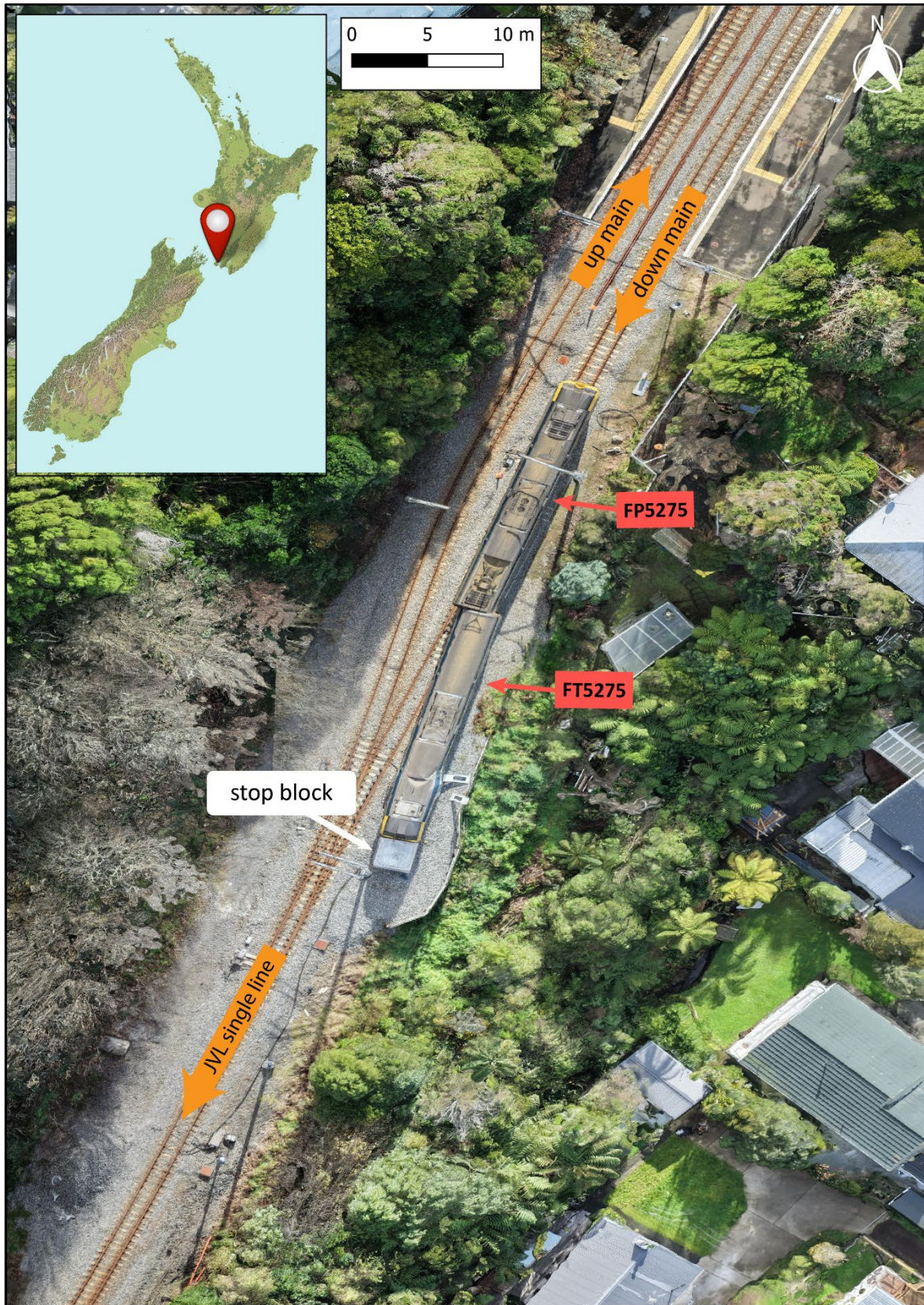


Figure 2: Collision location on runaway track south of Khandallah Station
(Credit: Scene reconstruction by TAIC using KiwiRail drone images)

