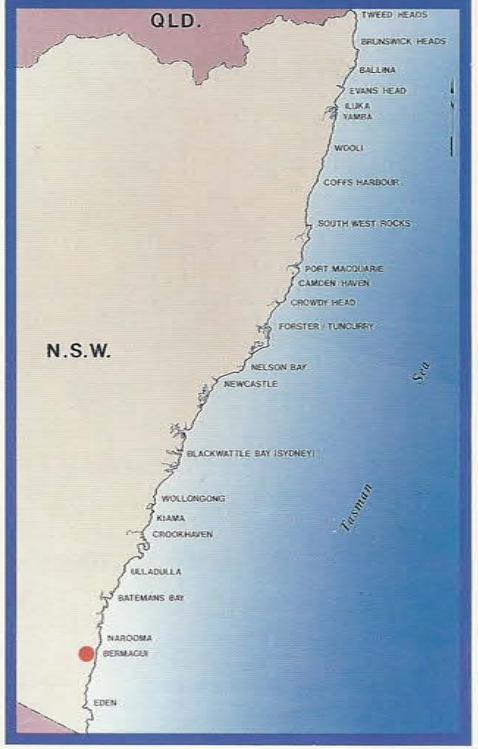
NSW FISHING PORTS PROGRAM



Since 1957, the Government has had a program to construct and improve fishing ports along the New South Wales coast.



Initially, the State Government established the NSW Fishing Ports Program to provide safer harbour entrances for the State's fishing fleets. It wasn't until later that the program expanded to include improved facilities such as wharves, jetties and moorings. The end result is much better support for the commercial needs of the fishing fleets.

The program is a great success. Not only has port development benefited commercial fishing and streamlined fleet operations, but in recent years it has also directly led to increased levels of fish production. By introducing the latest fish handling centres, the State's ports now make more public sales and offer far more community access to seafood produce.

