

Guidelines for Realistic Traffic Workings
For the NSW – North West Route V1.0 for MSTs

This document came about as a series of notes that I wrote for my own information when creating and running trains on the MSTs NSWGR North West route V1.0. As more information came to hand, I decided to make it available to the general MSTs NSWGR community, to enhance their enjoyment of running trains in MSTs over this route. Please note that this document is considered a 'work in progress', and that in some sections there is currently little or no information to hand.

General Notes

General Survey of the Route

The NSW-NW route covers a vast area of north-western NSW. The following sections of line are included in the route - there is a total of 753 route miles (1205 km) of main line track in this route:

Main North - from East Maitland to Armidale (238 miles)

Merriwa Branch - from Muswellbrook to Merriwa (51 miles)

Barraba Branch - from West Tamworth to Barraba (61 miles)

Mungindi Line - from Werris Creek to Moree (157 miles)

Dubbo Line - from Werris Creek to Binnaway (84 miles)

Gwabegar Line - from Gulgong to Gwabegar (162 miles)

A short section of the North Coast Line from Maitland to just north of Telarah

A short section of the South Maitland Railways from Maitland to just west of Mount Dee

Because of the vast size of the route, it is anticipated that the route will be released in three stages:

Stage 1 - East Maitland to Armidale & Muswellbrook to Merriwa

Stage 2 - Werris Creek to Moree & West Tamworth to Barraba

Stage 3 - Werris Creek to Binnaway & Gulgong to Gwabegar

Although the route contains some sections, such as Farley, East Greta and Mount Dee, Telarah, Maitland, High Street and East Maitland, that are duplicated in the 'Coals to Newcastle' route, by Peter Newell, these sections have been included in this route for 'comparative completeness' at the southern end of the route. This allows for any Activities along the Main North line to have associated AI traffic running on the Coal Lines to/from the SMR lines, or associated AI traffic running to/from the Main North Coast line.

Principal Railway Centres along the Route

Maitland - is the junction where the North Coast Line diverges through Telarah to Brisbane, and where the South Maitland Railway diverges from East Greta to Cessnock and the South Maitland collieries. Most traffic runs through Maitland to and from the Main North Line, the North Coast Line and the South Maitland Railways; only a few local trains terminate or start from Maitland to Newcastle.

Singleton - is a major through station on the Main North. Most traffic runs through Singleton; only a few local trains terminate or start from Singleton to Newcastle

Muswellbrook - is the junction where the Merriwa Branch line diverges to the terminus at Merriwa. Most traffic runs through Muswellbrook, only local trains run between Muswellbrook and Merriwa.

Werris Creek - is the major Divisional Centre in north-western NSW. It is the junction where the Mungindi Line to Moree diverges through the Gap to Narrabri and Moree, and where the Dubbo Line diverges through the Gap to Binnaway and Dubbo. All trains have a change of locomotive here.

West Tamworth - is the junction where the Barraba Branch diverges to the terminus at Barraba. Most traffic runs through West Tamworth, only local trains run between West Tamworth and Barraba.

Armidale - is a major through station on the Main North. An amount of traffic terminates or starts from Armidale to Newcastle and Sydney, a lesser amount of traffic continues northward to Wallangarra on the Queensland Border.

Narrabri West - is the junction where the branch line diverges to the termini at Walgett and Pokataroo.

Moree - is the junction where the branch line diverges to the termini at Mungindi, Boggabilla and Inverell.

Binnaway - is the principal junction where the Dubbo - Werris Creek line crosses the Wallerawang - Gwabegar line. It is an intermediate divisional centre. All trains have a change of locomotive here. All trains between Dubbo and Werris Creek require to be reversed here.

Merrygoen - is the intermediate junction where the Dubbo - Werris Creek line crosses the Wallerawang - Gwabegar line. All trains run through Merrygoen, except for inter-change of traffic between the Dubbo-Werris Creek line and the Wallerawang-Gwabegar line. No change of locomotive or train reversal is required.

Locomotive Types and Regional Boundaries

The following is a generalised description of the locomotive types used in the areas depicted by this route and the regional boundaries of specific locomotive types:

DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES

Class 40 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line.

Class 41 - NOT used over these lines - the class was restricted to the greater Sydney metropolitan lines.

Class 42 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale, and was restricted mainly to principal Express and Mail trains. The class was withdrawn to other lines once sufficient numbers of Class 44 became available. The 42 and 43 classes were used interchangeably. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line.

Class 43 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale, and was restricted mainly to principal Express and Mail trains. The class was withdrawn to other lines once sufficient numbers of Class 44 became available. The 42 and 43 classes were used interchangeably. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line.

Class 44 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale, and was restricted mainly to principal Express, Mail and Fast Passenger trains, but could also be seen on general goods trains when available. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line.

Class 48 - this class was the 'universal' branch line locomotive, and took over all the traffic formerly hauled by the 30T and 32 classes as described below.

Diesel railcars/railmotors - where passenger traffic was light, and did not require locomotive hauled stock or two-car diesel sets, CPH railmotors were commonly used - these could be seen on the Merriwa Branch, the Barraba Branch, the Dubbo - Werris Creek line, and the Gulgong - Gwabegar line. On other moderately trafficked lines 600/700 two-car diesel sets were used where railmotors were too small for the traffic available – often used on the Dubbo – Werris Creek line, and the Gulgong – Gwabegar line. The 620/720 two-car diesel sets were limited to the Newcastle outer suburban workings – i.e. to Cessnock (from 1961 to 1972 only), Dungog and Singleton.

In the early 1960's the steam hauled Northern Tablelands Express was replaced by a diesel train made up of two DEB sets, one 4-car portion working to Armidale, and a 3-car portion dividing at Werris Creek and working to Moree.

Other classes - I have not included any 'modern' diesel classes after about 1965, as I am not interested in the modern era, and have no knowledge of these locomotives or where they were used. I will leave it up to individual MSTs users to decide if they want to run any modern trains over this route.

PASSENGER LOCOMOTIVES

Class 38 - NOT used over these lines - however, in later days, the two preserved 38's could be seen on special tour trains to Maitland, and occasionally as far north as Werris Creek.

Class 36 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale, and was restricted mainly to principal Express, Mail and Fast Passenger trains, however, due to inadequate turntable sizes, this class was rarely worked north of Werris Creek, the Class 35's being the preferred locomotives over this section. This class could also be seen on goods trains. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line.

Class 35 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale, and was restricted mainly to principal Express, Mail and Fast Passenger trains. This class could also be seen on goods trains. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line.

