

Senator Bob Brown - Australian Greens

Bob Brown, born in 1944, was educated in rural New South Wales, became captain of Blacktown Boys High School in Sydney and graduated in medicine from Sydney University in 1968. He became the Director of the Wilderness Society which organised the blockade of the dam-works on Tasmania's wild Franklin River in 1982/3. Some 1500 people were arrested and 600 jailed, including Bob Brown who spent 19 days in Risdon Prison. On the day of his release, he was elected as the first Green into Tasmania's Parliament. After federal government intervention, the Franklin River was protected in 1983.

As a State MP, Bob Brown introduced a wide range of private member's initiatives, including for freedom of information, death with dignity, lowering parliamentary salaries, gay law reform, banning the battery-hen industry and nuclear free Tasmania. Some succeeded, others not. Regrettably, his 1987 bill to ban semi-automatic guns was voted down by both Liberal and Labor members of the House of Assembly, seven years before the Port Arthur massacre.

In 1989, he led the parliamentary team of five Greens which held the balance of power with the Field Labor Government. The Greens saved 25 schools from closure, instigated the Local Employment Initiatives which created more than 1000 jobs in depressed areas, doubled the size of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area to 1.4 million hectares, created the Douglas-Apsley National Park and supported tough fiscal measures to recover from the debts of the previous Liberal regime. Bob resigned from the State Parliament in 1993 and Christine Milne took over as leader of the Tasmanian Greens.

In 1996 Bob was elected to the Australian Senate, where some of the bills he has introduced include constitutional reform, forest protection, blocking radioactive waste dumping, banning mandatory sentencing of Aboriginal children and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Bob Brown has been a life-long activist. In 1986 he was shot at and assaulted during protests against logging at Tasmania's Farmhouse Creek. He was arrested and jailed twice in 1995 for demonstrating peacefully to protect Tasmania's Tarkine Wilderness from roading and logging. In 1990 Bob Brown established the Australian Bush Heritage Fund to buy land for conservation. His books include Lake Pedder, Wild Rivers, Tarkine Trails, The Greens, The Valley of the Giants, Tasmania's Recherche Bay and Memo for a Saner World.

Bob Brown was a driving force in forming the Australian Greens in 1992. He has travelled extensively, fostering Green politics and forming close links with Greens in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. In 2001 he was re-elected to the Australian Senate. There are now about 100 Greens local government councillors in Australia, 15 state MPs and 4 federal senators. Bob Brown is parliamentary leader of the Australian Greens.

Bob has a house on the Liffey River beneath snowy Drys Bluff in central Tasmania. He enjoys photography, bushwalking, poetry, and philosophy.

Brief Curriculum Vitae

Bob (Robert James) Brown

- Partner: Paul Thomas
- Born a twin, 27 December 1944, Oberon, NSW
- 1952 Began school at Trunkey Creek, NSW
- 1968 Graduated in Medicine, University of Sydney
- 1969-1980 Medical practice Canberra, London, Sydney, Perth, Launceston
- 1972 Moved to Tasmania to work in Launceston general practice
- 1975 United Tasmania Group candidate. Won 199 votes in his first Senate election
- 1979-84 Director, The Wilderness Society
- 1983 Elected to the Tasmanian House of Assembly
- 1989-92 Leader of the five Green independents, formed an accord with the Labor Party
- 1990 Founding president, Australian Bush Heritage Fund
- 1992 Formation of the Australian Greens
- 1994-6 Extensive tours of Australian cities and towns as Australian Greens national spokesperson
- 1996 Elected to the Senate as first Australian Greens Senator
- 2001 Hosted the first Global Greens Conference, Canberra
- 2001 Re-elected to the Australian Senate.
- 2005 Became leader of the Australian Greens

Awards

- 1983 The Australian newspaper 'Australian of the Year'
- 1987 UNEP Global 500 Award
- 1990 Goldman Environmental Prize (USA)
- 1996 BBC Wildlife magazine 'World's Most Inspiring Politician'
- 1998 National Trust Australian National Treasure
- 2006 Rainforest Action Network Environmental Hero

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