

**Item name:** BAT Co relics**Location:** 73 River Street Woolgoolga 2456

Coffs Harbour

**Address:** 73 River Street**Planning:** Northern**Suburb/nearest town:** Woolgoolga 2456**Local govt area:** Coffs Harbour**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Other/former names:** Bat Tramline Relics - Archaeological**Area/group/complex:****Group ID:****Aboriginal area:** Gumbainggar**Curtilage/boundary:****Item type:** Archaeological-Terrestrial**Group:** Forestry and Timber Industry**Category:** Other - Forestry & Timber Industry**Owner:** Local Government**Admin codes:****Code 2:****Code 3:****Current use:** Monument**Former uses:****Assessed significance:** Local**Endorsed significance:** Local

**Statement of significance:** The tramway has local historic significance for its association with the British Australia Timber Company's private tramway network which was an essential part of the overall timber getting venture in the Coffs harbour region, particularly the hardwood timber trade. The identifiable relics are positive evidence of the route and extent of the British Australia Timber Tramway network. It has local technological significance for its potential to contribute to an understanding of the changing transport technologies and the changing techniques used in obtaining raw material and delivering it to the market from the early 20th century.

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**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, a 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. To load boats and to unload machinery acquired for his new, larger sugar mill, William Pullen built a jetty slide or boat ramp at the eastern end of Woolgoolga beach which allowed punts to be winched out to sea to waiting ships and to be pulled back by bullock teams. William Pullen later converted his sugar mill to a timber mill following the sharp fall in sugar prices in the late 1880s. By September 1884 Pullen's sugar mill was processing 8000 gallons of juice per day from locally grown sugar cane.

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.

With work having started on the North Coast Railway line in 1911, the supply of hardwood sleepers boosted the local timber industry. At the beginning of 1916 GNT had cut and stockpiled 3500 sleepers over three weeks and the mill, at once time considered the largest in Australia, provided most of the employment in the small town.

However, at this fast rate of harvesting, the timber supplies soon ran out, and the timber industry around Woolgoolga was well into decline by WWI. Like other towns and villages in the Coffs area, dairying was profitable for a time, and the Woolgoolga Butter Factory, run as a co-operative was built near the jetty on Wharf Street. However, dairying was never the major local industry in Woolgoolga that it was for other north-coast towns. The butter factory operated through the 1920s, when dairying too went into decline.

#### BAT relics

These relics from the Woolgoolga BAT tramline were installed in their current location in 1988 as part of the Bicentennial celebrations and to record and mark the history of BAT activities in Woolgoolga. Most of the original 6 ½ mile tramline has disappeared though historic parish maps show the location of the line. Some evidence such as bridge pylons across creeks still exists. The line ran along Woolgoolga Creek in approximately this location to bring logs down from the forest to the BAT mill at the base of the jetty.

The decision to erect the relics as a Bicentennial project was undertaken by the Woolgoolga Art Gallery which leases the Crown land.

**Themes:** **National theme**

- 4. Settlement
- 3. Economy

**State theme**

- Towns, suburbs and villages
- Forestry

**Local theme**

**Designer:** British Australia Timber Co

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**Builder:** British Australia Timber Co

**Year started:** 1907

**Year completed:**

**Circa:** Yes

**Physical description:** The item consists of a large sawn log fixed with chains on to a 3 metre long section of tramway.

**Physical condition** Good  
**level:**

**Physical condition:** Intact

**Archaeological**  
**potential level:**

**Archaeological**  
**potential Detail:**

**Modification dates:**

**Recommended management:** Prepare a maintenance schedule or guidelines  
Carry out interpretation, promotion and/or education.

**Management:** **Management category**  
Recommended Management  
Recommended Management

**Management name**  
Prepare a maintenance schedule or guidelines  
Carry out interpretation, promotion and/or education

**Further comments:**

**Criteria a):** Of local significance in demonstrating the history of the hardwood timber milling industry in Woolgoolga. The site marks the line of the BAT tramline built in 1907 that ran from the jetty into the forest and brought timber down to be milled before being shipped from the jetty. It represents one of the formative industries that shaped the growth of Woolgoolga.

**Criteria b):**  
[Historical  
association  
significance]

**Criteria c):**  
[Aesthetic/  
Technical  
significance]

**Criteria d):** Of local significance as a Bicentennial project initiated by the Woolgoolga Art Group in 1988, indicating the desire of the local community to record and celebrate its early history.

**Criteria e):** Able to reveal information about early timber milling in Woolgoolga and the route and extent of the BAT tram network post-1907. It has potential to contribute to a greater understanding of changing technologies used to obtain raw materials and deliver them to markets.

**Criteria f):** Rare within the Coffs Harbour local government area and of local significance.

**Criteria g):**  
[Representative]

**Intactness/Integrity:** Good level of integrity.

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References:	Author	Title	Year
	Neil Yeates	Coffs Harbour Vols 1 and 2	1990
	Neil Yeates	Woolgoolga: History of a Village	1994

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	EJE Consulting	CHCC Heritage Study		1998
	Robin Hedditch	Coffs Harbour Heritage Study		2013

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
	LOT	682		DP	618948

**Latitude:****Longitude:****Location validity:****Spatial accuracy:****Map name:****Map scale:****AMG zone:****Easting:****Northing:****Listing: Name****Title**  
Local Environmental Plan**Number**  
I96**ListingDate**  
27/09/2013**Data entry:** Data first entered: 22/05/2013

Data updated: 11/01/2014

Status: Partial

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**Image:**



**Caption:** BAT relics

**Copy right:**

**Image by:** R Hedditch

**Image date:**

**Image number:**

**Image url:** <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/345aceab81419d54d5bb6c906491957a297.JPG>

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