

Queens Wharf Station



Railway to Morpeth

A railway linking the Port of Newcastle to Maitland opened in March 1858. Despite a concerted effort by Morpeth townspeople, not until 1864 was a branch line constructed from the main line at East Maitland. At first the terminus was just east of the Queen's Wharf Station. Later in the 1860s an extension was built to serve the commercial wharves, the flour mill and other industries, and passengers. Property owners whose land lay between the river and Swan Street faced adversity due to the resumption of the central part of their allotments for the terrace needed for the rail line.

Rail carriage to the wharves was an improvement on the bullock and horse teams that previously brought the wool clip and other produce to the port although this advantage was greatly lessened when the Hawkesbury River Rail Bridge opened in 1889. In later years Morpeth railway was mainly used for passenger traffic and in 1953 the line closed.

The old railway terrace can be seen from this point.

The Coal Staithe

John Eales, a nearby landowner and director of one of the Hunter River shipping companies, opened a coal pit on his estate in 1847 and brought coal to Morpeth to supply his steamships. Coal mining was eventually to replace agriculture in some localities, such as Minmi, and later, at Greta and Cessnock.

The government built a loading staithe at Queen's Wharf in 1864 linked to the rail line, hopeful that Morpeth would develop as a coal port. This did not eventuate. Minmi coal was shipped at Hexham instead and the staithe was used to export only a little Greta coal in the 1870s.

However, building the coal staithe and extending the railway from Queen's Wharf Station to the eastern end of the town greatly changed the riverside environment. Several buildings were demolished that had been work places for many people.

Coal Staithe
State Library of NSW

