

Located 20km from McGrath's Hill and 85km from the centre of Sydney, Wisemans Ferry is now a quaint settlement, a few shops and, most importantly, a ferry across the Hawkesbury River providing access to St Albans, the Hunter Valley and Gosford.

Wisemans Ferry is not so much a town as a fascinating relic on the banks of the Hawkesbury River. The Park near the ferry is an ideal location for large family get togethers or a day next to this historic river.

A kiosk is located within the park for those last minute items left behind in the haste to pack the car.

### History

By 1794, settlers had moved into the area west of Wisemans Ferry and grain and other crops were being grown for the colony. These early farmers provided Sydney Town with almost half its food supply. The produce was delivered by boat down the Hawkesbury River, a situation which saw Wisemans Ferry rapidly develop as an important river port, out into the Pacific Ocean and around into Sydney Harbour. This was the beginning of a riverboat industry, which continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

In 1805, Solomon Wiseman had been convicted of stealing timber from barges on the River Thames, in London, and transported to New South Wales. It is also reported in some quarters that he was found guilty of smuggling French spies into England along with contraband whiskey.

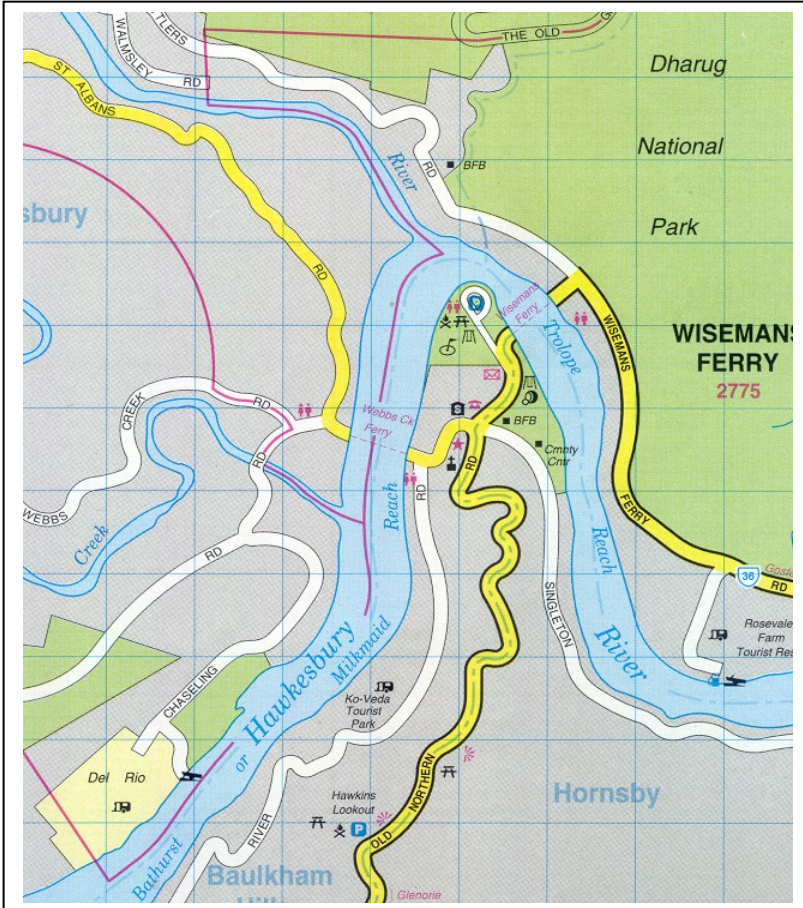
In 1816 he settled at what was then called Lower Portland Head, now Wisemans Ferry and by 1821 was operating an Inn called, "Sign of the Packet."

An astute businessman he managed to get himself assigned to his wife, Jane, who had also come to this country. While still a convict, he began to carve out for himself a business empire such that the locals often referred to him as "Governor Wiseman."

The ferry he established is the oldest in Australia having operated continuously since 1827.







### Location and access

The Park is located on Old Northern Road adjacent to the Wisemans Ferry.

### Things to do and see

**Picnicking:** Wisemans Ferry Park is an ideal day tour destination with several sheltered picnic tables available at the Park.

**Public Amenities:** A modern set of public toilets are available at the park.

**Wetlands and Nature:** Tidal mangroves and a small ephemeral wetlands are located on the banks of the Hawkesbury River.

**Barbeques:** Both electric and wood fired barbeques are available on a first come basis

**Playground:** A children's playground is provided that caters for older children with climbing frame and swings.

**Walking:** A concrete walking track circumnavigates the Park. For a challenging walk travel across the ferry and walk some of the Great North Road.

**Bird watching:** Many interesting birds visit the park from overseas stopping off in the wetlands in the park.

### Getting involved

- Join a bush care group and assist with the management of the bushland. For more information contact Council's Bushcare Officer on 9686 4842
- Keep pets out of the bush
- Report vandalism to Council's 24-hour hotline 1300 884 885

### For further information:

Visit the Local Studies Collection at the Castle Hill Library.

Contact Council's Parks and Reserves Team for more information on 9843 0555.