

## Cataract Dam

location South-east of Appin, New South Wales.  
owner Sydney Water

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the plaques

types **National Engineering Landmark  
and Information Plaques**

location On stone parapet wall of dam.

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The Upper Nepean Scheme for Sydney's water supply (see Prospect Dam) was devised by E O Moriarty in the early 1880s. The severe drought of 1901–02 hastened the construction of water storage dams of which Cataract was the first. It is a mass gravity dam of cyclopean masonry whereby sandstone blocks weighing up to 4.5 tonnes, quarried from the thick sandstone strata at the site, were bedded in concrete mortar to form the basic shape of the wall. The upstream face was formed from precast basalt-concrete blocks and the downstream face was of cast in situ concrete. The top of the dam is 49m above the foundations.

plaque text

### **Cataract Dam**

Contractor Lane and Peters completed basalt concrete faced sandstone-block masonry dam in 1907 for the NSW Public Works Department to a design by principal engineers L A B Wade and T W Keele. It was the first large city water storage dam in Australia, the fourth largest of its type in the world and the first of the four Upper Nepean dams which provided water reserves for Sydney against the effects of drought.

Dedicated by The Institution of Engineers, Australia and Sydney Water, 1995.



### **L A B Wade (1864–1915)**

*Leslie Augustus Burton Wade served his articles in the Department of Public Works, NSW. In 1900 he was appointed Principal Engineer, Water Supply Construction, with statewide responsibility for town water supply and sewerage, and water conservation.*

*His accomplishments included Cataract, Medlow Bath and Burrinjuck Dams. He was appointed the first Commissioner of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission in 1913 and held this position until his untimely death in 1915.*



*Flood during construction*