Class 32 - this class was timetabled to run over the full Main North line, and could frequently be seen anywhere along this line. This class could also be seen on goods trains. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line. This class could be occasionally seen on goods trains on the Merriwa Branch, the Werris Creek to Binnaway line, and the Mungindi Branch (also hauling passenger and mixed trains as far as Narrabri only). This class also worked the Walgett, Pokataroo and Inverell goods traffic.

Class 30T - although timetabled to run over the full Main North line, this class was rarely seen south of Muswellbrook, except for transfer trips to Cardiff or Eveleigh for repairs and overhauls. This class could also be seen on goods trains over the full Main North line north of Muswellbrook. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line. This class also worked the Merriwa Branch, the Werris Creek to Binnaway line and the Mungindi Branch, on passenger, mixed and goods trains. This class also worked the Walgett, Pokataroo and Inverell passenger, mixed and goods traffic. This class EXCLUSIVELY worked the Barraba Branch for ALL passenger, mixed and goods traffic on that line, except for some lightly trafficked passenger services, where a CPH railmotor was used.

Class 30 - although timetabled to run over the full Main North line, this class was generally restricted to Newcastle to Maitland, Newcastle to Telarah and Newcastle to Cessnock local passenger workings only. Locomotives ran chimney first from Newcastle and returned bunker first to Newcastle.

GOODS LOCOMOTIVES

Class 60 - this class was restricted to only specific sections of the north-west - principally between Broadmeadow/Port Waratah to Newdell and Muswellbrook on coal traffic only – initially the 60 class were only 'light' Garratts and would be turned at each end, on the 105 ft Broadmeadow turntable and the special triangle at Muswellbrook. The extensive 'light engine' running between Newdell and Muswellbrook, and Port Waratah to Broadmeadow for tuning, proved costly in time and fuel wasted, so the converted 'heavy' dual-control Garratts were introduced, as soon as they became

available to eliminate this waste. Occasionally when heavy general goods traffic demanded, Class 60's could be sent as far north as Murrurundi, working chimney first in one direction and bunker first in the other direction (Garratt working was prohibited through the Ardglen Tunnel due to tight clearances).

During the 1950's, five 'light' Garratts were transferred to Werris Creek to work the Werris Creek to West Narrabri traffic, and occasionally would be seen working the Dubbo to Werris Creek cross-country line, however weight restrictions on the Mooki River bridge at Caroonna limited the total loads that could be worked over this section by such a heavy locomotive. The Class 60's were transferred away from the Werris Creek area by the early 1960's. Werris Creek had a 105 ft turntable.

Class 59 - this class was timetabled to run only on the Main North as far as Armidale. This class was also timetabled to run over the North Coast line to Casino.

Classes 57 & 58 - NOT used over these lines - these classes were restricted to Sydney to Lithgow, Sydney to Thirroul and Sydney to Junee only.

Class 55 - This class was rarely seen in the north-west, and when it was seen, it was generally restricted to the Main North line only, excluding all branch lines.

Class 53 - This class was regularly seen in the north-west and was used interchangeably with the Class 50.

Class 50 - timetabled to run over the full Main North line. This class could sometimes be seen on passenger trains when no other suitable locomotive was available. This class was also timetabled to run over the full North Coast line. This class also worked the Merriwa Branch and the Werris Creek to Binnaway line.

Other classes - some passenger locomotive types could be seen working goods trains as far north as Werris Creek - this includes Classes, 30, 30T, 32, 35 and 36.

MISCELLANEOUS LOCOMOTIVES

Class 12 - this class was timetabled to work between Tamworth and Werris Creek on the School Train, although it was usually hauled by a 30T class. This class was often seen on the light branch lines to Walgett, Pokataroo out of Narrabri West, and Mungindi, Boggabilla and Inverell out of Moree.

Class 13 - this class was very rare in the north-west, but when seen would be working similar trains to the Class 12, except it did not work the Tamworth-Werris Creek School Train.

Class 19 - NOT used over these lines

Class 20 - NOT used over these lines

Class 26 - NOT used over these lines

Banking of Trains and Pinning-down of Handbrakes

There are several sections where the banking of trains on steeper uphill grades, and pinning-down of handbrakes to prevent runaways on the corresponding downhill grades, was carried out:

Murrurundi to Ardglen - on the Down journey

Bank engine assistance, by push-up at the rear of the train, may be required for heavily loaded trains from Murrurundi to Ardglen. The bank engine will stop assisting just clear of the south portal of Ardglen tunnel, and return downhill to Murrurundi. Whether assisted or not, all Down goods trains are to stop at the Brakes Landmark in Ardglen loop to have the required number of handbrakes pinned down – if the train is fully Westinghouse brake fitted, a stop will be made in Kankool loop to release the brakes, otherwise all other trains will stop at Willow Tree to release the brakes.

Willow Tree to Ardglen - on the Up journey

Bank engine assistance, by push-up at the rear of the train, may be required for heavily loaded trains from Willow Tree to Ardglen. The bank engine will stop assisting just clear of the north portal of Ardglen tunnel, and return downhill to Willow Tree. Whether assisted or not, all Up goods trains are to stop at the Brakes landmark on the south side of Ardglen tunnel to have the required number of handbrakes pinned down – if the train is fully Westinghouse brake fitted, a stop will be made in Pangela loop to release the brakes, otherwise all other trains will stop at Murrurundi to release the brakes.

Werris Creek to Currabubula - on the Down journey

Bank engine assistance, by push-up at the rear of the train, may be required for heavily loaded trains from Werris Creek to Currabubula. The bank engine will stop assisting at the south end of Currabubula loop and return downhill to Werris Creek.

Allandale to Farley – on the Up journey

All Up goods trains are to stop at the Brakes Landmark on the eastern side of Allandale to have the required number of handbrakes pinned down – a stop will be made at Farley (opposite the Down Refuge Loop) to release the brakes.

Passenger Workings

Specific details of Passenger Train Formations, the type of passenger cars used and basic histories, as applied to MSTs, can be found in a supporting document, “NSWGR General Passenger Traffic Workings”, which can be found accompanying this document.

Express and Fast Passenger

The principal express passenger trains over this section of line was the ‘Brisbane Express (via Wallangarra)’ from Sydney to Wallangarra, and the ‘Northern Tablelands Express’ from Sydney to Armidale and Sydney to Moree (the train split at Werris Creek).

The main Fast Passenger train was the ‘Sydney to Werris Creek’ day train.

Several important Mail Trains also passed over this section of line – the ‘North-West Mail’ from Sydney to Moree, the ‘Armidale Mail’ from Sydney to Armidale.

