

# LAKE MARGARET POWER SCHEME

**Location:** On the Yolande River north of Queenstown

**Owner:** Hydro Tasmania.

The plaque is located outside the entrance to the Upper Station.

## The scheme

The Upper Scheme consisted of a concrete gravity dam, a 2.2 km long wood-stave pipeline, twin steel penstocks and four Pelton wheel turbines driving four 1.2 MW generators.

A 10km long double circuit 6.6 kV transmission line delivered power to the Mt Lyell Mine site.

The overall planning and construction of the scheme was carried under the direction of Mt Lyell's Chief Engineer, **Geo W Wright** and hence much of the credit for the success of the scheme is attributable to this man and his team.

A third penstock and three more machines were added in 1918 and 1931.

The Lower Scheme built in 1931 had a concrete dam, a wood-stave pipeline, a single steel penstock and 1.8 MW generating set. It was operated remotely from the Upper Station.

The Hydro-Electric Commission purchased both schemes in 1985. The Lower Station closed in 1994 and its machinery mothballed. The Upper Scheme closed in 2006 due to safety concerns over the wood-stave pipeline and its supports. Its refurbishment and re-opening is currently being considered (2008).



**Lake Margaret Upper Power Station**

## HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER

### Lake Margaret Power Scheme

The Mt Lyell Mining & Railway Company built this hydro-electric scheme to replace its voracious wood-fired steam-driven station. Commissioned in 1914 and expanded in 1918 and 1931, it was the sole supplier to the West Coast mining communities until 1937. The Lower and Upper Stations operated continuously until closure by Hydro Tasmania in 1994 and 2006. It was the last private scheme to be built in Tasmania, and it displays rare and intact early 20th century machinery and equipment.

The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
Hydro Tasmania 2008

## Heritage Significance

The scheme has a long association with the Mt Lyell Mining & Railway Company and later with Hydro Tasmania.

The scheme is one of a few sites in Australia whereby the whole process of power generation, construction, staffing and community life at a remote industrial settlement is readily evident.

Due to the exceptional integrity of its historic assets, the scheme is a rare example of an early twentieth century hydro-electric scheme in Australia.