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1 Factual information

Pārongo pono

Background information

- 1.1. The Johnsonville Line (JVL) is a passenger-only rail line running between Wellington Railway Station and the Wellington suburb of Johnsonville, about 10 kilometres (km) north.
- 1.2. The JVL is single-line track between stations and double-line track within station limits at Wadestown, Ngaio and Khandallah. When northbound trains enter these stations, they travel on the 'up' main, whereas southbound trains travel on the 'down' main (see Figure 2).
- 1.3. Transdev Wellington Limited (Transdev Wellington) operates the passenger trains under contract to the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). Greater Wellington Rail Limited (GWRL) own the trains. GWRL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Wellington Regional Council Holdings Limited, which in turn is a wholly owned subsidiary of GWRC. KiwiRail Holdings Limited (KiwiRail) maintains the infrastructure and operates the train control¹ system for the JVL.
- 1.4. The JVL train control system can be placed into 'automatic mode'. This means that signals² and points³ are automatically changed by the control system to keep trains running to schedule without the need for intervention from a train controller. The JVL was in automatic mode at the time of the accident.

Narrative

- 1.5. At 1045⁴ on Saturday 6 June 2026, the train manager⁵ started their shift at Wellington Railway Station.
- 1.6. At 1805, the locomotive engineer⁶ (LE) started their shift at Wellington Railway Station.
- 1.7. Both the train manager and the LE were employed by Transdev Wellington.
- 1.8. At about 1830, the LE and the train manager boarded Train 9378 for the journey north towards Johnsonville on the JVL.

¹ Train control is responsible for track authorisations and the safe movement of rail traffic. Train controllers can use an electronic train control system to remotely operate the network within their specific area. Train control is part of the Wellington Regional Operations Centre, formerly the National Train Control Centre, located in Wallaceville, Upper Hutt.

² Visual display devices that convey instructions for authority to pass using illuminated coloured lights (aspects). Simplified, these aspects are red=stop, yellow=proceed with caution, green=proceed at normal speed.

³ A movable part of the rail that enables rail vehicles to be guided from one track to another.

⁴ Times in this report are in New Zealand Standard Time (Universal Coordinated Time +12 hours) expressed in a 24-hour format.

⁵ A designated person who is responsible for the welfare and comfort of passengers, assists with emergency working on a passenger train and is in charge of any ticket collectors on the train.

⁶ A person qualified by certification to drive trains on the main line.

- 1.9. Train 9378 was a two-car 'Matangi' electric multiple unit (EMU) comprised of an 'FP' power unit leading an 'FT' trailer unit.⁷ The LE was seated in the driver's cab of the FP power unit at the northern end.
- 1.10. After departing Wellington Station at about 1832, Train 9378 was scheduled to stop at all stations along the JVL as it journeyed towards Johnsonville.
- 1.11. At 1850:31⁸ as Train 9378 was approaching Khandallah Station heading north towards Johnsonville, the train control system registered a 'dropped track',⁹ which occurs when the signalling system interprets the track as being occupied. The dropped track caused the signalling system to determine that there were multiple trains in the same section, and this resulted in an error message being displayed on the train control mimic screen¹⁰ (see Figure 3).
- 1.12. The error message was a visual warning only and did not generate an audible alarm to alert the train controller. (Note: to reduce visual clutter on the train controller's mimic screen, signals at red display as grey on the mimic screen and signals at yellow or green display as green on the mimic screen.)

