

# Settlement of the Tuggerah Lakes

The ecological history of the Tuggerah Lakes over the last 200 years is closely linked to the pattern of European settlement both around the lakes and within the upper catchment. As settlement spread throughout the district, activities such as the clearing of land, logging, fishing and urban development have all had impacts on the ecology of the lakes. To understand when each of these impacts occurred, the settlement of the Tuggerah Lakes and its catchment has been divided into four broad time periods. These are;

- Aboriginal settlement
- The first European settlers (1820s – 1870s)
- Settlement after the opening of the railway (1880s – 1950s)
- Urban Development (1960s – 1990s)

Historical documents which provide an insight into the rates of settlement and associated activities during each of these time periods, are presented in the following sections. Table 1 provides a summary of some key dates in the development of the region.

**Table 1. Significant events in the development of the Tuggerah Lakes and its catchment**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
1825	<b>First settlers arrived.</b>
Early 1830s	<b>Logging commenced in the upper catchment</b> , principally for cedar.
Early 1830s	<b>Felton Mathews surveyed the district.</b>
1832	<b>The Great North Road was opened</b> , principally as a means of providing access to the Hunter District from Sydney. There were two branches from this road into Wyong.
1830s	<b>Cabbage Tree Harbour provided a shipping point</b> for cedar from the 1830s onwards. Gosford was another such departure point.
Early 1850s	<b>Hargraves residence</b> at Noraville constructed using cedar from the valleys behind Wyong.
1854	<b>Jane Taylor acquired all the land of what is now The Entrance.</b> The property was operated as a dairy for the next three decades.
1875	<b>Billy Faulkner, the last full-blooded aboriginal of the district died.</b> (Stinson, vol 1, 1979)
Early 1880s	<b>Fishermen took up residence at Canton Beach.</b> The fish were sent by steamer to Sydney from the jetty at Cabbage Tree Harbour. When the railway opened in the late 1880s, many of the fishermen moved to Tacoma.
1885	<b>The Taylor family moved to their property at The Entrance</b> , to raise cattle for the bullock teams being used to haul timber in the valleys behind Wyong.
1887-89	<b>The completion of the Sydney-Newcastle railway</b> was the greatest change for the district. Trains came to Wyong in 1887, but the link across the Hawkesbury River to Sydney was only opened in 1889.
1888	<b>Wyong Public School</b> was opened in 1888 in temporary premises. A new school building was opened in 1898 when the enrolment was about 70. (Swancott 1963)
1889	<b>Telegraphic communication:</b> The railway station at Ourimbah had telegraphic facilities and the public were permitted to send messages from there as from 9 <sup>th</sup> April 1888.

**Table 1 continued**

1892	<b>Tuggerah Post Office opened.</b> (Swancott 1963)
1895	<b>The first guest house at The Entrance, Dunleith,</b> was opened by Mr and Mrs Walter Denniss. Visitors were transported by boat across the lake from Wyong.
1898	<b>Wyong population reached 200</b> (Stinson, vol 5, 1984)
1900	<b>Bayview Guest House was built</b> on the southern side of The Entrance by Mr and Mrs Denning. Mrs Denning was the eldest daughter of Richard Taylor. In 1903 Pinehurst was built by Richard Taylor's eldest son, Les Taylor. By 1912 the adult members of the Taylor family were operating 4 guest houses, and Bayview could accommodate 150 guests and also offered tent accommodation.
1901	<b>A stone jetty (Woodbury's Jetty) was built at Tuggerah</b> to allow dispatch of fish from the lakes to Tuggerah Railway Station. (This avoided the access problems caused by siltation at the mouth of Wyong River.)
Early 1900s	<b>Timber industry was at its peak.</b> Large export orders for timber, including an order for 540,000 sleepers for South Africa in 1903.
1901	<b>A traffic bridge across Wyong River was opened.</b> (This bridge was only single lane.)
1902-3	<b>The first bridge across Budgewoi Creek</b> was constructed by the Freeman family.
1903	<b>Norah Head lighthouse</b> was completed.
1903	<b>Alison Estate</b> (all the land around Wyong) was subdivided and auctioned.
Approx. 1903	<b>First motorised boats</b> used by fishermen. Previously, all fishing was done from rowing boats and sailing boats.
1905	<b>Rocky Point land sale</b> - Rockleigh (Rocky Point) subdivision advertised for sale.
1905	<b>Ourimbah Creek Bridge</b> was completed (to allow logs to be hauled from Berkeley Vale to the sawmills). In 1980 this old single lane bridge was replaced by a new concrete two lane bridge.
1906	<b>The first direct road link was formed between Wyong and The Entrance</b> via the Ourimbah Creek bridge.
1907	<b>Butter factory at Wyong</b> commenced operation. Dairy industry was expanding.
1908	The <b>snags in Wyong Creek were removed</b> allowing boat access from the lake to the township of Wyong.
1912	<b>Duplication of railway line</b> to Wyong was opened (Stinson, vol 2, 1980).
1915	<b>A long jetty was built</b> on Tuggerah Lake, just south of The Entrance, at what is now known as Long Jetty. This jetty was destroyed in the 1927 flood and replaced by a new one.
1916	<b>The bridge across Wallarah Creek,</b> of timber, was built in 1916, and replaced by the present concrete bridge in 1933. Prior to the construction of the wooden bridge, the road between Wyong and Budgewoi was via the top of Wallarah Creek and across to Doyalson.
1920	<b>Subdivision of 200 lots at The Entrance.</b> The Entrance had become a popular holiday resort. People would arrive by train to Wyong and then by boat across the lake. There were 15 guesthouses operating. During holidays, The Entrance also became a tent city, as the Taylors had created a large camping ground.

