

Item name: Big Log

Location: 1670 Solitary Islands Way Woolgoolga 2456

Coffs Harbour

Address: 1670 Solitary Islands Way

Planning: Northern

Suburb/nearest town: Woolgoolga 2456

Local govt area: Coffs Harbour

Parish:

State: NSW

County:

Other/former names:

Area/group/complex:

Group ID:

Aboriginal area: Gumbainggar

Curtilage/boundary:

Item type: Built

Group: Forestry and Timber Industry

Category: Other - Forestry & Timber Industry

Owner: Private - Individual

Admin codes:

Code 2:

Code 3:

Current use: Transport depot

Former uses: Timber mill

Assessed significance: Local

Endorsed significance:

Statement of significance: The Big Log is of local significance is demonstrating the history and economic importance of the now-largely defunct timber milling industry around Woolgoolga, which was, for decades, one of Woolgoolga's major industries. Located on a prominent rise above the Pacific Highway south of Woolgoolga, it is a distinctive example of roadside advertising and held in high esteem by the local community. It is strongly associated with the Hall family, a well-known local timber milling family.

Item name: Big Log

Location: 1670 Solitary Islands Way Woolgoolga 2456

Coffs Harbour

Historical notes of provenance: The early development of Woolgoolga ran in parallel with Coffs Harbour in that European settlers arrived at approximately the same time and for the same reasons. Its late development, like Coffs Harbour, can be attributed to difficult access by road and the lack of navigable rivers. The first road in the area went inland from Kempsey to Grafton bypassing the Coffs area.

The first settler came from the Clarence. On 1 January 1875 Thomas Small of Ulmarra took out a five-year Crown lease of 25,000 acres called 'Weelgoolga', though there is evidence that the land was already unofficially occupied by Small as early as 1872. It was managed as a single cattle run until 1880s after the lease expired and smaller selections became available for agriculture. From 1880 the first farmer was William Snare and following him other farmer-settlers began arriving in numbers from around 1883, and the names still closely associated with Woolgoolga start appearing in the records (Hofmeir, Hearne, Pullen etc). These first settlers came down from Grafton, the journey which took three days, and like those farmers in Coffs Harbour one of the first crops was sugar cane. Timber was also being harvested and small local sugar mills were set up by William Snare and William Pullen. By September 1884 Pullen's sugar mill was processing 8000 gallons of juice per day from locally grown sugar cane. William Pullen later converted his sugar mill to a timber mill following the sharp fall in sugar prices in the late 1880s.

Following the completion of the government jetty in 1892, the main produce exported from Woolgoolga was timber and sugar cane. The 1891 census gives Woolgoolga's population at 181 people inhabiting 45 dwellings.

In 1907 the BAT Co took over the Pullen sawmill at the jetty and began upscaling timber activities from a small local concern to that of a major activity using modern methods of harvesting and transport. Like it did in Coffs Harbour, the BAT Co built a 6 ½ mile long narrow-gauge tramline into the forest and the first steam locomotive ran in July 1907. In 1912 the Great Northern Timber (GNT) Co built another tramline north from Woolgoolga towards Corindi. Both these lines brought timber down to Woolgoolga jetty for loading onto ships.

The heyday of Woolgoolga's timber milling industry was the years prior to WWI and both BAT and GNT Co activities ceased in the 1920s. The construction of the North Coast Railway gave timber harvesting and milling a late boost from 1911 until 1924 but the rapid rate of harvest meant that the supply of timber soon began to dwindle. The closure of the government jetty in the 1940s also reflected the decline of the once important local industry.

Halls timber mill (later Parbury Henty)

Smaller, family-owned local milling operations around Woolgoolga continued until the 1990s. The local Hall family eventually owned several small timber mills around Woolgoolga, including the timber mill where the Big Log now stands.

According to local historians Merv and Joy Richardson, this site was originally the site of a small bush timber mill owned by Clouton and Blacker from the 1950s. It was acquired by Sid Moller in the late 1950s and then later by the Parbury Henty Group who went out of business in the 1980s.

The mill was then bought by Ossie Hall Jnr, whose family owned other small local timber mills.

According to the Richardsons, the Big Log was erected by Ossie Hall Jnr in the late 1980s – early 1990s, following re-routing of the Pacific Highway which left the timber mill fronting the highway.

The log is thought to be blue gum and to weigh 65 tonnes. The log came from a property at Bucca Creek and was erected on tall steel plinths as advertising for the mill.

The timber mill closed in c2000 and is now used as a transport depot.

Item name: Big Log

Location: 1670 Solitary Islands Way Woolgoolga 2456

Coffs Harbour

Themes: National theme

4. Settlement

3. Economy

3. Economy

State theme

Towns, suburbs and villages

Commerce

Forestry

Local theme

Designer: Ossie Hall Jnr

Builder: Ossie Hall Jnr

Year started: 1980

Year completed: 1990

Circa: Yes

Physical description: Locally harvested section of native blue gum raised on two steel brackets/plinths.

Thought to weigh 65 tonnes.

Physical condition

level:

Physical condition: Good. No visible signs of termite damage.

Archaeological

potential level:

Archaeological

potential Detail:

Modification dates:

Recommended List on a Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

management: Carry out interpretation, promotion and/or education use.

Management: Management category

Statutory Instrument

Recommended Management

Management name

List on a Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

Carry out interpretation, promotion and/or education

Further comments:

Criteria a): The Big Log is of local significance is demonstrating the history and economic importance of the now-largely defunct timber milling industry around Woolgoolga, which was, for decades, one of Woolgoolga's major industries.
[Historical significance]

Criteria b): Of local significance due to its association with the Hall family, a prominent local timber milling family.
[Historical association significance]

Criteria c): Of local significance as distinctive example of roadside advertising. It is located on a rise above the Pacific Highway just south of Woolgoolga and is clearly visible, especially travelling south along the Highway.
[Aesthetic/Technical significance]

Criteria d): Of local significance as a distinctive and prominent symbol of the timber milling industry around Woolgoolga and held in high esteem by the local community.
[Social/Cultural significance]

Criteria e):
[Research significance]

Item name: Big Log**Location:** 1670 Solitary Islands Way Woolgoolga 2456

Coffs Harbour

Criteria f): Of local significance as a distinctive example of roadside advertising.
[Rarity]**Criteria g):**
[Representative]**Intactness/Integrity:** Good level of integrity.

References:	Author	Title	Year
	Neil Yeates	Coffs Harbour Vols 1 and 2	1990
	EJE Consulting	CHCC Heritage Study	1998
	Neil Yeates	Woolgoolga: History of a Village	1994
	Merv and Joy Richardson	Pers comm	2013

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Robin Hedditch	Coffs Harbour Heritage Study		2013

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
	PART LOT	61		DP	1005804

Latitude:**Longitude:****Location validity:****Spatial accuracy:****Map name:****Map scale:****AMG zone:****Easting:****Northing:****Listing: Name****Title**
Heritage study**Number****ListingDate****Data entry:** Data first entered: 11/06/2013

Data updated: 20/08/2014

Status: Partial

Item name: Big Log

Location: 1670 Solitary Islands Way Woolgoolga 2456

Coffs Harbour

Image:



Caption: Big Log and former sawmill site

Copy right:

Image by: R Hedditch

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/345cbae9c94c39242d6ac2f36e38aa3eda6.jpg>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Thumb_test345cbae9c94c39242d6ac2f36e38aa3eda6.jpg