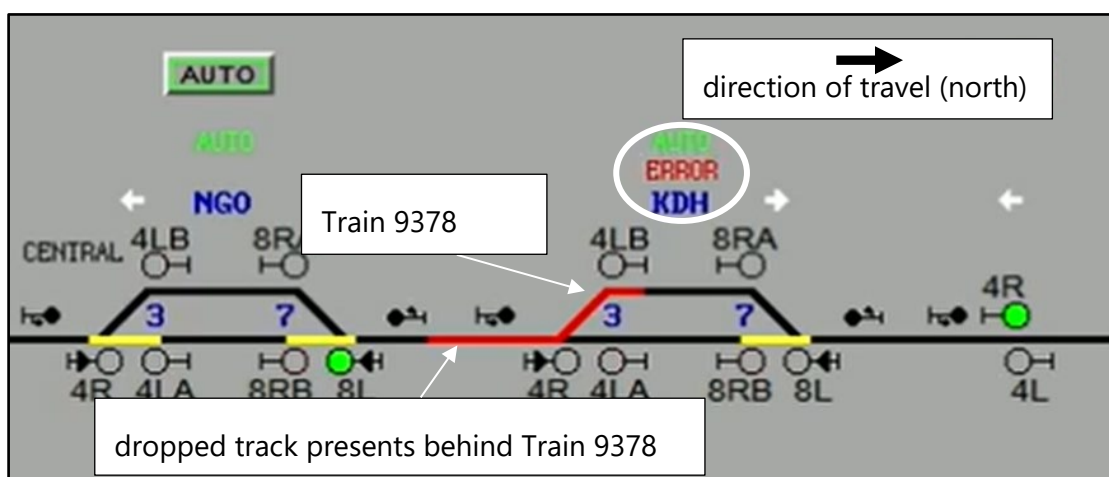


Figure 3: Mimic screen displaying error message as the train entered Khandallah Station
(Credit: KiwiRail, annotated by TAIC)

- 1.13. The error message remained visible for 25 seconds until, at 1850:56, Train 9378 entered Khandallah Station. The error message then stopped displaying on the mimic screen because the system no longer detected multiple trains in one section.
- 1.14. However, because of the dropped track, the signalling system was still interpreting the section south of Khandallah as being occupied by a train (see Figure 4).
- 1.15. As a result, the signalling system interlocking¹¹ acted as designed, holding all signals governing entry into the occupied section at stop (red).

⁷ The manufacturer identified the Matangi series by the letter 'F', so FP and FT denote the units as Matangi power and Matangi trailer respectively. Matangi trains are arranged with the FP car at the northern end, so 'up' trains are driven from the FP car and 'down' trains are driven from the FT car.

⁸ Where timings are described in seconds, information has been obtained from verifiable data sources such as train control signal logs and the train's Tranzlog 'black box' data-recording system.

⁹ Can happen for several reasons, including, but not limited to, a broken rail, faulty electrical connection or excessive moisture on the track.

¹⁰ A monitor displaying the graphical user interface of the train control system.

¹¹ Points and signalling that are electrically or mechanically arranged to prevent conflicting train movements.

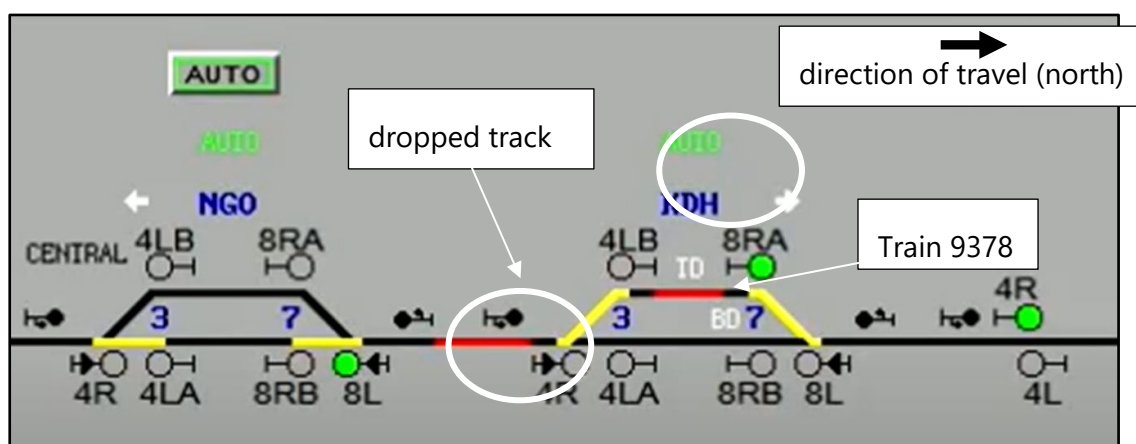


Figure 4: Mimic screen with error message no longer displaying and dropped track south of Khandallah Station

(Credit: KiwiRail annotated by TAIC)

