

Tilba Dairy 37 Bate Street, Central Tilba, New South Wales 2546



Tilba was first settled by Europeans in the gold rush years of the mid-1800s before dairying took over in the early 19th century.

The traditional peoples of Tilba Tilba (an Aboriginal term for “many waters”) are the Yuin Nation, who have lived among these lands for millennia.

Many of the original cottages were built using local eucalyptus, and when alluvial & reef gold was discovered in the region, a boom of sorts began, bringing with it much prosperity – and newcomers – up until the late 1800’s.

The Bate family were key political figures in establishing the town and the main street of Central Tilba is named in their honour.

The ABC Cheese factory (established in 1891) continues the tradition thanks to the Dibden family, who purchased the premises in 2006 and have gone from strength to strength with their high quality milks, cheeses & yoghurts.

In 1974, The National Trust added the Tilba villages to their heritage listing, ensuring the preservation of the unique & quaint buildings, which draw many visitors to the region to appreciate their distinctive charm & character and absorb the unique historical ambience.

Until August 1990 the Princes Highway passed through Tilba when a bypass opened.

**Outside the Dairy Factory is a 32mm Davies
Shephard / Elster 32mm oval flanged rotary piston
PD Water Meter.**

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The ABC Cheese Factory in Central Tilba, was the first co-operative cheese factory in NSW.

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In July 1891, 320 shares were issued at 2s 6d each (£40).[19] The cost of plant was £268.[20] ABC was in operation from September 1891[21][22] until 2006 and it remains a local attraction.

In 1892, half the shares had been taken up and the 450 gallons of milk was processed. The Moruya Examiner reported "The ABC Dairy Factory has settled down to its work...as proof of the popularity of which this brand has attained, we append an extract from the report of the manager of the South Coast & West Camden Co. 'Cheese market improving...We received 45 [crates] of your cheese today, all sold...Can do with double quantity next boat."

1894: In the financial year ending 6 March 1894, the factory processed 219,000 gallons (0.8 of a megalitre) of milk producing 228,000 (~100 tonnes) of cheese. Gross revenue was £2,994 9s 8d. After deducting cost of manufacture, freight, commission, repairs and additions to plant, secretary's salary and sundry expenses, the suppliers received £2,114 8s.

1904: 265,000 gallons of milk were treated. Gross revenue from cheese was £5,841. The suppliers received £4,618. At this time there were 15 holdings and 800 cows. Farmers received £300+ from the Co-op, aside from revenue from pigs, poultry, calves and other stock which was estimated to be worth £100 each year.

1905: 313,000 gallons of milk were treated. Gross revenue from cheese was £7,119 18s 8d. The suppliers received £5,581 17s 10d.

1907: The factory was supplied by 16 dairies within a radius of three miles (5 km). One farm on 230 acres (93 ha) with a herd of 60 cows had a turnover of £998 of which £700 was from milk, the balance from pigs and other produce.

In 1917 and 1918 the quantity of milk processed (250,000 gallons every six months) and the return to farmers were at record highs.

1922: A shock came in December 1922, when the NSW Department of Agriculture condemned the ABC and Tilba Tilba cheese factories. The ABC was given until May 1924, to erect an up-to-date building, with an adequate water supply. Although the quantity of milk being processed had increased significantly over the last 16 years, the ABC had been using the same scales. The observer saw a long row of waiting waggonettes with their bright milk cans standing in the hot sun, the contents deteriorating all the time on account of the slowness of the weighing and receiving methods.

Tenders were called in June 1924 and building was underway by August. By mid 1925 the new factory was complete at a cost of £4,364, while £603 was expended on plant and machinery. It was pronounced equal to anything of the kind in the State. In that year, 78 crates of ABC cheese were sold in London for £104 – topping the market. Foley Bros, the company's Sydney agents, said the ABC cheese was 'always of excellent quality'.

1980: The drought of 1980 cut production at the ABC to a quarter of normal. Instead of 18,000 litres a day and four vats of cheese, the factory was handling only 2,300 litres and producing only one vat of cheese.

1981: The Bega Dairy Cooperative announced that it would close the ABC factory with its five employees on 21 March.[38] BDC said the closure was due to a lack of milk due to an increase in the liquid-milk market and to the smallness of the factory. In December 1981, Geoff and Catherine Bryan announced they had bought the factory and it would re-open in February 1982.

The Tilba Factory was purchased in 2012 by two local dairy farmers who installed new cheese-making and milk-bottling equipment, bringing back the tradition of dairy manufacture to the Tilba area. The milk bottled and cheese made on site are from two local dairy farms, one in Tilba one in Cobargo. In 2006 there were 19 locals employed at the Tilba Factory, where they were producing award-winning cheese, yoghurt, milk and cream made from jersey milk. As of 2021 the business is called Tilba Real Dairy.

<https://tilbadairy.com.au/>

(thanks to Wikipedia)



Site visit by ATM
26.07.2025

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<https://bermaguihistoricalsociety.org.au/tilba-mountain-life/>