The short section of the Main North Coast line depicted in this route also saw the following principal passenger and mail trains:

The ‘Brisbane Limited’ and the ‘Brisbane Express’ from Sydney to South Brisbane, the ‘North Coast Daylight Express’ from Sydney to Grafton, the ‘North Coast Mail’ from Sydney to South Grafton, and the ‘Sydney to Kempsey’ day train.

The short section of the South Maitland Railways line depicted in this route also saw the following principal passenger train:

The ‘Cessnock Express’ from Sydney to Cessnock.

Ordinary Passenger

Various ordinary passenger trains served the intermediate stopping points between East Maitland and Armidale and the branch lines depicted in this route.

Commuter Trains

The Upper Hunter district also served as an outer ‘dormitory’ region for some workers within the Newcastle Metropolitan Area – accordingly a number of specific semi-express commuter trains catering specifically for this traffic, worked over the Main North and Main North Coast lines. The main trains serving this traffic were the Newcastle to Singleton and Newcastle to Dungog services. There was also significant daily suburban commuter traffic between Newcastle and Maitland, and Newcastle and Cessnock.

Special Carriage workings

Westinghouse Email had two mobile exhibition carriages – it would seem appropriate that at some stage these could have been railed north under Special Traffic Notice (STN) to be exhibited in a suitable siding at principal townships along the lines.

There were also a number of special carriages which did not operate specifically within the Northern and North Western areas, but from time to time would pass over these lines, attached to normal scheduled workings, on their way from ‘The North and the North-West’ to the carriage workshops at Eveleigh for annual repairs or maintenance – these would include:

The Far West Children's Health Scheme – Baby Health Clinic cars (mainly on the more remote branch lines out of Narrabri and Moree and to Gwabagar)

The NSW TAFE – Mobile Instructional Unit cars

The NSWGR Commissioners Train (usually ran as a separate train)

The Dynamometer Car could be occasionally seen attached directly behind the locomotive when running special Test Trains – these would also be run under STN's.

Apart from the small jail cells attached to local police stations and courthouses, the only Prisons within the areas depicted by this route were at Cessnock and East Maitland. Therefore any criminals convicted of serious crimes were taken to Newcastle for processing, and in the case of criminals given long sentences, they would be more than likely moved to the large country Prisons, such as Maitland, Cessnock and Grafton. The prisoners were moved in one of the bogie BKD Prison Vans – these were normally attached to any suitable Fast Passenger train, and coupled directly behind the locomotive.

Goods Workings

Firstly, it must be pointed out, that the normal method of working any goods trains on any line within NSW was to load the trains to their **maximum** loading tonnage for each section of line. Only a select few fast goods trains used a 75% loading factor. This meant that both locomotives and crews were worked to their limits, i.e. basically they were 'flogged'.

Major Goods facilities – Newcastle Metropolitan Area

Broadmeadow – Broadmeadow was the principal goods marshalling yard for the whole NSWGR Main North / North Coast system. It acted as the central arrival / departure point for the majority of goods trains north of the Hawkesbury River. Most goods trains from the Main North and North-West and from the Main North Coast would terminate at Broadmeadow, and be re-marshalled into new trains for Enfield, Darling Harbour and Flemington. All trains required a change of locomotive at Broadmeadow. However, there were some 'through' trains such as Fast Stock, Perishables and Express Goods which were not re-marshalled at Broadmeadow, simply a change of locomotive and the train continued on its journey to Sydney.

Broadmeadow was also the location of the principal locomotive depot for passenger and general goods workings into/out of Newcastle. A large depot was situated on the western flank of the yards with two 'roundhouse' style loco sheds, and full servicing, watering and coaling facilities. Broadmeadow was also the source for a number of 'trip workings' within the Newcastle Metropolitan Area.

Port Waratah, Bullock Island and Carrington Basin, Morandoo Exchange Sidings

– Port Waratah was the central marshalling yard for all coal traffic for Newcastle and surrounding districts, and received coal from the various collieries to the south and west of Newcastle, the South Maitland coalfield collieries and those of the Upper Hunter Valley up to Muswellbrook. Port Waratah was also the principal locomotive depot for all locomotives engaged in the coal traffic. The coal traffic from the South Maitland coalfield was of sufficient importance to warrant the building of a dedicated pair of Up/Down Coal Lines laid in parallel with the Main North line from Waratah to Maitland.

The goods lines through Port Waratah also extended through to Bullock Island, where the coastal and export coal from Port Waratah marshalling yard was transhipped to collier ships, and through to Carrington basin, where there were extensive wheat storage silos and wheat loading facilities for transhipping to bulk grain carrier ships.

Morandoo Exchange Sidings were adjacent to Port Waratah Marshalling Yard, and were exclusively for all traffic to and from the BHP Steelworks. All coal for the steelworks was worked into Morandoo from several BHP owned collieries to the south and west of Newcastle. All outgoing steel products traffic was worked by 'trip train' to Broadmeadow Marshalling Yard, where the loaded steel wagons were re-marshalled into goods trains heading to Sydney (and other points south) and the north, north-west and north coast.

Throughout the Port Waratah/Bullock Island/Carrington Basin areas, there were a number of small miscellaneous goods sidings to serve other local industries.

Islington/Hamilton/Woodville Junctions – around the triangle formed by these three junctions were a number of other goods facilities - a short Branch line to Goninan's Rolling Stock builders, the Newcastle Gasworks, a large Shell Oil depot, and a small goods yard containing a flour mill, sawmill, perway and miscellaneous goods facilities.

Wickham Branch – a short branch line diverged from Hamilton and served a few local industries as well as several small oil storage facilities.

Honeysuckle Yard – was the original goods yard serving Newcastle before the line was extended to the current terminus – in later years it was only a secondary yard serving Lee Wharf and several repair and perway facilities.

Newcastle yard – when the line was extended to the current passenger terminus, a large goods yard was built between the station and the Hunter River. Initially, it served the coal export traffic before it was moved to Port Waratah, in later years it only served the adjacent wharves for general goods – there was also substantial coal traffic to feed the Zarra Street Power Station.

Specific Goods Provisions at Stations

Next we look at the specific goods facilities at each station along the line:

Modelled sections of the North Coast Line:

Telarah – passenger platform – several storage sidings, weighbridge road, and stock sidings. The line extends a short distance to the north, representing the Main North Coast line to South Brisbane and Murwillumbah.