While the commercial fleets benefit from the improved amenities the added bonus of all this development is that the local community and tourists also gain better access to the water. Indeed, the Fishing Ports Program can actually be a focus for people looking for some enjoyment on the water as well as for those interested in gaining a fresh haul of tasty fish.

For more information about the NSW Fishing Ports Program, or about specific fishing ports along the coast, you can contact any of the following Public Works Department offices:

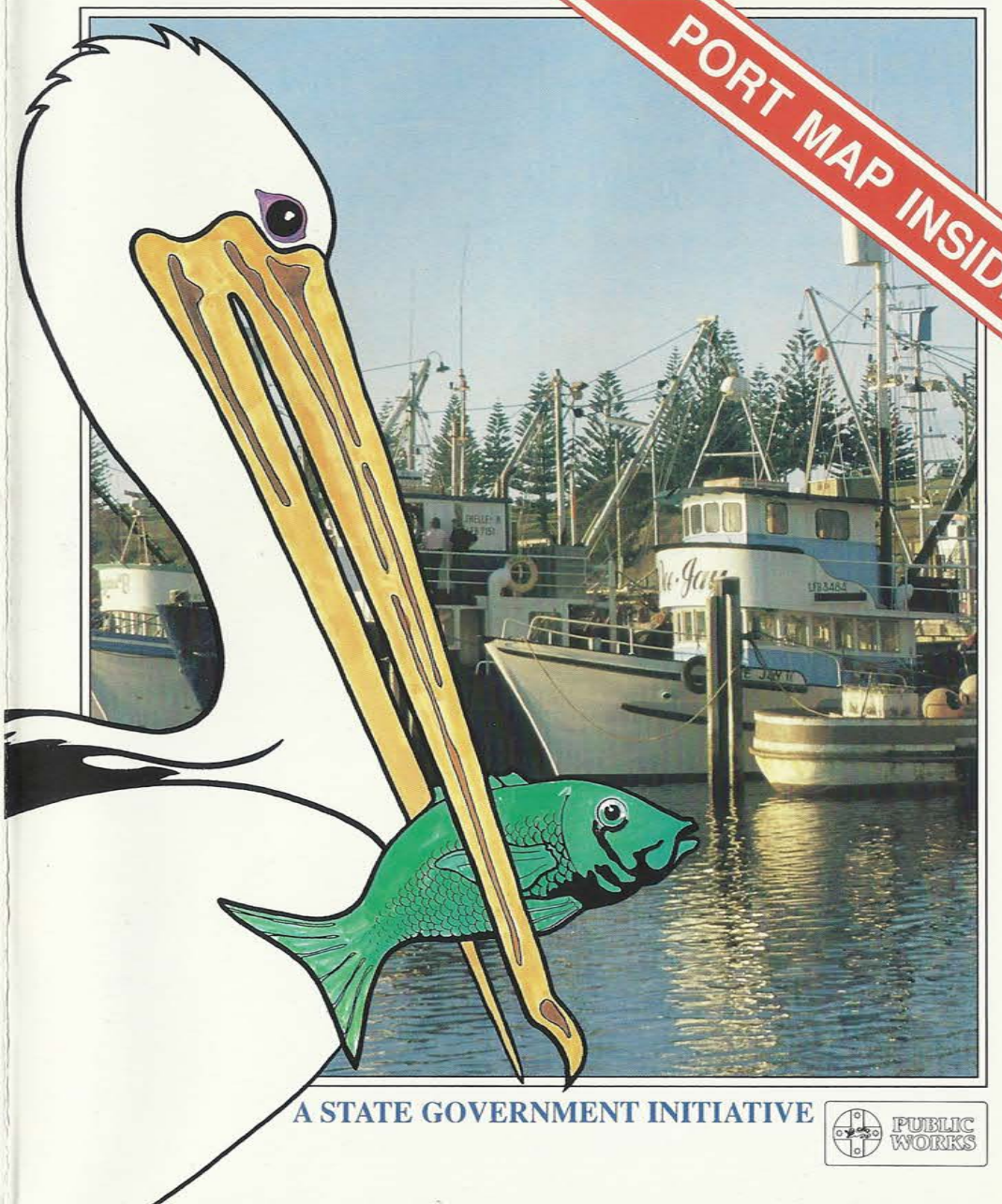
Lismore	(066) 21 1600
Coffs Harbour	(066) 52 0411
Newcastle	(049) 26 9711
Sydney	(02) 228 3722
Wollongong	(042) 26 8111

