



# How one man did this

A GUARD was away from his post when a passenger train crashed into another train yesterday, causing more than \$5 million damage and throwing rail services into chaos.

A driver was shunting, or reversing, his train into Waterfall station when it struck another suburban train, which was stationary at the platform, at 4.04am.

The impact sent one carriage 10m into the air and knocked down a concrete overhead walkway.

A guard should have been at the other end of the shunting train to alert the driver of any danger, using bell signals.

But CityRail group general manager Lucio Di Bartolomeo told *The Daily Telegraph Mirror* that "clearly" the guard was not in his lookout position at the time of the crash, a standard procedure during shunting.

"When the front car of the moving train hit the rear carriage (of the stationary train), clearly he (the guard)

By KELVIN BISSETT

wasn't there," Mr Di Bartolomeo said.

He said the guard could not have been in the cabin at the leading end of the train "or we would have had a real tragedy".

Had the guard been at his post, he could not have survived the crash, Mr Di Bartolomeo said.

Remarkably, no-one was seriously hurt in the crash.

Two crew members from each train suffered minor bruising.

These four men — two drivers and two guards — have been

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The scene at Waterfall station yesterday after a shunting train hit a stationary passenger train. Picture: PAUL HUTTON



# Battle to clear line



Twisted metal and broken concrete make up the wreckage of the two passenger trains at Waterfall yesterday. Picture: NATHAN EDWARDS

**EMERGENCY** crews were working through the night in an effort to clear the tracks blocked by yesterday's train crash.

State Rail officials hoped the second damaged line, covered with debris from the mangled carriages and the fallen footbridge, would be open before this morning's peak-hour rush, but there were fears commuters could still face delays.

CityRail spokesman Ron Hall said last night a "breakdown gang" of more than 100 workers was at Waterfall station and a relief crew was replacing them at midnight.

He said clearing the line of wreckage was "a mammoth job" and a 400-tonne crane was brought in to help lift the heavy debris for line-workers to carry out repairs.

"The first priority is to get the tracks cleared of the carriages and concrete bridge spans," Mr Hall said.

"The actual track is OK, but the overhead wiring and signalling equipment will need re-paring."

By EVIE  
GELASTOPOULOS

Workers used large metal cutters to shred the metal carriages so they could be lifted off the tracks and on to flat-top trucks.

Their job was made even more difficult because live high-voltage lines have fallen on to the tracks and required specialist electricity workers to fix them.

The clean-up and repair operation began after the two trains crashed at 4am. By noon yesterday, the city-bound track was back in use and enabled trains to run in both directions.

Mr Hall said the forecast last night was that the south-bound track would be up and running by 4am this morning.

"It's quite an exercise in 24 hours," he said.

Thousands of South Coast commuters were forced to take shuttle buses to get to work yesterday.

About 8000 passengers were delayed for more than an hour during the morning peak period alone.

Both north- and south-bound lines were

immediately blocked by two carriages that had skewed in different directions during the early morning collision.

The disruptions continued into the evening peak hour despite CityRail emergency crews being able to re-open one line after midday on the busy link between Sydney and Wollongong.

Most trains were getting through with only minor delays after the re-opening, but passengers wanting to alight at Waterfall station had to use either Sutherland or Thirroul stations.

Buses were then used to move Waterfall passengers to the closed station.

CityRail spokesman Ron Hall said last night that he expected both lines should be operating for this morning's peak period, although there were no guarantees.

"We will be doing all we can to ensure the line is open and services are back to normal," he said.

The collision caused at least \$5 million damages, including two \$2 million Tangara carriages which would have to be written off.

No one was seriously injured in the accident,



Railmen survey the wreckage yesterday

## Inquiry into \$5 million train crash

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removed from duty pending the outcome of an inquiry, begun yesterday by police and State Rail Authority investigators.

Mr Di Bartolomeo said in a statement earlier yesterday the collision was caused by human error rather than any malfunction or signalling error.

"On the evidence so far, it

appears the rules were not followed and that it is a matter that the formal inquiry, which has been set up, will closely examine," Mr Di Bartolomeo said.

In the crash, the front and rear cars of the trains were left skewed on to the platform with sheet metal ripped away and dented as if they were soft drink cans.

Thousands of peak-hour commuters were delayed by

the collision.

The stationary train was the 4.03am to Sydney, running one minute late.

Then, the other train moved out of the storage yards at Waterfall and shunted towards the station, where it was scheduled to leave for Sydney at 4.50am.

Sergeant Dana Jennings, of Engadine police, said the four train crew were all

breathalysed at the scene and their readings were negative.

"There's no suggestion of any criminality at this stage," Sgt Jennings said yesterday.

He said there appeared to be no signal failure, but the signal box had been sealed up for further investigation.

The State Rail inquiry is expected to take two weeks.