A FREIGHT train loaded with fuel and other goods has derailed in the Top End.

The rail accident happened not far from Pine Creek, about 280km south of Darwin, on Monday afternoon.

Railway owner Genesee & Wyoming Australia (GWA) used a private public relations company to speak on its behalf after reading media for most of yesterday.

Spin doctor Caroline Rhodes eventually released a statement late yesterday to confirm the incident. She said three locomotives, fuel wagons and a crew van derailed about 4.30pm.

“GWA confirms that no fuel tanks have been ruptured and spilled in the incident,” Ms Rhodes said.

“No one was injured as a result of the derailment and there are no environmental concerns as the train was hauling containers at the time.

“The Intermodal train was operated by GWA at the time of the incident. The incident resulted in damage to a minor section of track.”

Ms Rhodes said “appropriate authorities and regulatory services were notified immediately”.

“A repair crew has been dispatched from Darwin to remediate the site and recover the damaged locomotive,” she said.

“The track is expected to remain closed today.”

A Ghann passenger train service heading north to Darwin was forced to end its journey at Katherine yesterday morning.

Travellers were transferred to buses for the final 384km leg of their trip.

“GWA places the highest priority on the safety of its work force and the safety of communities where we operate.”

“The cause of the latest derailment is unknown at this stage but an investigation into the incident has commenced, in full cooperation with relevant authorities.”

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) duty officer, Mike Walker, confirmed that the organisation was aware the derailment had occurred.

Mr Walker said ATSB and GWA would each conduct their own investigations into the incident.

“But at this stage (ATSB) will not be attending the accident site,” he said.

In December 2011, a GWA train derailed and spilled about 1200 tonnes of toxic copper concentrate into the Edith River, north of Katherine.