- 1.16. At about 1856, Train 9378 arrived at Johnsonville Station. The LE left the driver's cab in the FP unit and walked to the driver's cab in the FT unit at the southern end of the train in preparation for the return journey to Wellington. As the train was now southbound, the service number¹² changed from Train 9378 to Train 9379 (the train).
- 1.17. After departing Johnsonville Station on schedule at about 1858, the train stopped briefly for passengers at Raroa Station at 1902, before travelling to Khandallah Station. The train passed the 8L arrival signal¹³ showing a 'caution to stop'¹⁴ (see Figure 5), entering the down main at Khandallah Station at about 1905.

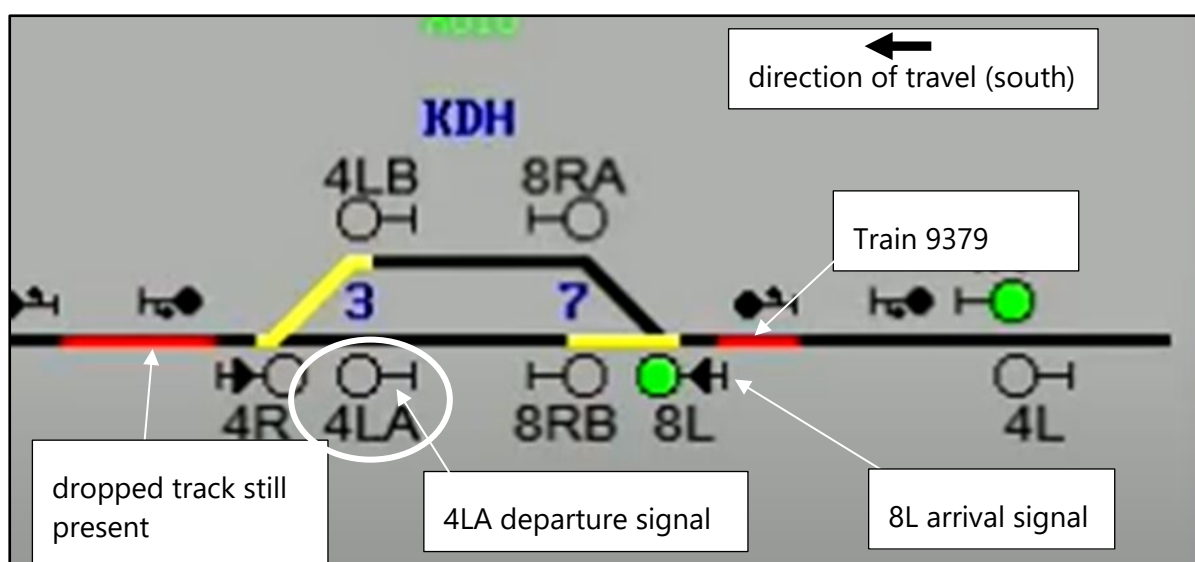


Figure 5: Mimic screen showing Train 9379 approach to Khandallah Station

(Credit: KiwiRail, annotated by TAIC)

¹² The number assigned to a train for identification purposes. Generally, northbound (up) trains end in even numbers, while southbound (down) trains end in odd numbers.

¹³ A signal governing entry into station limits.

¹⁴ A signal aspect which advises the train crew that the next signal may be at stop. It is indicated by a yellow over red aspect.

- 1.18. Because of the dropped track south of the station, the interlocking system held the 4LA departure signal at stop ahead of the train. Because the signal was at stop, the track in front of the train was automatically set for the runaway line at the southern end of Khandallah Station (see Figures 6 and 7).

