

# Basic Detail Report

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**Title**

Cape Bowling Green lighthouse

**Date**

1873 - 1874

**Primary Maker**

John & Jacob Rooney

**Medium**

Iron, wood, copper, bronze, brass, glass, paint

**Dimensions**

Overall: 21000 x 6400 mm

**Name**

Lighthouse

**History**

In 1864, after a study of the Colony's maritime affairs, a Queensland Government committee recommended that major lights be built at a number of locations on the Inner Passage route through the Great Barrier Reef to ensure a safe route for ships. During the 1860s and 1870s, the gold rushes saw the population of Northern Queensland increase dramatically, as well as the expansion of ports and shipping services. Between July 1873 and October 1874, a lighthouse was built at Cape Bowling Green, a low sandy spit 70 km south of Townsville. It was one of 22 lighthouses built in Queensland to the same 'ironclad' design, comprising a local hardwood frame clad with iron plates imported from Britain. The plates were prefabricated in Brisbane under the direction of the colonial architect and then bolted to the inner frame on site, ensuring a fast and economical construction. The original optical equipment - lamp, lens, glass panes and clockwork were made by Chance Brothers of Birmingham, and threw a 13,000 candlepower beam 25 kilometres (14 nautical miles). Originally kerosene powered, the lighthouse converted to an incandescent mantle using vaporised kerosene in 1913, increasing the candlepower to more than 60,000. In the early 20th century, the development of acetylene lights which were switched on by a sun-operated valve, led to the development of the automated lighthouse. In 1920, an automatic acetylene light was installed and the lighthouse, which was previously staffed by a keeper and three assistants, was 'de-manned' and the keepers' cottages and other buildings were demolished. In 1983 the white tower was given two wide red bands to increase its visibility in daylight. By 1987 the lighthouse had been replaced by a modern tower and in 1988 it was carefully dismantled by a team from the Department of Transport and Communications. The dismantled lighthouse was ferried by landing craft and helicopter to the Royal Australian Navy support ship HMAS STALWART, lying offshore to transport it to Sydney. Consultants Ove

Arup and Partners restored the lighthouse to its 1919 pre-automated condition and in 1994 it was re-erected on the Australian National Maritime Museum's North Wharf, sponsored by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.