Modelled sections of the South Maitland Railways:

East Greta Exchange Sidings – passenger platforms – Down Empty Coal Sidings, Up Full Coal Sidings, several storage sidings - locomotive depot with various sidings for all South Maitland Railway locomotive facilities

The line extends a short distance to the west, representing the SMR lines to Cessnock and the South Maitland coalfield collieries.

Modelled sections of the Main North Line – East Maitland to Armidale:

East Maitland – passenger platforms – several goods sidings, storage sidings, weighbridge road and stock siding

High Street – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

Maitland – junction, facing Down trains, for the Main North Coast line and the South Maitland Railways lines – passenger platforms, with dock siding south of platforms – several general goods sidings, Council siding, turntable road.

Farley – passenger platforms, with dock siding north of the platforms - double-ended goods siding on Down Side, shunted by both Down and Up trains, extending into siding to abandoned quarry – Down and Up Refuge Sidings

Lochinvar – passenger platforms - double-ended goods siding on Up Side, shunted by both Down and Up trains – Down and Up Refuge Sidings

Allandale – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

Greta – passenger platforms - double-ended goods siding on Down Side, shunted by both Down and Up trains – Down and Up Refuge Sidings

Branxton – passenger platforms, with dock siding south of the platform – double-ended siding on Down Side, shunted by both Down and Up trains – Double-ended stock siding on Up side, shunted by both Down and Up trains - Double-ended goods siding on Up side, shunted by both Down and Up trains, extending into Branxton Co-operative Dairy Company siding – junction, facing Down trains, for branch line to Ayrfield-Branxton (Ayrfield No 3) Colliery (for colliery details – see separate section within this document)

Belford – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities - Up and Down Refuge Loops south of the platforms

Minimbah – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

Whittingham – passenger platforms - goods siding on Up side, south of the platforms, shunted only by Up trains - Up and Down Refuge Loops north of the platforms

Singleton – passenger platform, with dock sidings north and south of the platform – passing loop - various goods facilities including, goods sidings, stock siding, weighbridge siding, storage sidings, separate Vacuum siding and Singleton Co-operative Dairy Company siding – carriage siding - locomotive depot with various sidings

Nundah – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

Glennies Creek – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

Ravensworth – passenger platforms – Down Refuge Loop – double-ended goods and stock siding on Down side, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Newdell Junction – junction only, facing Down trains, for branch line to Newdell, Liddell and Durham collieries – no goods facilities (for colliery details – see separate section within this document) – an Electricity Commission siding is adjacent to the junction on the Down side, trailing to the Down colliery branch line

Ravenan – no goods facilities – Up and Down Refuge Loops

Antiene – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

Grasstree – passenger platforms only – no goods facilities

St. Heliers – junction only, facing Up trains, for branch line to Muswellbrook Colliery No2 – brake van storage siding - Up and Down Refuge Loops (for colliery details – see separate section within this document)

Muswellbrook – passenger platform, with dock siding south of the platform – passing loop – various goods facilities including, goods sidings, stock siding, repair siding, weighbridge siding, coal sidings, storage sidings, separate Caltex, Ampol, Shell and Esso sidings – railcar siding (for Merriwa branch line) - locomotive depot with various sidings – sidings leading south out of Muswellbrook yard for Muswellbrook Colliery No1 coal loading facility - double-ended siding for Oak Dairy Products, shunted by both Down and Up trains, located north of Muswellbrook (for colliery details – see separate section within this document)

Koolbury – passing loop only

Aberdeen – passenger platform – passing loop - double-ended goods siding on Down side, shunted by both Down and Up trains, double-ended stock siding on Up side, shunted by both Down and Up trains, extending into the Australian Chilling and Freezing Company sidings

Togar – passenger platform - passing loop – no goods facilities

Scone – passenger platform – passing loop – double-ended goods siding on Up side, shunted by both Down and Up trains, double-ended siding on Down side, shunted by both Down and Up trains, double-ended stock siding on Up side on the northern edge of Scone township, shunted by both Down and Up trains,

Parkville – passenger platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Wingen - passenger platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Murulla – passing loop only

Blandford - passenger platform, with dock siding north of the platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods and stock siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Murrurundi – passenger platform, with dock siding north of the platform – passing loop – various goods facilities including, goods, stock and storage sidings - locomotive depot with various sidings

Pangela – passing loop only

Ardglen – passenger platform – passing loop – goods siding and storage siding, on down side, shunted only by Down trains – connection off the passing loop at the north end to Ardglen Quarry, shunted by Down trains. Up trains shunted after running-around via loop.

Kankool – passing loop only

Willow Tree – passenger platform – passing loop – double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains, double-ended stock siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains, wheat siding on Up side, shunted by Up trains only – Up Refuge Siding extending north from passing loop

Braefield - passenger platform - passing loop – no goods facilities

Quirindi – passenger platform, with dock siding north of platform – passing loop - various goods facilities, including goods siding, goods shed siding, stock siding, silo siding, Mill siding, Vacuum siding and Shell siding

Quipolly - passenger platform - passing loop – goods siding on Down side, shunted only by Up trains

Werris Creek Colliery Junction - junction only, facing Up trains, for branch line to Werris Creek Colliery – empty wagon ‘trip’ trains from Werris Creek yard were propelled to Werris Creek Colliery under local instruction, loaded wagons were then hauled back to Werris Creek yard for further shunting and marshalling (for colliery details – see separate section within this document)

Werris Creek – major divisional centre – diverging junctions for branch lines to Binnaway and Moree - separate passenger platforms for both Main North line and Moree line – extensive marshalling and storage sidings – major locomotive depot with various sidings – other sidings for repairs, goods, loading bank, transshipment, stock, dock siding, wheat sidings, perway sidings, Commonwealth sidings

Special note: a Down Loop ran off the Moree platform and re-joined the Main North line clear of Werris Creek station – if a northbound passenger train was scheduled to cross a southbound train, it would be diverted to stop in the Moree platform instead of the Main North platform; once the southbound train was clear, the northbound passenger would turn into the Down Loop and resume its journey on the Main North

Warrigundi - passenger platform only – no goods facilities

Currabubula - passenger platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods and grain siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Belgamba - passenger platform only – no goods facilities

Duri - passenger platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods and grain siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains, silo and stock sidings on Down side, shunted only by Up trains

Warral - passenger platform – a double-ended goods and silo siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

West Tamworth - passenger platform, with dock sidings north and south of platform – through road - various goods facilities, including goods siding, goods shed siding, loading bank siding, stock sidings, silo siding, Fielders Mill sidings and Tamworth Milling Company siding – Joe White Maltings sidings, Union and COR siding: both facing to

