

Power into poetry- Information sheet

Hydro Tasmania: 100 years of achievement

What started in 1914 as the Hydro-Electric Department became known by Tasmanians simply as 'the Hydro'. For a century, the Hydro has shaped Tasmania's industries, economy, landscape and community. Its **legacy** is not only its engineering and construction **feats**, but also its lasting impact on the State's population and culture. Thousands of 'Hydro people', many from overseas, came to work on the Hydro. At its peak, the Hydro employed more than 5200 people.

The beginnings

In the early 1900s, the miracle of hydro-electric power was just arriving in Tasmania. In 1914, the Tasmanian Government bought a small electricity company and created the Hydro-Electric Department. The first power station was opened in 1916.

By the 1920s, hydro-electric power was **revolutionising** Tasmanian farms, mills, mines and factories, but electricity was not yet widely available for household uses. The Hydro kept up building their power stations and dams, but materials and workers became **scarce** and progress slowed until the 1930s.

The pioneers

Construction work in the early years was difficult and dangerous, requiring great **resilience** and **pioneering spirit**. The camps were **rustic** and isolated, and often bitterly cold. Despite the **hardship**, many Hydro men (and later, women) came to remember the time they spent in these communities as happy and fun.

After the Second World War, the Hydro **recruited** many migrants to build dams and power stations. English, Polish, German, Italian, Scandinavian, Eastern European and other migrants came together with Tasmanians, and together they created lively and diverse Hydro communities.

The 1950s

A severe drought that began in the late 50s saw power restrictions introduced. At the same time, Hydro proposed major new developments with the **construction** and **commissioning** of a number of stations through the 60s.

The changed organisation

By the 70s and 80s, the age of dam building in Tasmania was coming to an end. Out of the days of environmental conflict came a strong commitment by the Hydro to environmental planning and **revegetation**.

You can find out more about Hydro Tasmania and present day operations at www.hydro.com.au

For more information on how you can help our environment, or to make some suggestions of your own, please go to www.coolaustralia.org