PUBLIC WORKS

NSW FISHING PORTS PROGRAM

BERMAGUI

PORT MAP INSIDE



A STATE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

PUBLIC WORKS

BERMAGUI FISHING PORT

Bermagui is a small river mouth basin, tightly landlocked, and strategically located between Eden and Ulladulla to provide fishing boats with an alternative unloading point and shelter from storms.



It was the first focus of major harbour work under the Government's Fishing Port Development Program 30 years ago.

EARLY START TO PORT WORKS

Bermagui's first boat harbour was formed in 1937 by dredging an existing shallow basin, to serve the local fishermen's co-operative building and timber jetty.

Until 1958, the river entrance was narrow and badly aligned, and anchorage room inside the harbour was limited. Large boats could not navigate the entrance channel except at high tide.

During 1958 and 1959, the Public Works Department built a breakwater and training walls at the harbour entrance, and dredged the harbour to enlarge it.

The 220m-long eastern training wall was separated from the headland by a wave trap.

Marram-grass planting helped to stabilise the deteriorating sand spit west of the breakwater.

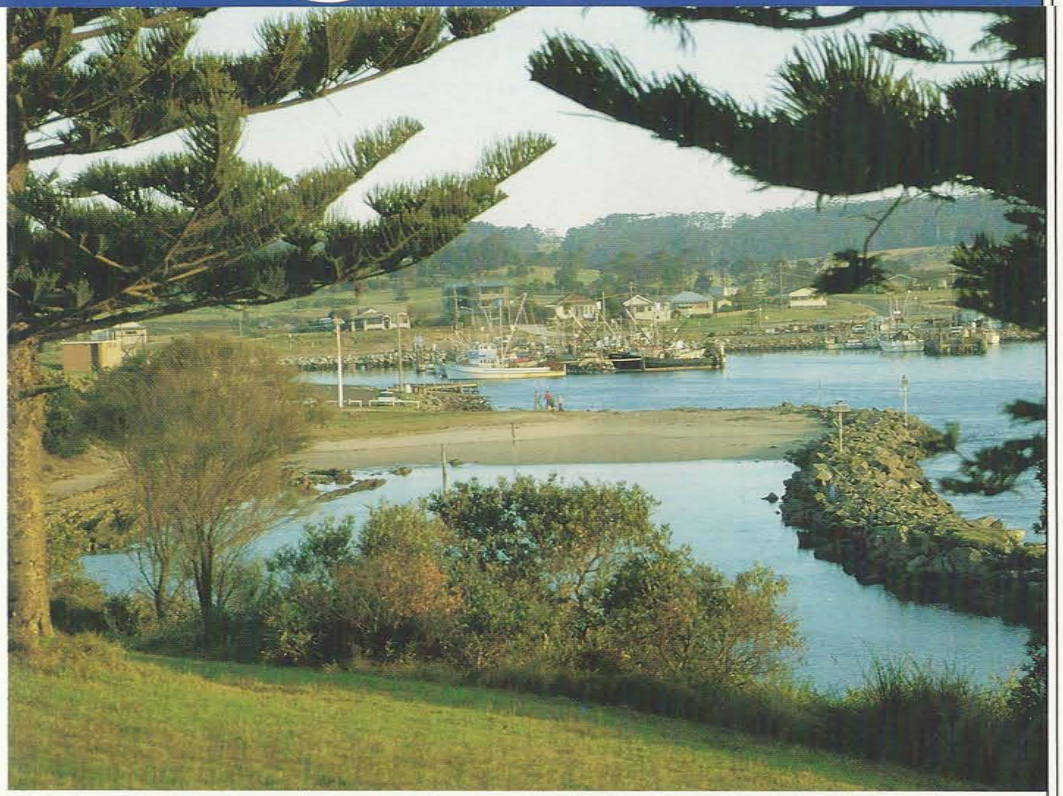
RECENT WORKS

In 1969, the Public Works Department built a fishermen's working jetty on the harbour's southern side to ease congestion at the existing wharf.

The Mumbulla Shire Council installed a concrete boatramp in 1971, and dredged Campbell's Cove, to the east of the harbour, to prepare for a small marina, which has been in use since 1978.

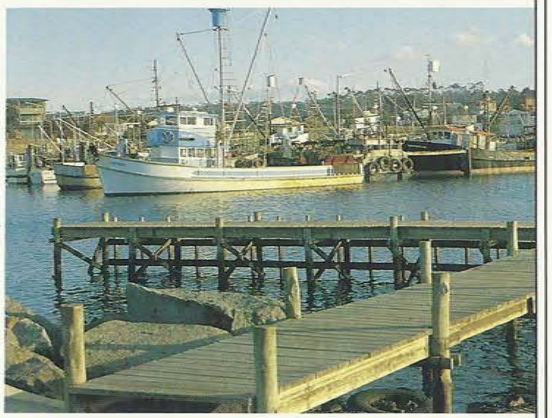
The fishermen's co-operative built its new building next to the working jetty in 1975.

Ten mooring piles were installed along the western wall of the harbour in 1978 for commercial boat use, with another 18 provided in the north-western corner of the harbour that year.