**Table 1 continued**

Early 1920s	<b>Budgewoi subdivided.</b> East Budgewoi, an area of 13 acres was sold by the Hargraves in the early 1920s and the new owners subdivided it into 39 blocks.
1920s	<b>Ferry service to Toukley.</b> In the 1920s Henry Hargraves was running a regular daily ferry service from Toukley, Buff Point and Wallarah Point to Wyong, using a launch called the “Helmar” (Stinson, vol 4, 1983).
1922-23	<b>The Entrance-Wyong road.</b> A road that could be used by vehicles was opened between Wyong and The Entrance in about 1922. Previously the route was only a bush track through the scrub. The first bus service from Wyong to The Entrance commenced in 1923, and another from Gosford to The Entrance. This eventually led to the decline in the ferry boat service between Wyong and The Entrance.
1925	<b>Work commenced on the Pacific Highway.</b>
1927	<b>Entrance Hotel completed.</b>
1929	<b>Electricity.</b> The Erina Shire Council made arrangements to buy power from Newcastle and transmit it by high tension line to the Shire. In that year electricity was switched on at Wyong.
1929	<b>Construction of the Wyong water supply commenced.</b> A reservoir was built on Chapman’s Hill above the town and water was pumped to it from the Wyong River.
1930	<b>Pacific Highway was opened</b> through Mooney Mooney and Gosford. Previously traffic from Sydney went through Wisemans Ferry along the Great Northern Road to Wollombi and the Hunter.
1934	<b>Single lane, wooden bridge across The Entrance</b> completed.
1939	<b>Walarah Point Bridge</b> (or Toukley Bridge) was opened.
1940s	<b>Electricity connected to Tuggerawong, Wyongah, Tacoma and Toukley.</b>
1945	<b>First vehicular bridge over the Hawkesbury</b> was opened. Previously, vehicles were transported across the river on a punt and at busy periods there could be delays of a few hours.
1952	<b>Electricity connected to Budgewoi.</b>
1954	<b>Wyong Shire population reaches 13,100.</b>
1956-67	Wyong Shire Council began <b>pipng water to the northern areas of the shire</b> , and Budgewoi connections began in 1956 and were completed in 1967.
1957-58	<b>New railway bridge</b> built at Wyong. Old railway bridge became traffic bridge in 1963.
1959	<b>Noraville sanitary depot opened.</b> Other depots were located at Mardi and Bateau Bay.
1960	<b>Electrification of Gosford to Sydney railway line.</b>
1961	<b>Reticulated water supply to The Entrance.</b> Work commenced on the construction of a dam at Mardi which was the initial stage of “The Entrance Water Supply Scheme”. This scheme eventually provided reticulated water throughout the Shire.
1962	<b>Population.</b> Gorokan had a permanent population of 400 in 1962. (Swancott 1963)
1965	<b>Completion of the road between The Entrance and Toukley.</b>
1967	<b>Munmorah Power Station</b> commenced operation.

**Table 1 continued**

1969	<b>New concrete bridge at The Entrance</b> completed.
mid to late 1960s	<b>Sewerage scheme commenced.</b> Wyong Sewage Treatment Plant completed in 1969.
1982	<b>Population.</b> The Shire had a population of 72,000 in 1982.
1982	<b>Railway line electrified</b> from Gosford to Newcastle. This allows regular services from Sydney to Wyong.
1983-85	<b>Freeway west of Wyong opened.</b> This, combined with the new electrified rail line, opened up the area to urban development as a satellite town of Sydney. Freeway bypassing Peats Ridge, including the Mooney Ck Bridge, opened in 1985. Many new residents started commuting to Sydney for work.
1980s	<b>Urban development.</b> Large areas of land developed for housing including Berkeley Vale, Killarney Vale, Chittaway Point, Lake Haven.
Late 1980s – early 1990s	<b>Tuggerah Lakes Restoration Project.</b> \$13 million spent on restoration of foreshores. Included deepening of nearshore zone by dredging of ooze and mud, using this material to extend the foreshore up to 50 metres into the lake, and major reclamation work at Picnic Point and near Terilbah Island at the North Entrance. (Some reclamation work caused acid sulphate problems.) Dredging of the entrance channel to maintain a permanent opening. Installation of silt traps at the outlets of stormwater drains.
1990	<b>Munmorah Power Station,</b> two of the four units taken off line.
1990	<b>Wyong Shire sewerage scheme completed.</b>
Mid 1990s	<b>Munmorah Power Station reduces its operations – one unit remains operational as a standby plant.</b>
1990s	<b>More urban development</b> -Blue Haven, Lake Haven, Watanobbi, Warnervale, Kanwal, Tuggerah, Glenning Valley. Shire population is 116,000 in 1996.