



The wharf, in use between 1862 and 1952, was restored by the National Trust, Department of Planning and local residents. It is also a favourite fishing spot for tourists and locals as it features deep water and spectacular scenery.

History

The first wharf at Tathra (not Kianinny) was constructed around 1860-1861 and was in the form of a simple jetty projecting into the ocean. It was known as the Farmer's Sea Wharf. This structure was quickly superseded in 1861-1862 with the erection of a new wharf built over the earlier structure. It was constructed from turpentine timber brought down from the north coast. The structure was consequently extended in 1873, 1878, 1886, 1889 up to the turn of the century. There is a record of two sheds being erected on the early wharf of which there are no remains but drawings prepared by the Department of Public Works survive.

The wharf was built in response to the need for coastal shipping after the commencement of the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company in 1858. The first cargo vessel to call at Tathra was in 1858. It moored offshore and the cargo was transported by small boat from a location known as Kangarutha. A store shed was constructed there in the same year and an access road a year later. The following year Kianinni was discovered to be more sheltered for loading and a store was built there. Cargo was still shipped from the beach by small boat to vessels moored in the bay.

During the early period of the wharf Public Works records show that significant repairs were carried out to the wharf structure including re-piling and change of location of piles as techniques of piling improved. The changes and increase in size of the wharf can also be clearly related to increased shipping needs, larger ships visiting the wharf and the need for deeper mooring.

The wharf and buildings continued to be extended after the turn of the century. The cattle and pig yards were added in 1901, the wharf was again extended in 1903 and the buildings reconstructed with the present two storey structure in 1907. At this time a major upgrade took place with the introduction of spring-loaded wrought iron buffers to assist in the berthing of larger vessels in the difficult north-easterly seas to which the wharf was exposed. This was in conjunction with a mooring buoy to the north east of the jetty. When ships berthed at the wharf they would drop anchor to the north west of the wharf and attach a spring line from the mooring buoy and from these would spring against the buffers in front of the wharf.



The position of the wharf was selected as it was the most protected position in the area particularly from the south.

Between 1907 and 1912 the wharf underwent major extensions in 8 definable stages including a sub-deck, jib crane, the addition of the cattle race, loading ramp and passenger shelter.

In 1919 the passenger shelter was replaced by a single storey shed abutting the two story building. This correlated with the decline in passenger transport by sea and the concentration on freight and cargo. With the advent of road transport further decline in shipping took place. The south coast was however one of the last areas to see the effects of other forms of transport as there was no adjacent railway line to carry bulk freight from the area to Sydney. The last ship to take freight from Tathra was in 1954.