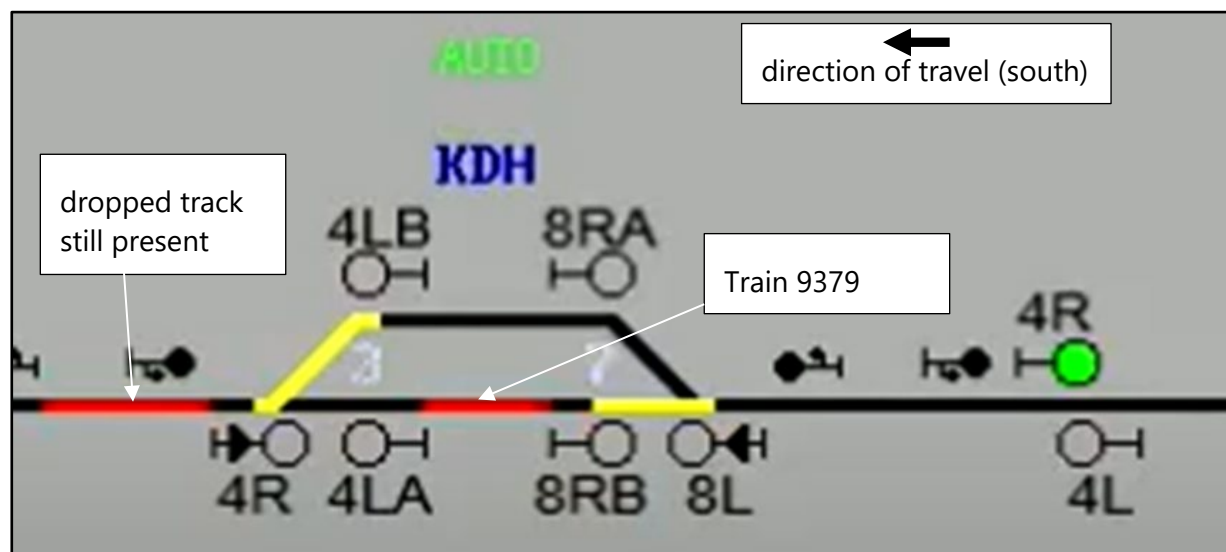


Figure 6: Mimic screen showing Train 9379 at Khandallah Station platform

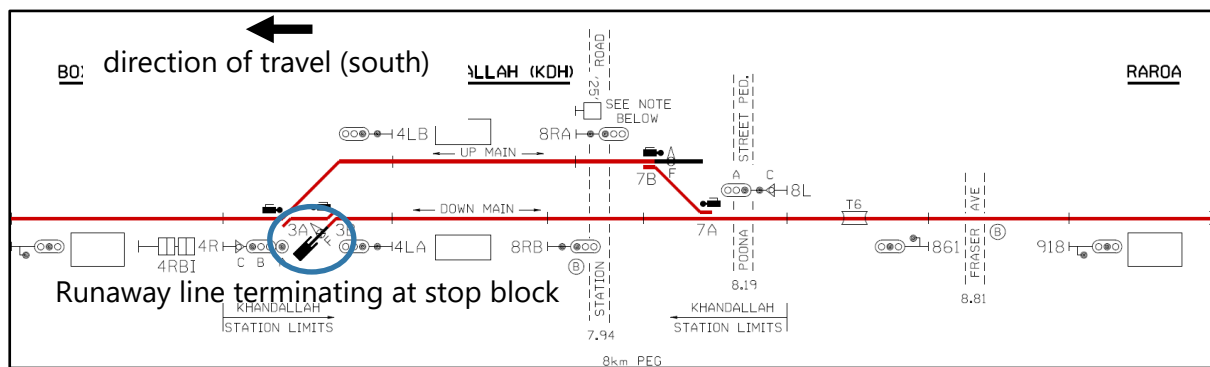
(Credit: KiwiRail, annotated by TAIC)

- 1.19. On arrival at Khandallah Station, the train manager exited the train and waited on the platform to check all passengers were safely clear.
- 1.20. At 1905:49, once the doors were clear, the train manager entered the train and pressed the 'all close'¹⁵ and 'right of way'¹⁶ buttons on the train's operation panel.
- 1.21. In the driver's cab, a green light illuminated on the dash and an audible alarm sounded to indicate that the doors were closed and that the train manager had pressed the right of way button. The train's brakes were released, and the train was placed into power to start departing Khandallah Station. Power was gradually increased over the next 8 seconds while the train moved away from the platform along the down main towards the southern end of Khandallah Station.
- 1.22. At 1906:12, the train passed the 4LA departure signal¹⁷ at stop (red) at the south end of Khandallah Station. The signal was displaying a red aspect because of the dropped track.
- 1.23. At 1906:12, the emergency brake was activated.
- 1.24. Because the departure signal was at stop (red), the track in front of the train diverted to the left onto a runaway line. The runaway line diversion was designed to prevent trains from entering the JVL single line in potential conflict with another train coming from the opposite direction (see Figure 7).

