

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

The Royal National Park was the second national park in the world, after Yellowstone in the United States.

Yellowstone	Wyoming Montana Idaho	United States	1/3/1872
Royal	NSW	Australia	26/4/1879
Benff	Alberta	Canada	1885
Glacier	British Columbia	Canada	1886
Yoho	British Columbia	Canada	1886
Tongariro	North Island	New Zealand	1887
Sequoia	California	United States	25/9/1890
Kings Canyon	California	United States	1/10/1890
Yosemite	California	United States	1/10/1890
Belair	South Australia	Australia	1892

The first ten national parks in the world.

Because it was such an early national park, the authorities were not sure of its purpose. Logging occurred, deer were introduced and military activities took place.

The railway opened on 9 March 1886. Level crossings were located at the Princes Highway and Lady Rawson Avenue (now only a walking track).



The National Park branch in 1931. The double-track near the junction has been made into a dead-end refuge siding but the double-track connection to the main line remains. ARHSnsw Track and Signal Diagrams 95, page 6.

A short length of double track was laid near the junction in 1899 to facilitate train movements at busy times. An Up refuge siding, which was located near the junction at Loftus, was formed on 3 December 1926. This had been the Up

line of the short double-track section to increase capacity on the line. It was abolished on 2 February 1939. The line had been electrified on 24 December 1926. An unusual skewed catenary was used. The catenary wire was attached to the wooden poles and the droppers (normally vertical) had to be placed at an angle to reach the contact wire.

The double-track junction was removed on 19 October 1943. The branch was then connected to the Down Illawarra track with a crossover to take trains from the branch to the Up track.



The approach to the old Royal National Park Station. The track to Platform 1 and the Up Siding went to the right of the signal box (which is still there) and the track to Platform 2, the Runround and Goods Siding went to the left of the signal box. The upper quadrant track controlled signal was put in place in January 1931. ARHS RRC 1012220.



Royal National Park from the eastern side showing No. 1 Platform and the Up Siding. The special train for the School Railway Clubs Association is on Platform 2. The date is 15 October 1960. EH Downs Collection. ARHSnsw Railway Resource Centre Royal National Park showing No. 1 Platform and the Up Siding. The special train for the School Railway Clubs Association is on Platform 2. The date is 15 October 1960. Skiller Collection. ARHSnsw Railway Resource Centre 015291.



The Royal National Park Station from the eastern side. The tracks are Platform 2, the Runround and Goods Siding. The pole to the right is on the loading bank, which is somewhat overgrown. ARHS RRC 065702.



The terminus of the Royal National Park Branch on 27 June 1964. The tracks are, from left to right, Goods Siding, Runround, No. 2 Platform, No. 1 Platform and Up Siding, the buffers of which are just visible on the right of the photo. The sidings were wired during electrification for the stabling of electric trains (but not the crossover on which the locomotive is located). NJ Simons Collection, ARHSnsw Railway Resource Centre 059834.



The National Park Station showing trains on three of the tracks at the terminus and charabancs to take people down to Audley. The angophora tree in the foreground is still there! Royal National Park postcard.



The temporary platform at The Royal National Park that was in use between the time the original station closed on 17 February 1978 and the new station opened on 28 April 1979. It was located on the Up side of the straight section of track on the Sydney side of the signal box. ARHS RRC 164145A.



The 1979 Royal National Park Station with one of the first Tangaras at the platform. John Oakes.



The 1979 track space showing the relationship between the old and new stations. The old station extended for another 150 metres or so behind the camera. John Oakes.

A Scouts' Camp Platform opened on the Down side at 16 miles 60 chains (just south of the Princes Highway level crossing) on 23 December 1946. It was 520 feet

(158 metres) long, that is the length of an eight-car electric train. The Scout Association held a Boy Scouts New South Wales “Corroboree” in a bush setting near the railway from 26 December 1946 to 6 January 1947.

The platform at National Park was 212 metres long, about 50 metres longer than a typical suburban station. Five parallel tracks were located at the terminus. The goods siding was the most easterly of the tracks and featured a loading bank, which was referred to as the Horse Platform in 1898. It was associated with military activity in the park in the early days. A scotch-block (to prevent runaways from reaching the main branch) was placed on the goods siding (loading bank siding) on 20 August 1898. It was replaced by catchpoints on 19 February 1912. The other tracks (from east to west) were a runround road, Platform 2, Platform 1 and a stabling siding. The entire yard (apart from the engine release crossovers) was wired when the line was electrified.

Staff and Ticket was replaced by the single-line Track Block system of safeworking on 21 December 1926.

Hundreds of people travelled by electric train to National Park during the 1930s. In addition to the regular trains, special trains were chartered for Sunday School and company picnics. Charabancs or buses connected with the trains but many people chose to walk down the Honeymoon Track to Audley, where there was a large shelter shed, kiosk, guest house and boat shed.

A small bus, a White normal control single-decker with the engine protruding from the front, had taken over the Audley service by the 1950s. This old vehicle had begun service as a truck during World War II (when only American chassis could be imported), but a timber framed bus body was fitted to its White chassis by Motor Body Assemblers of Camperdown in 1948. Wilf Tuck operated MO 575 over Route 182 between Audley and Sutherland, connecting with the train at The Royal National Park Station. The concrete floor of a pretentious “drive through” waiting shed is still located on the northern bank of the Hacking River near Audley Weir.

Three of the five tracks at the terminus were placed out of use on 4 July 1967, leaving only the No. 2 platform road and the runround loop available for service. The old station went out of use on 17 February 1978 because the site was required as part of a new development by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A short temporary platform made of scaffolding was erected on the Sydney side of the signal box. It was replaced by a new platform with a single track on 28 April 1979. The new platform is only about 100 metres long. It only held five cars of a suburban electric train but that did not stop eight-car trains from running to the terminus! The signal box was abolished on 11 October 1979.

The name of the station has changed several times. It was first known as Loftus. This name referred to the Right Honourable Sir Augustus William Spencer Loftus, a former State governor. It became National Park from 1896, then The National Park from March 1934. Following the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1954, the name was changed to The Royal National Park on 16 July 1955. The “The” was dropped from the station name when the new platform opened in 1979.

The last train ran on 11 June 1991. There had been a signal failure at Loftus Junction and the cost of upgrading the signals and track was considered to be prohibitive. The line reopened for trams on 1 May 1993.