Down trains at the beginning of the Barraba branch line - locomotive depot with various sidings

Tamworth – passenger platform, with dock sidings north and south of platform - through road – various goods facilities, including goods siding, goods shed siding, loading bank siding, separate Caltex, Shell and Mobil sidings, sawmill siding, Fielders Mill siding – carriage siding – double-ended Powerhouse siding, north of Tamworth, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Nemingha - passenger platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains, silo siding on Up side, shunted only by Up trains – Commonwealth siding on Down side, south of the loop, shunted only by Down trains

Tintinhull - passenger platform only – no goods facilities

Kootingal - passenger platform, with dock siding south of platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains, a double-ended stock siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Limbi – passenger platform – passing loop – siding on Up side, shunted only by Up trains

Danglemah – passenger platform – passing loop – siding on Up side, north of the loop, shunted only by Up trains

Warrungen – passing loop only

Woolbrook - passenger platform – passing loop – a double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains

Walcha Road – passenger platform – passing loop at rear of platform – two parallel double-ended goods sidings, shunted by both Down and Up trains – loading dock siding at north end, and three storage sidings at south end, shunted only by Down trains – turntable siding off platform road and loop road facing to Down trains

Wollun - passenger platform only – no goods facilities – passing loop south of the platform

Kentucky South - passenger platform only – no goods facilities

Kentucky – passenger platform – passing loop – siding on Up side, shunted only by Up trains

Uralla – passenger platform, with dock siding north of platform - passing loop - double-ended siding on Down side with parallel goods siding extended to the north and south, shunted by both Down and Up trains – stock siding on Up side, shunted only by Up trains

Kellys Plains - passenger platform only – no goods facilities – passing loop north of the platform

Armidale – passenger platform, with dock sidings north and south of platform – through road – various goods facilities, including goods siding, goods shed siding, wool siding, stock siding, Shell and Vacuum siding – carriage siding – locomotive depot with various sidings

Modelled sections of the Merriwa Branch Line – Muswellbrook to Merriwa:

Roxburgh – passenger platform – passing loop – no goods facilities

Mangoola – passenger platform only – no goods facilities

Denman – passenger platform – passing loop - double-ended goods siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains - double-ended stock siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains - double-ended private siding to the north of Denman, shunted by both Down and Up trains, for Hilder's freezing Works

Myambat – passenger platform – passing loop – Commonwealth siding, facing Down trains, to the west of Myambat

Sandy Hollow – passenger platform - double-ended goods and stock siding, shunted by both Down and Up trains (connection to future 1985 branch line from Gulgong to sandy Hollow)

Gungal – passenger platform – passing loop – no goods facilities

Wappinguy – passenger platform – no goods facilities

Merriwa – passenger platform – run-round loop – goods siding, stock siding, wheat siding, bulk wheat siding – small loco depot, with shed, turntable and water and coaling facilities

Colliery Traffic Workings

Colliery traffic was worked either by timetabled 'dedicated' block coal trains between the two points (where detailed below), or the empty and loaded wagons were picked up / dropped off by any passing scheduled Up / Down pickup goods train.

Note, the term 'Operational Timeframe' refers only to the 1960-1980 era depicted by this route.

South Maitland Railways

The South Maitland Railways system served more than twenty privately owned collieries on the South Maitland coalfields, and connected with the NSWGR at East Greta. Each colliery used their own privately owned wood framed non-air coal hopper wagons, each marked with a distinguishing letter or name to identify the owner.

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah

Types of wagons: Various 'Hunter Valley' private owner wooden non-air hopper wagons, NSWGR 4-w hoppers LCH and CCH, NSWGR bogie hoppers BCH – departmental locomotive coal in NSWGR S-trucks and K-trucks. By the late 1960's, the

PO wood hopper wagons were being supplemented with the standard NSWGR types listed above, and the last of the PO wood hoppers were withdrawn by 1978.

Types of Locomotives: All traffic between the various collieries on the South Maitland Coalfields and the East Greta Exchange Sidings was worked by SMR locomotives, mostly using the SMR 10 class 2-8-2 tank locomotives, but in later days several ROD type 2-8-0's were hired at various times from the Richmond Vale Railway. All traffic between the East Greta Exchange Sidings and Port Waratah was worked by NSWGR 'Standard Goods' of the 50 and 53 classes – 55 class was rarely seen on these duties.

Method of Working: The SMR had a detailed 'working timetable' which covered the collection of loaded coal wagons from each of the separate collieries and their forwarding to East Greta Exchange Sidings, and the subsequent return of empty wagons to the separate collieries.

All Up loaded coal trains from the South Maitland coalfields terminated in the Up Coal Sidings adjacent to Mount Dee Signal Box (SMR), where the SMR loco was uncoupled, the loco then drew forward into the East Greta Down Sidings, where it would couple to the relevant train of empty wagons for returning to the required colliery.

All Down empty coal trains from Port Waratah terminated in the Down Coal Sidings at East Greta, where the NSWGR loco was uncoupled, the loco then drew forward into the Up Coal Sidings, where it would couple to the relevant train of loaded wagons for forwarding to Port Waratah.

All coal trains between Port Waratah and the South Maitland coalfields used either NSWGR CHG type 4-wheel brake vans or one of the 12 SMR 4-wheel brake vans (which were similar to the NSWGR CHG type and were interchangeable with them). The SMR system did not have any locomotive turning facilities, and all locos were set so the chimney was at the East Greta end – therefore empty trains were hauled westwards bunker first, and loaded trains hauled eastward chimney first. Similarly the NSWGR 'standard goods' locos worked empty trains tender first from Port Waratah to East Greta, and chimney first with loaded trains from East Greta to Port Waratah.

MSTs Paths –

MSTs Consists –

Ayrfield No3 Colliery, Branxton

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah

Types of wagons: Ayrfield No3 Colliery was owned by R.W. Miller and the vast majority of wagons sent to this Colliery were RWM's own 'Ayrfield' and 'Millfield' branded non-air wood hoppers – also a number of ex-Rothbury colliery wagons were on hire to RWM (some still in Rothbury livery) – at various times other 'Hunter Valley' non-air colliery wagons could be seen at this colliery.

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 'standard goods' 50 and 53 class.