¹⁵ To close and secure all passenger doors, and illuminate a white light in the drivers cab to confirm.

¹⁶ The authority required for passenger trains to depart a platform.

¹⁷ The signal controlling entry into the section of track beyond a station. A written authority is required to pass departure signals at stop. Any signal passed without authority is referred to as a signal passed at danger (SPAD).



- 1.25. At 19:06:14 the train passed a fixed train stop¹⁸ that was fitted to the rail on the runaway line, but the train's trip lever¹⁹ did not activate.
- 1.26. At 19:06:16 the train lost all power when the pantograph²⁰ disconnected from the overhead power lines. Immediately after this the train, travelling at 33 kilometres per hour (km/h), collided into a concrete stop block²¹ as it reached the end of the runaway line.
- 1.27. The lead unit, FT5275, sustained substantial damage in the accident.
- 1.28. Both the LE and train manager were incapacitated by injury and four of the eight passengers received minor injuries.
- 1.29. No emergency alert was received by train control following the accident. Passengers and members of the public from nearby homes alerted emergency services to the collision. Emergency services then notified train control.

Train/vehicle information

- 1.30. Train 9379 was a two-car Matangi EMU used on Wellington's suburban rail network. It consisted of an FP power unit and an FT trailer unit and was being driven from the FT trailer unit at the time of the accident. Matangi units were built in South Korea by Hyundai Rotem. FP5275 and FT5275 were 5000 series units, built between 2015 and 2016 with minor design modifications from the original 4000 series.

Personnel information

- 1.31. The train was crewed by an LE and a train manager. Both personnel had been employed by Transdev Wellington since 2016 and held full and current certifications for their roles. As a result of the accident both personnel received injuries requiring hospitalisation.

¹⁸ Lineside equipment designed to automatically apply a train's brakes by tripping an external lever on the train when activated by a train passing a signal at stop.

¹⁹ A lever connected to Transdev trains that is activated when it comes into contact with a fixed train stop and, in turn, activates the train's braking system. It was designed to interact with equipment at selected signal locations to mitigate trains running past signals at stop.

²⁰ A device mounted on the roof of electric trains that draws power from the overhead lines.

²¹ A structure fixed at the termination of a running line or siding to arrest slow-moving vehicles (as defined in KiwiRail's online New Zealand Rail Operating Rules and Procedures glossary, accessed in July 2026). The Khandallah stop block was installed during major maintenance works in April 2025.

2 Further lines of inquiry

He pakirehua anō

- 2.1. A full inquiry into this occurrence is continuing. A final report, setting out findings, safety issues and recommendations, if any, will be issued at the completion of this inquiry.
- 2.2. The Commission is continuing to collate and verify evidence directly relating to the accident and is pursuing several lines of inquiry of a systemic nature.

3 Data summary

Whakarāpopoto raraunga

Vehicle particulars

Train type and number	Passenger train 9379 consisting of FP5275 and FT5275
Classification:	Matangi-class electric multiple unit
Year of manufacture:	2015–2016
Operator:	Transdev Wellington Limited

Date 6 June 2026

Location Khandallah, Johnsonville Line

Operating crew one locomotive engineer, one train manager

Injuries two crew requiring hospitalisation and four passengers receiving medical attention

