

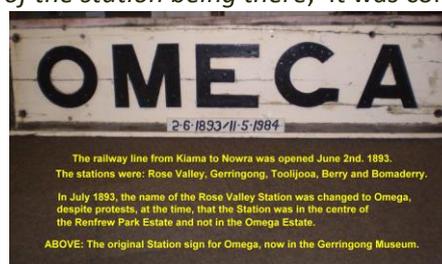
OMEGA RAILWAY STATION



Up until 1893, the Railway Line south from Sydney terminated at North Kiama (Site now: Bombo). However, as early as 1872, discussions had taken place to extend the line down as far as Jervis Bay. Different routes were considered but it was not till 22 April 1890, that a Parliamentary Committee approved a 22 miles 73 chains single line extension to the northern bank of the Shoalhaven River. The names of the Stations selected for the line were to be Kiama, Rose Valley, Gerringong, Toolijooa, Berry, Jasper's Brush and Nowra. In August 1890, contracts were let to Edward Pritchard and Co. for £224,821 to construct the line and tunnels. Messrs G. D. Fetherston and F. E. Barbat were to build the Stations.

By December, 1892, with up to 1,800 men working on the line between North Kiama and Nowra, five tunnels - each of which were excavated day and night by navvies using compressed air operated rand drills - had been completed and plate-laying had reached Miller's Flats, the site of the second Station - Rose Valley (site c. 20 mtrs. on the N/W side of Omega railway crossing). The Rose Valley Station had a 198-ft. platform with a small waiting room and store combined. At this point, the railway line had to cross the main coastal road which, at the time went up Fern St. and down Belinda St. A gatekeeper's house was constructed on the immediate south side (site now: gate signal box). Also a siding - which closed in 1951 - and cattle holding yard were constructed on the western side of the Station.

On 22 May, 1893, just prior to the opening of the line, Gerringong Council wrote to the Commissioners of Railways stating that the Station name; Rose Valley 'is inappropriate and likely to be misleading as the settlement of Rose Valley was 2 miles distant from Miller's Flat'. They also stated that when a station was applied for, *'the people wanted it on the Omega Estate'* but since *'the gradient on the line at that place would not admit of the station being there,'* it was constructed on the adjoining Estate, known as Renfrew Park. Council should either be called 'Omega' Immediately after the 'Omega', protests from to the Local Member of 'please explain' letter to Council. played no part in the final over to Railways to sort out.



suggested therefore, that it or 'Renfrew Park'. Commissioners had chosen 'Renfrew Park' were submitted Parliament who in turn sent a Naturally, Council said they decision and passed the ball

Due to heavy rains throughout the construction period, up to 5 months working time had been lost. Eventually, on 2 June 1893, '*Amid Torrents of Rain*', the Kiama to Nowra line was officially opened by the Governor, Sir Robert Duff.

A copy of the first Timetable shows that initially, Omega Station was serviced by 3 daily 'UP' trains (Sun. excepted) and 2 daily 'DOWN' trains. The morning UP train left Omega at 7.37 am, arriving Sydney at 11.20 am. The evening UP train left Omega at 6.20 pm, arriving Sydney at 11.24 pm. Since Omega Station was not manned, intending passengers had to take the red **STOP** baton from its holder and wave it furiously as the train came rocketing down the hill from Gerringong. At night you lit the **STOP** lantern, waved and hoped for the best – try doing that today! To alight the train at Omega, you told the guard of your intention at either Kiama or Gerringong.



In the early 1900s, Omega became a popular stop for the hundreds of tourists, who at weekends alighted from the Tourist train to make their way across Miller's Flats to either the Lagoon Reserve, (site now: Caravan Park) for picnics and 'sea-bathing' or to the Lagoon itself for fishing and boating. When the Miller's Werri Beach Estate was developed in 1926, Omega Station served its residents. It was specifically for their benefit that the 'right of way' across the flats – which still operates - was designated and a wooden suspension bridge was constructed for pedestrian access across the Lagoon.



Steam train stopped at Omega Station 1954

In May 1965, Diesel 'Red-Rattlers' replaced the Steam Engines. Sadly, shortly after the old wooden Lagoon bridge was replaced by a sturdy concrete one – still standing, our beloved little Omega Station which had served so many for so long was finally decommissioned on 11 May 1984.

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