Method of Working: The incoming empty wagon train would diverge from the NSWGR main line at the facing junction at Branxton. The train would draw forward to the end of the Arrival Road, the loco uncouple, reverse through the Run Around Road, re-couple to the rear of the train, draw it back down the Arrival Road clear of the points, then propel the empty wagons into one of the empty wagon storage roads. The NSWGR brake van would be uncoupled, drawn back, and propelled into the Storage Road beside the Run Around Road. Empty wagons would be gravitated from the empty wagon storage sidings, under the screens for loading, and gravitated into the full wagons sidings, ready for collection by the locomotive. The loco would then run forward clear of the entry points and reverse into one of the full wagon storage roads, coupling to the loaded train: the brake van would be gravitated to the rear of the train. At the appointed time, the

loaded train would depart the colliery, and re-join the NSWGR main line at the trailing junction at Branxton. NSWGR 'standard goods' locos worked empty trains tender first from Port Waratah to Ayrfield, and chimney first with loaded trains from Ayrfield to Port Waratah.

MSTs Paths –
MSTs Consists -

Just north of Ravensworth, a double-track facing junction diverged (using part of the old Main North line which was abandoned when the main line was re-aligned to allow construction of Lake Liddell for the Liddell Power Station) at Newdell Junction to serve the Newdell, Liddell and Durham collieries. Newdell had direct access for arriving empty wagon trains and could be processed wholly within the colliery sidings. However, Liddell and Durham collieries did not have direct entry, and incoming trains terminated on a 'stub' of the old main line, where they were 'run-around', drawn back, and then propelled into the colliery sidings.

Newdell Colliery, Hunter Valley

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah

Types of wagons: NSWGR 4-w hoppers LCH and CCH, NSWGR bogie hoppers BCH

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 60 class Garratts, NSWGR 'standard goods' 50, 53 and 55 class

Method of Working: The incoming empty wagon train would diverge from the Colliery Branch Line at the facing junction into Newdell Colliery. The train would draw forward to the end of the Arrival Road, the loco uncouple, reverse through the Run Around Road, re-couple to the rear of the train, then propel the empty wagons into one of the empty wagon storage roads. The NSWGR brake van would be uncoupled, drawn back, and propelled into the No 5 Storage Road adjacent to the Colliery Branch Line. Empty wagons would be gravitated from the empty wagon storage sidings, under the screens for loading, and gravitated into the full wagons sidings, ready for collection by the locomotive. The loco would then run forward clear of the entry points and reverse into one of the full wagon storage roads, coupling to the loaded train. The train would then be drawn forward, clear of the colliery yard points, and then reversed back into No 5 Storage Road to couple up to the brake van. At the appointed time, the loaded train would depart the colliery, and crossover to the Up Colliery Branch Line, and re-join the NSWGR main line at the trailing junction at Newdell Junction. NSWGR 'standard goods' locos worked empty trains tender first from Port Waratah to Newdell, and chimney first with loaded trains from Newdell to Port Waratah. Garratt locos used on this traffic were dual-control, and could work in both directions without turning.

MSTs Paths –
MSTs Consists -

Liddell Colliery, Hunter Valley

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah

Types of wagons: NSWGR 4-w hoppers LCH and CCH, NSWGR bogie hoppers BCH

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 60 class Garratts, NSWGR 'standard goods' 50, 53 and 55 class, 59 class

Method of Working: Liddell colliery did not have direct entry, and incoming trains terminated on a 'stub' of the old main line, where they were 'run-around', drawn back, and then propelled back into the colliery onto the empty wagon storage siding, the brake

van would be uncoupled, drawn back and propelled into the Up Storage Siding adjacent to the Colliery Branch Line. Empty wagons would be gravitated from the empty wagon storage siding, under the screens for loading, and gravitated into the full wagons sidings, ready for collection by the locomotive. The loco would then proceed through the Arrival Road (passing underneath the screens) and couple to one of the full trains in the Full Storage Sidings, draw back out clear of the entry points, and then reverse into the Up Storage Siding to couple up to the brake van. At the appointed time, the loaded train would depart the colliery on the Up Colliery Branch Line, and re-join the NSWGR main line at the trailing junction at Newdell Junction. NSWGR 'standard goods' locos worked empty trains tender first from Port Waratah to Liddell, and chimney first with loaded trains from Liddell to Port Waratah. Garratt locos used on this traffic were dual-control, and could work in both directions without turning.

MSTs Paths –
MSTs Consists -

Durham Colliery, Hunter Valley

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah

Types of wagons: NSWGR 4-w hoppers LCH and CCH, NSWGR bogie hoppers BCH

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 60 class Garratts, NSWGR 'standard goods' 50, 53 and 55 class, 59 class

Method of Working: Durham colliery did not have direct entry, and incoming trains terminated on a 'stub' of the old main line, where they were reversed onto the Up Branch Line clear of the colliery entry points, then drawn forward into the Arrival Road, stopping to uncouple the brake van, clear of the entry points to Liddell Colliery. The train continued forward, and then propelled back into the empty wagon storage sidings. The loco then retrieved the brake van and using the crossover adjacent to the screens, ran around the brake van and propelled it into the storage siding beside the Large Coal road. Empty wagons would be gravitated from the empty wagon storage siding, under the screens for loading, and gravitated into the full wagons sidings, ready for collection by the locomotive. The loco would then proceed through the loading roads (passing underneath the screens) and couple to one of the full trains in the Full Storage Sidings, draw back out clear of the points, and then reverse into the storage siding to couple up to the brake van. At the appointed time, the loaded train would depart the colliery on the Up Colliery Branch Line, and re-join the NSWGR main line at the trailing junction at Newdell Junction. NSWGR 'standard goods' locos worked empty trains tender first from Port Waratah to Durham, and chimney first with loaded trains from Durham to Port Waratah. Garratt locos used on this traffic were dual-control, and could work in both directions without turning.

MSTs Paths –
MSTs Consists -

Muswellbrook No2 Colliery, St.Heliers

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah, NSWGR Departmental coal (see separate section within this document)

Types of wagons: 'Muswellbrook Colliery' owned air-braked 4-w hoppers, NSWGR 4-w hoppers LCH and CCH, NSWGR bogie hoppers BCH, departmental locomotive coal in NSWGR S-trucks and K-trucks and LCH/CCH hopper wagons

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 60 class Garratts, NSWGR 'standard goods' 50, 53 and 55 class, 59 class

Method of Working: Muswellbrook No2 Colliery had a Down trailing connection to the NSWGR lines at St. Heliers (facing toward Muswellbrook). Because of this, incoming empty wagon trains were hauled through to Muswellbrook yard and terminated in the Coal Siding or the Down Sidings. Local timetabled 'trip' trains worked the empty wagons back through St. Heliers to the colliery and worked loaded trains back to Muswellbrook yard, for onward forwarding. On arrival at St. Heliers, the empty wagon trip working would shunt the brake van into a special siding adjacent to the signal box, and proceed along the branch without a brake van. The train would draw forward into the Arrival road, the loco would uncouple, and run back through the run-around road, and then propel the wagons into the empty wagon storage sidings. Empty wagons would be gravitated from the empty wagon storage siding, under the screens for loading, and gravitated into the full wagons sidings, ready for collection by the locomotive. The loco would draw back clear of the points, and then reverse into the full wagon sidings, and couple up to the train. On departure the loaded train would draw up 'wrong road' into the Up Refuge Loop at St. Heliers, the loco would uncouple, run around to the rear, shunt into the storage siding, picking up the brake van and shunting it onto the rear of the train. The loco would then proceed back through the run-around siding to the front of the train, re-couple and depart on the single main line to Muswellbrook yard.