Damage substantial damage to FT5275

4 Conduct of the inquiry

Te whakahaere i te pakirehua

- 4.1. On 6 June 2026, New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi notified the Commission of the occurrence. The Commission subsequently opened an inquiry under section 13(1) of the Transport Accident Investigation Commission Act 1990 and appointed an Investigator-in-Charge.
- 4.2. Commission investigators attended the site that evening and, over the following days, conducted a site investigation that included:
 - photography and video recordings
 - distance measurements
 - signal-visibility assessments.
- 4.3. The Commission obtained documentation and records including:
 - Tranzlog data of the locomotive
 - signal logs
 - closed-circuit television footage
 - mobile phone records
 - track and infrastructure records
 - train control voice recordings
 - train control system replays.
- 4.4. Commission investigators conducted interviews with the locomotive engineer, train controller, witnesses and passengers.
- 4.5. The Commission issued a protection order on the train, and it was transported to a secure location for examination.
- 4.6. On 26 August 2026, the Commission approved a draft interim report for circulation to seven interested parties for their comment.
- 4.7. Four interested parties provided a detailed submission, one interested party replied that they had no comment and two interested parties did not provide a response. Any changes as a result of these submissions have been included in the final interim report.
- 4.8. On 23 September 2026, the Commission approved the final interim report for publication.

Abbreviations

Whakapotonga

EMU	electric multiple unit
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JVL	Johnsonville Line
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Glossary

Kuputaka

departure signal	the signal controlling entry into the section of track beyond a station
down main	in double-line areas, the track generally used by southbound trains
dropped track	a condition occurring when the signalling system registers the track as being occupied
interlocking	points and signalling that are electrically or mechanically arranged to prevent conflicting train movements
mimic screen	graphical user interface of the train control system
pantograph	a device mounted on the roof of electric trains that draws power from the overhead lines
stop block	a structure fixed at the termination of a running line or siding to arrest slow-moving vehicles
train control	responsible for track authorisations and the safe movement of rail traffic
up main	in double-line areas, the track generally used by northbound trains

Kōwhaiwhai - Māori scroll designs

TAIC commissioned its four kōwhaiwhai, Māori scroll designs, from artist Sandy Rodgers (Ngāti Raukawa, Tūwharetoa, MacDougal). Sandy began from thinking of the Commission as a vehicle or vessel for seeking knowledge to understand transport accident tragedies and how to avoid them. A 'waka whai mārama' (i te ara haumarū) is 'a vessel/vehicle in pursuit of understanding'. Waka is a metaphor for the Commission. Mārama (from 'te ao mārama' – the world of light) is for the separation of Rangitāne (Sky Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) by their son Tāne Māhuta (god of man, forests and everything dwelling within), which brought light and thus awareness to the world. 'Te ara' is 'the path' and 'haumarū' is 'safe' or 'risk free'.

Corporate: Te Ara Haumarū - the safe and risk free path



The eye motif looks to the future, watching the path for obstructions. The encased double koru is the mother and child, symbolising protection, safety and guidance. The triple koru represents the three kete of knowledge that Tāne Māhuta collected from the highest of the heavens to pass their wisdom to humanity. The continual wave is the perpetual line of influence. The succession of humps represents the individual inquiries.

Sandy acknowledges Tāne Māhuta in the creation of this Kōwhaiwhai.

Aviation: Ngā hau e whā - the four winds



To Sandy, 'Ngā hau e whā' (the four winds), commonly used in Te Reo Māori to refer to people coming together from across Aotearoa, was also redolent of the aviation environment. The design represents the sky, cloud, and wind. There is a manu (bird) form representing the aircraft that move through Aotearoa's 'long white cloud'. The letter 'A' is present, standing for a 'Aviation'.

Sandy acknowledges Ranginui (Sky father) and Tāwhirimātea (God of wind) in the creation of this Kōwhaiwhai.

Maritime: Ara wai - waterways



The sections of waves flowing across the design represent the many different 'ara wai' (waterways) that ships sail across. The 'V' shape is a ship's prow and its wake. The letter 'M' is present, standing for 'Maritime'.

Sandy acknowledges Tangaroa (God of the sea) in the creation of this Kōwhaiwhai.

Rail: rerewhenua - flowing across the land



The design represents the fluid movement of trains across Aotearoa. 'Rere' is to flow or fly. 'Whenua' is the land. The koru forms represent the earth, land and flora that trains pass over and through. The letter 'R' is present, standing for 'Rail'.

Sandy acknowledges Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and Tāne Mahuta (God of man and forests and everything that dwells within) in the creation of this Kōwhaiwhai.



Transport Accident Investigation Commission

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