



Friends of the North Australia Railway - GPO Box 3504 - Darwin NT 0801 - Australia

FACT SHEET 2 – *Sandfly*

SANDFLY is a Class 4-10½ locomotive manufactured by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia USA. She was one of eight of her class supplied to Newell and Co of Melbourne between 1884 and 1891. She was brought to Port Darwin by the Millar Brothers aboard a steam ship and arrived on 4 December 1886 in pieces. She was assembled by May 1887 to commence life as the longest serving locomotive (and only one of her class) on the NAR.



On 12 July 1887 [left], she was formally named the *Port Darwin* by Mrs Pater, wife of Justice Thomas Kennedy Pater of the Supreme Court. Her official name didn't stick and she became known as *Sandfly* because:

...like its diminutive namesake, the engine flittered to and fro the port area near the mangroves shunting wagons of railway construction materials between the jetty and yards. The Sandfly's shrill whistle could apparently be heard all over town, as it puffed and fussed around the yard shunting wagons to and fro.¹

Sandfly's primary role was to haul railway stock, including tracks, from the jetty to the railway yards at Frances Bay.

The jetty [pictured right, 1901] was designed and constructed by W Wishart who arrived in Port Darwin aboard the *Airlie* in 1885. The wharf was completed by 1886 and was an engineering boon to the NAR, although it was not without its hazards.²



¹ NRETAS (2009). *The Sandfly NA1 Locomotive: Background Historical Information*. Prepared by the Heritage Branch, NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport, Darwin.

² Without safety rails or lights, the jetty was dangerous at night and many a local stepped off the jetty as they farewelled friends departing by steam ship.