MSTs Paths –

MSTs Consists -

Muswellbrook No1 Colliery, Muswellbrook

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: Port Waratah, NSWGR Departmental coal (see separate section within this document)

Types of wagons: 'Muswellbrook Colliery' owned air-braked 4-w hoppers, NSWGR 4-w hoppers LCH and CCH, NSWGR bogie hoppers BCH, departmental locomotive coal in NSWGR S-trucks and K-trucks and LCH/CCH hopper wagons

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 60 class Garratts, NSWGR 'standard goods' 50, 53 and 55 class, 59 class

Method of Working: Muswellbrook No 1 Colliery was within the yard limits of Muswellbrook yard and was classed as being part of the yard shunting procedures. After arrival of empty wagons in Muswellbrook Yard, the yard shunter would propel the empties at slow speed (without a brake van) directly into the Colliery sidings (passing under the loading bins) and leave the empties at the outer end of the sidings. Empty wagons would be gravitated from the outer end of the sidings, under the loading bins, and gravitated to the inner end of the sidings, ready for collection by the yard shunter, which would haul them back into Muswellbrook Yard, for assembly into outgoing coal trains.

MSTs Paths –

MSTs Consists -

Werris Creek Colliery, Werris Creek

Operational Timeframe: 1960-1980

Output sent to: NSWGR Departmental coal (see separate section within this document)

Types of wagons: departmental locomotive coal in NSWGR S-trucks and K-trucks and LCH/CCH hopper wagons

Types of Locomotives: NSWGR 'standard goods' 50 class, 32 class, miscellaneous minor classes

Method of Working: Werris Creek Colliery was very close to Werris Creek Yard and for the purposes of traffic working was classed as being part of the yard shunting

procedures. After arrival of empty wagons in Werris Creek Yard, the yard shunter would propel the empties at slow speed (without a brake van) directly along the Main North, diverging at Werris Creek Colliery Junction, and into the Colliery sidings and leave the empties in the empty siding. Empty and loaded wagons were moved by local means (tractor shunted), under the loading bins, and moved to the full sidings, ready for collection by the yard shunter, which would haul them back into Muswellbrook Yard, for assembly into outgoing coal trains.

MSTS Paths –

MSTS Consists -

Other Traffic Workings

General Goods Traffic

Specific details of general Goods Trains, the type of goods vehicles used and basic histories, as applied to MSTs, can be found in a supporting document, “NSWGR General Goods Traffic Workings”, included with this route.

Departmental Locomotive Coal Traffic

One primary source of traffic within this area was the requirements for large quantities of coal for locomotive departmental purposes. Throughout the state, the NSWGR used several types of coaling plants at their locomotive depots – some used long elevated ramp type coal stages with large storage bins that discharged coal by overhead chutes into the locomotive tenders and bunkers (Broadmeadow, Port Waratah, Werris Creek) – some used under-track discharge hoppers with a vertical coal elevator to a large storage bin that discharged coal by overhead chutes into locomotive tenders and bunkers (Armidale, Dubbo, Orange) – and some used simple raised timber built platforms, where coal was manually shovelled from the wagon onto the stage, then from the stage into the tender or bunker (most smaller loco depots).

At the elevated ramp type and vertical elevator type coal plants, LCH/CCH hopper wagons were used. But for the raised timber stages, S-Trucks/K-trucks were used.

Coal came from two primary sources – several collieries on the South Maitland coalfield and from Muswellbrook. The departmental coal from the South Maitland coalfield was transported in a similar manner to the other coal, except it was always hauled in standard NSWGR LCH/CCH hopper wagons or S-trucks/K-trucks as appropriate for the loco depot where it was going to. The Muswellbrook Collieries had a long term contract to supply coal to the NSWGR – some of the output proceeding south and some of the output proceeding north. Regular timetabled block coal trains left Muswellbrook for Port Waratah and for Werris Creek; at Werris Creek, the coal wagons were re-marshalled into normal goods trains serving the Main North (to Armidale and beyond), the Barraba Branch, the Narrabri/Moree line (and beyond) and the Werris Creek – Binnaway line for other depots to the west and north-west.

The coal output going to the south was primarily in ‘Muswellbrook Colliery’ owned hopper wagons, and these were for the elevated ramp stage at Port Waratah, other coal being forwarded south was in normal NSWGR LCH/CCH, S-trucks/K-trucks, the LCH/CCH hoppers for the Broadmeadow elevated ramp stage, and the S-trucks/K-trucks for other destinations.

The coal output going to the north was in NSWGR LCH/CCH hopper wagons (for the elevated plant at Armidale, and for the Dubbo and Orange plants via the Werris Creek – Binnaway line) and in S-truck/K-trucks (for all other loco depots throughout the north and north-west).

Some other minor coal traffic for local non-NSWGR customers throughout the region was hauled in NSWGR S-Trucks/K-trucks (e.g. Tamworth Powerhouse).

Ballast, Blue Metal and Minerals

The two main sources of ballast for track use on the NSWGR, were at Bombo on the Illawarra line, just north of Kiama, and at Martin's Creek, approximately half-way between Maitland and Dungog, on the North Coast line.

Prior to building the BBW bogie ballast hoppers, NSWGR used 16T MH 4-wheel hoppers; a total of 105 MH's were built in 1931 and 1938 (metal bodied equivalents to the typical wooden LCH wagons used by most coal mines), for transporting ballast.

Photos showing Ballast Trains in use on NSWGR, generally show a typical consist of six or nine bogie ballast hoppers and a bogie Ballast Plough Van, which would be within the typical 550 ton loading capacity for a Superheated Class D50 2-8-0.

Another common ballast train consist would comprise a set of six BBW bogie ballast hoppers, then a bogie plough van, following behind these would be a small number of S-Trucks (maybe 4 or 5) loaded with 'fines' for use on pathways and other paved areas around yards and stations, all this was then tailed by a normal LHG goods brake van.

