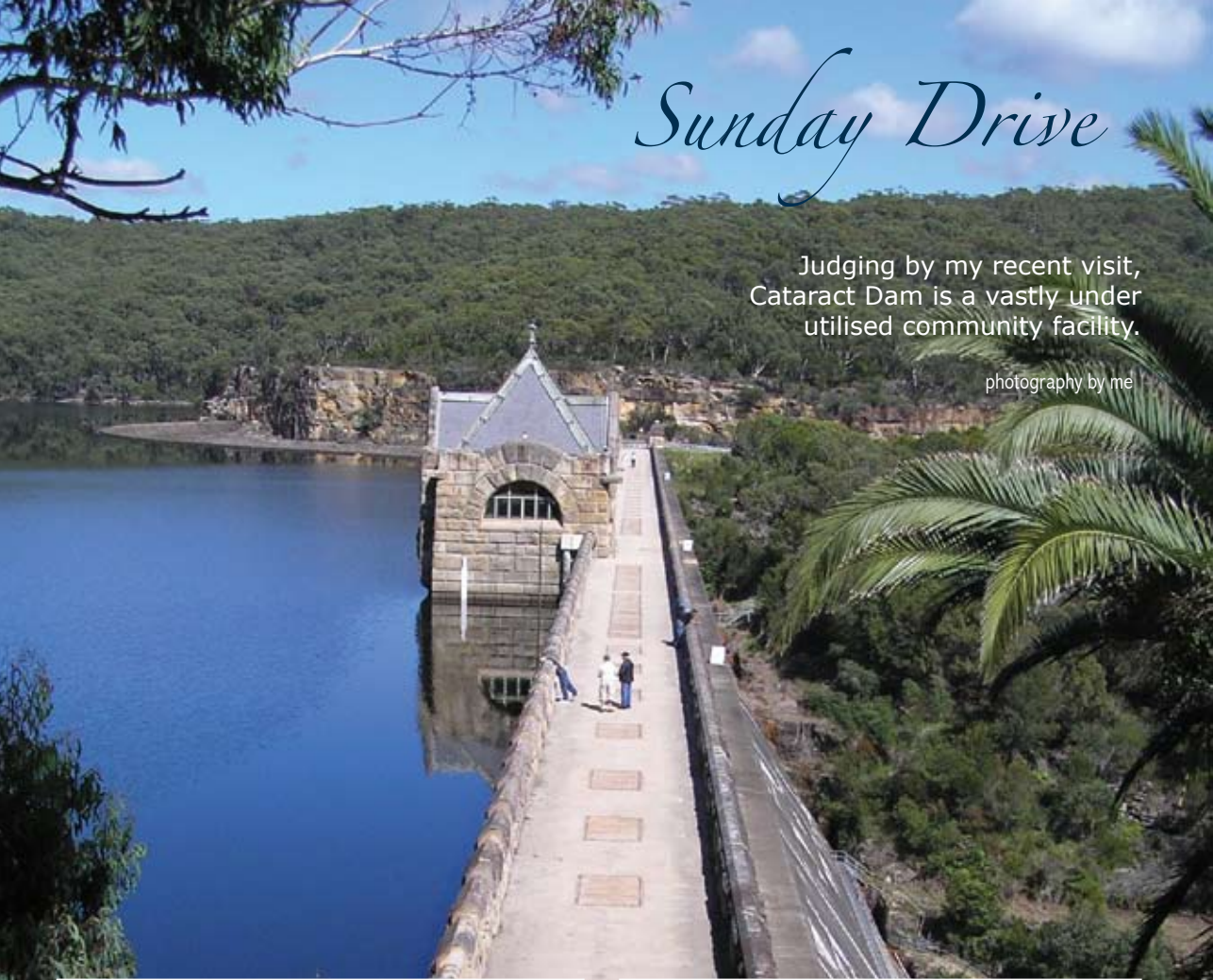


# Sunday Drive

Judging by my recent visit, Cataract Dam is a vastly under utilised community facility.

photography by me



Ranault Megane

Brought to you by  
**Peter Donnelly Automotive**

10 Mill Rd Campbelltown tel.4628 2933

email: [sales@peterdonnelly.com.au](mailto:sales@peterdonnelly.com.au)



## Cataract Dam

Hands up those who have been to Cataract dam in the last ten years. I thought so. Yes, I am guilty too. The facility is fantastic and really should be used by more people. At the time of my visit (March) the dam was full and releasing excess water into the natural water course (bottom left)... Spectacular!

Located just a few minutes from Appin, with heaps of shade, heaps of grass, heaps of cooking facilities and tables chairs... it is hard to imagine why Cataract isn't packed every weekend.

The day I visited, I had been for a surf and was on my way home when I decided to drop into Cataract to get some pictures for this piece. It was 11am on a spectacular Autumn day, and there were maybe six families there.

Cataract dam is located on the Cataract River, a tributary of the Nepean River, just below the junction with the Loddon River. By June 1903 much of the area to be submerged had already been cleared of timber.

For the first time in Australia, pre-cast moulded concrete blocks were used in construction for the upstream face of the dam. They were hauled to the site from an open factory on the banks of the Loddon River. Cement and other supplies were delivered to the site by steam tractors hauling trailer trains, over rough-made roads from Campbelltown.

The dam was completed in 1907 and cost about \$1.3 million. When Cataract filled to capacity for the first time in January 1911, it soon became clear that the spillway should be widened to prevent any risk of floodwaters overtopping the dam wall. This work was completed in 1915. In 1968 a large flood saw the water level climb 1.5 metres overnight reaching 75mm below the walkways across the wall. About 150 million litres of water were discharged out of the old spillway.

Cataract Dam is a straight dam with an unlined side spillway extending from the left abutment. The weathering of the sandstone on Cataract, coupled with its stone battlements, has made it one of the most picturesque dams in Sydney. In 1987 Cataract Dam was strengthened by the installation of post-tensioned anchors at a cost of \$13.2 million.

I left Cataract Dam and headed to Appin for your lunch destination. The main bar at Appin Hotel was already fairly busy when I arrived. I went straight to the bistro to investigate the new operators.

New Chef Ben Armstrong and his Apprentice Shaun Lawson seem to be coping easily in one of the busiest pub eateries in the district. I try to be completely honest when I write for the magazine. I didn't eat. I was in a hurry to get back to my office and keep working so I can't offer a review.

Ben told me he owned his own restaurant in Kiama for many years before accepting this position a few months ago. He had a few Chef's Specials written up which may give you a bit of an idea as to the style of food: Roast Duck with Orange Sauce and Fresh Vegies; Fish Parmasiana with Prawn Salsa; Lamb Souvlaki and Tzatziki. Sounds good. They get very busy so best if you book a table.

