



Shifting Sands and Ships

In 1841 the Bellinger Valley was visited by the Government Surveyor, Clement Hodgkinson, who identified the area as a valuable source of cedar. Cedar getters arrived soon after, but, with no roads out of the valley, all trade came and went by sea. The entrance over the river bar was shallow and dangerous for the shipping which transported timber to Sydney and supplied the growing community with goods and food.



SS DOEPEL AND TUG REPTON CIRCA 1930

After many shipping accidents a Pilot Station was established in 1868. In 1880 steam tugs were introduced and by 1902 the Pilot and his crew were assisting 300 vessels a year over the bar.

"The Bellinger River suffers the disability of having an entrance which is so hampered by a shifting bar and a wickedly varying channel as to occasion great difficulty and considerable risk to those who are relied upon to maintain the direct communication with Sydney by sea"

NORTH COAST STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY 1909

Despite the training walls and breakwaters of the Bellinger River that were constructed over a 15 year period from the early 1890s, the bar continued to be difficult. Regular dredging was required to keep the channel open. The arrival of the railway from the south and road bridges across the rivers to the north, accessing deep water facilities at Coffs Harbour, resulted in the decline of the shipping to the Bellinger. Dredging operations ceased in 1929, the Pilot Station ceased operation in 1935 and since then the estuary has been largely used for recreation and fishing.

More to explore...

Pick up one of our other **Visit Urunga ...and surrounds** leaflets to help you explore our beautiful area further – Discover Urunga, Walking Urunga, Cycling Urunga, Heritage Urunga, Birds in Urunga & Boating Urunga.



HOW TO GET TO THE URUNGA BOARDWALK

Driving south on the Pacific Hwy: after the Kalang River bridge, turn first right at the Visitor Information Centre, and follow the road round under the highway and railway, past the golf course. Turn right at the t-junction onto Morgo Street. Turn left into the Urunga Heads Holiday Park. Drive ahead for 300metres to the Urunga Boardwalk car park.

Driving north on the Pacific Hwy: turn right on to Tourist Drive 16 at Hungry Head Road (16kms after Nambucca Heads). Follow the road into Urunga and turn right into the Urunga Heads Holiday Park. Drive ahead for 300metres to the Urunga Boardwalk car park.

AIR

Fly direct to Coffs Coast Airport (20 mins from Urunga) from Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne.

TRAIN

Countrylink trains daily – stop at Urunga by appointment.

BUS

Sydney-Brisbane buses stop at Urunga. New England Coaches run buses along Waterfall Way from Urunga to Tamworth three times a week.

Visitor Information Centres

Bellingen Shire
Pacific Highway, Urunga
Phone: 02 6655 5711

Coffs Coast
Cnr Pacific Hwy & McLean Street
Phone: 02 6648 4990

Waterfall Way Visitor Centre
Hyde Street, Bellingen
Phone: 02 6655 1522

Dorrigo Visitor Centre
Hickory Street, Dorrigo
Phone: 02 6657 2486

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre
Dome Road, Dorrigo
Phone: 02 6657 2309



Urunga BOARDWALK



w a t e r f a l l w a y



dorrigo • bellingen • urunga

Urunga BOARDWALK



URUNGA BOARDWALK

The Urunga Boardwalk has to be one of the best boardwalks on the east coast, with spectacular views from the entire length of the boardwalk. Starting from the charming town of Urunga, the boardwalk passes along the banks of the Kalang River, to the junction with the Bellinger River and out to the ocean, with stunning views inland past Urunga town and up the river valleys to the Great Dividing Range, north across the rivers to Mylestom Spit and south along the beach to Picket Hill and beyond to Nambucca Heads.



PHOTO CREDIT: ST IMAGES

The entire length of the boardwalk is wheelchair accessible. There are numerous rest areas with seating, as well as many interpretive signs along the boardwalk pointing out items of interest and telling the history of the area.

The original footbridge – 1908

After construction of the rock training walls in the late 1890s it became necessary for navigation lights to be installed to guide ships across the bar. The Pilot and boatmen of the village of Bellinger Heads (now Urunga) constructed a basic footway to gain easy daily access to the breakwall in all weather and tidal conditions to light and extinguish the acetylene lamp. This first footbridge was a series of planks supported by an uneven alignment of randomly spaced piers connecting to the breakwall.



There were no handrails and the walkway was only two planks wide. Then, in 1922, local volunteers constructed a more elaborate walkway, still only two planks wide, but including a handrail.



1940 Boardwalk

The footbridge was replaced in 1940 by a more substantial structure consisting of sixty 20 foot spans for a total length of 1,200 feet. It was 4 feet wide with 3 feet high handrails on each side and was built by five Bellinger Shire staff over a period of 15 weeks for a cost of 700 pounds. It was located just south of the original footbridge to allow for a 50 yard Olympic swimming area. Remains of the 1940s footbridge and timber piles from the old wharf can still be seen on the northern side of the existing boardwalk along the training wall.

1988 Boardwalk and further extensions

The boardwalk was replaced in the Bicentennial year of 1988 by a new structure located about five metres to the north, which constitutes the first 400 metres of the present day structure. In 1999 a 240 metre extension was added with a viewing deck located at the eastern end overlooking Mylestom Spit, the training wall and providing a spectacular view of the river and surrounding landscape. In 2006 the Urunga Lagoon Interpretive Boardwalk, a 260 metre low level boardwalk, was constructed, extending south into Urunga Lagoon.



2010 Boardwalk extension

The final extension of 360 metres, leading to the viewing platform overlooking the river mouth and the ocean beach, and providing stair access onto the beach, was constructed in July/August 2010.



The Diving Tower

The first structures to cater for swimming in the lagoon were dressing sheds and a diving tower, constructed in the 1920s when the water in the lagoon was much deeper. The tower was fairly basic, and was replaced by a more substantial structure in the early 1930s, with a lower and upper diving board and a lengthy access ramp back to the beach. This was in use until the mid 1970s. Six piers from this structure are visible in the lagoon today.