The Bogie Ballast Plough Vans, as well as having normal accommodation for the train Guard, also had additional seating accommodation for the Ballast Train crew. The twin centre-mounted ploughs under the floor would be wound down to track level by a set of winding gear inside the van. The plough van had two sets of ploughs, so that track ballasting activities could be carried out in either direction to suit conditions at the work-site.

Normally, loaded ballast trains would be worked over the Down (outbound) lines to all parts of the state, with the return empties being worked in Up (inbound) trains. However, ballast was normally worked directly from Martin's creek, where it would be assembled into required 'work trains' for use throughout the North West and North regions. Ballast trains to the Main North were worked around the north-west triangle between Telarah and Farley. Ballast trains in transit, not forming an STN scheduled 'work train,' would be trailed by a normal brake van, although a Ballast Plough Van would still be included in the consist, 'taking the plough to the work area'.

Petroleum Products

The only two oil refineries in NSW were both in Sydney. One was at Kurnell (using an under-water pipeline to the oil terminals at Matraville) and the other one at Clyde. A constant stream of loaded and empty tank wagons performed a regular cyclic flow between the oil terminals and the local fuel suppliers in the country centres.

The vast rural lands to the North and North West of the Hawkesbury River required a constant supply of petrol, oil and other lubricants to maintain all the rural farming machinery and localised industries. Most rural towns had at least one siding for use by various oil companies to store these commodities. Nearly every northbound goods train had one or more loaded tank wagons, or S-trucks loaded with 44-gal drums to serve these local sidings – often the tank and drum wagons would be positioned in groups throughout the train to suit the shunting order at each wayside yard.

Details of other oil and petroleum traffic workings, as applicable to this route, can be found in the document "NSWGR General Goods Traffic Workings".

Milk – Dairy farming was a frequent activity throughout the north and north-west of the state. The daily supply of milk, for local communities, as well as the larger cities and towns, generated a substantial amount of milk traffic – this could be in the form of milk churns loaded into louvre vans, or bulk milk loaded into milk tank wagons or 'milk pots'.

Many small rural stations along the lines, that had at least one goods siding, often had a small timber loading stage to enable milk churns to be transhipped from local road vehicle to ventilated louver vans. Milk co-operatives processing plants were located at many stations along the lines covered by this route, and were found at such places as: Oak Dairy factory (just north of Muswellbrook), Singleton Co-operative Dairy Company, Branxton Co-operative Dairy Company, and Hunter Valley Dairy Company at Hexham. Similarly, there were a number of dairy processing plants along the Main North Coast line, at Dungog, Gloucester, Wingham and Taree, and other locations further north.

Fruit and Vegetables

There were only a small number of local industries growing fruit and vegetables, mostly for local area consumption, throughout the area north of the Hunter Valley. Significant quantities of fruit and vegetables grown in other parts of the state (or interstate) were railed to the North and North-West for sale in the local markets, particularly tropical fruit from northern NSW and Queensland (ie bananas, pineapples, mangos, paw paws, etc. - railed via the North Coast Line to Broadmeadow, for re-marshalling into other northbound goods trains) and stone fruit and vegetables from the Riverina District and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. This traffic was worked as a number of refrigerator vans or louver vans in normal scheduled goods trains over the areas covered by this route

Wheat –The lands west and north-west of the Hunter Valley sourced huge quantities of wheat and other grains for milling in the Newcastle Metropolitan Area or for export from Bullock Island. This vast flow of wheat during the Harvest Season was railed in covered wheat wagons, either 4-wheel RU wagons or bogie BWH wagons, often in block loads, or significant parts of general goods trains. The resulting flow or return of empty wagons was just as huge. Sometimes, in peak demand, when no other wagons were available, surplus coal hopper wagons were cleaned and seconded for wheat transport, being covered by tarpaulins to keep the weather out.

Wool –The lands west and north-west of the Hunter Valley sourced significant quantities of wool for processing in the Sydney Metropolitan Area or for export from Darling Harbour or Rozelle. This vast flow of baled wool during the Shearing Season was railed in open wagons or flat wagons covered by tarpaulins to keep the weather out, usually in block loads, or significant parts of general goods trains. The resulting flow or return of empty wagons was just as huge.

Livestock – The lands west and north-west of the Hunter valley sourced huge quantities of livestock for the Saleyards (Telarah) or Abattoirs (Hanley Junction) in the Newcastle Metropolitan Area, or for onward transport to the huge saleyards and abattoirs at Flemington and Homebush in Sydney. This vast flow of livestock for the regular Stockyard Sales days was railed in sheep or cattle wagons, often in block loads, or significant parts of general goods trains. The resulting flow or return of empty wagons was just as huge.

Timber – Timber cutting was an extensive industry in the north of NSW – there were two principal areas; the strip along the coastline (covered by the Main North Line) and the area in the north-west called the 'Pilliga Scrub' (which fell between the Narrabri line and the Gwabegar line.

Substantial areas of State Forest covered the surrounding districts along the Main North Coast Line – most major stations and yards along the line had facilities to load either un-sawn or sawn timber – many had small local sawmills adjacent to the line and prepared the sawn timber suitable for building purposes, other customers railed un-sawn logs to the south for further processing. Just about every goods train coming southwards off the Main North Coast line at Telarah contained a number of wagons loaded with either un-sawn logs or sawn timber.

In the north-west, the Pilliga Scrub covered a huge area, and many stations along the Gwabegar line, including Gwabegar, Baradine and Coonabarabran were the loading points for timber products, as well as Narrabri, Baan Baa and Boggabri on the Werris Creek – Narrabri line. Accordingly a regular flow of wagons loaded with timber came down the Gwabegar line, either to Binnaway and then across to Werris Creek, or straight down to Wallerawang and the Main West line. Likewise, a regular flow of wagons loaded with timber came down the Narrabri line to Werris Creek, where they were re-marshalled into goods trains going either to the north (Armidale and beyond) or to the south (Newcastle and Sydney).

Superphosphate – Superphosphate proved to be a major product in increasing the growth and production rate of grain and other crop farming activities throughout NSW. A manufacturing plant was established on Kooragang Island just north of Newcastle, and this plant had a substantial output directed to the farming communities all over NSW. A substantial amount went south through Broadmeadow to service the south and south-western parts of the state right down to the Victorian border. However, large quantities flowed into the north and north-west. Superphosphate was usually carried in bagged form, loaded into open wagons, such as S-trucks or K-trucks, and tarpaulined against the weather.