

# Basic Detail Report

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**Title**

SS KEILAWARRA of Sydney 478 tons

**Date**

1883

**Primary Maker**

William Forster

**Medium**

Watercolour on paper

**Dimensions**

Overall (Includes frame): 625 x 755 x 50 mm Image: 334 x 506 mm

**Name**

Painting

**History**

Willilam Forster was born in England in 1851. He went to New Zealand in 1871 and began working as a marine artist. Around 1880 he came to Sydney where he painted ships and yachts in Sydney Harbour and Newcastle, producing a prolific number over the next decade. Forster catered to a well defined market using the conventions common to professional ship-portraitists - usually presenting a broadside view of the vessel with a recognisable landmark such as South Head in the background and one or two smaller vessels. He usually included the ship's flags. He always worked in watercolour. His brushwork was distinctively delicate and the detail was technically of a high standard. He died of illness in 1891 and was buried in a pauper's grave. SS KEILAWARRA was a passenger and general cargo ship operated by Howard Smith in the intercolonial trade. It was built in 1878 at Kinghorn, Scotland where it was said that the slipway at the shipyard was so exposed that the steamships produced had to be launched with their engines running to ensure they were not immediately swept onto nearby rocks. It was 784 tons and 200 ft long (61 m). Its design and facilities were old style for its day. It had one bathroom for 48 passengers and provided only convertible sofa accommodation in the saloon. In 1886 the KEILAWARRA was rammed and sunk by a small collier HELEN NICOLL, while en route from Sydney to Brisbane.