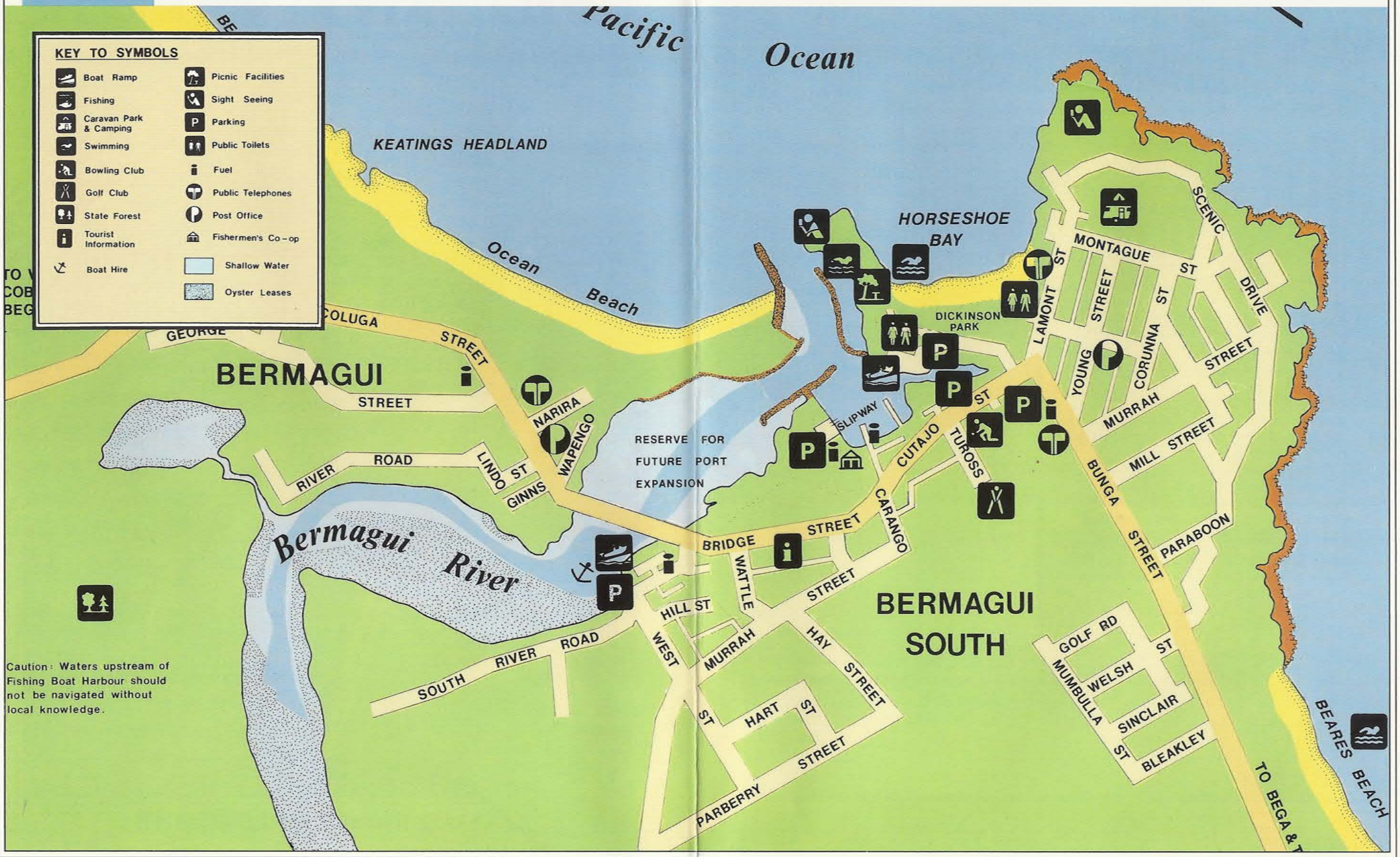


The northern training wall was extended by 80 metres to prevent erosion behind it, and bank protection works were carried out on the northern river banks.

The old timber jetty was closed in 1978. The Public Works Department replaced it with a commercial mooring jetty in 1981.



BERMAGUI FISHING PORT



Early History

Bermagui is Aboriginal for "canoe with paddles."

The first white man to make an overland journey to Bermagui is thought to have been William Tarlinton, a grazier from Braidwood, who followed the rivers south in search of pastures for his cattle.

With four others, he cut his way through to the coast in 1829, and soon after he built his home near Bermagui.

In 1833, Governor Bourke's party rode north from Twofold Bay as far as Bermagui. When he returned to Sydney, he told of the land available around the port, and Bermagui soon became the port for Cobargo and the surrounding grazing lands.

At first, each pastoralist chartered his own boat. But in 1858, the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company was chartered, providing the main means of transporting produce from the far-south coast until 1945.

For each area - Bermagui, Tathra, Merimbula and Eden - there was a wharf for coastal shipping, and bulk store, and sometimes a shop, hotel and a few houses.

An early settler in Bermagui was Thomas Moorhead of Eden, who started a sawmill and shipped the timber to Sydney by the sailing ketch "Advance". In 1880 the Public Works Department built a wharf and goods shed on the river bank.

When gold was discovered at nearby Montreal, 26 hotels were run up and stores, a post office and police camp were established.

About 8000 people rushed to the claims as good yields of gold were found. But the goldrush was shortlived.



Bermagui - the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Co's ship at the wharf



Bermagui - a view of the bay
Credit: Bega Valley Historical Society

FISHING FLEET TODAY

Bermagui's home fishing fleet is made up of a dozen ocean-going trawlers and nine trap and set line vessels.

The trawlers range in length from 12m to 17m and the trap and line vessels are from 7m to 12m.

Most of the catch is made up of trawled fish, although plenty of long-lining goes on in tuna season.

For some years a slipway business has operated at the port, on a site leased from the Government.

The port improvements carried out over the years by the Public Works Department have boosted the efficiency and effectiveness of the local fishing industry. At the same time, the work has enhanced the port and foreshore areas for the whole community and its visitors.



