

1886

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Power generation

There are a number of power generation sites on lands managed by DOC including the Dawson Falls Power Station. The world's first commercial application of electricity was the 1882 Paris street lighting. New Zealand's first application of electricity was as early as 1886, powering the Bullendale gold mine in Otago, followed in 1888 with the inauguration of the Reefton street lighting.

Both were hydro schemes, utilising the significant New Zealand hydro potential. Many small scale hydro schemes were built throughout the country, by local government and industries. There was even a power station on the West Coast operated by an early U-boat engine.

Many of the early power generation plants were municipally operated coal-fired steam plants located mid-town. Some, established to power electric tramway systems, were often utilised to supply power for elevators, lighting and industrial machinery along tramway routes. 'Not in my back yard' protests were unheard of, technological advance was considered highly desirable. It was more cost efficient to ship in coal by coastal steamer than build a long transmission line.

Gradually power transmission technology became more cost effective, spurring the construction of large hydro dams at remote sites. These were linked by lines to major centres and rendered redundant the coal fired steam plants. Today, with increased opposition to transmission lines, the mid-town power plant may yet reappear!

There is a number of interesting power generation sites on lands managed by the Department, including Dawson Falls Power Station, still operating. The 1901 generator is the oldest in continuous operation in New Zealand and amongst the oldest in the world. However many of New Zealand's most significant power generation sites are not on land managed by the Department and have no assurance of heritage protection. The following sites are actively managed by the Department and developed for visitors:

The sites that DOC manages under this theme are:

Northland

- [Kerikeri hydro station](#)

Wanganui

- [Dawson Falls](#), Tongariro National Park, 1934
- Mangaweka Power Station
- Waitawheta Pylons

Bay of Plenty

- Okere Falls Power Station 1901
- Waikino Transformer House

Nelson/Marlborough

- Six Mile Power Station 1921

West Coast

- Tatatare Tunnels, Franz Joseph

Canterbury

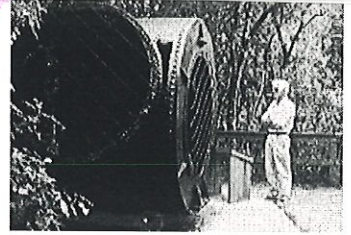
- [Sawyer Stream Hydro Power Scheme](#), Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, 1925

Otago

- [Bullendale Power Station site](#), 1886

Southland

- Upper Hollyford Hydro Station, Te Anau, 1936



Turbine, Okere Falls, Bay of Plenty

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