

# Bob Brown

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Bob (Robert James) Brown, was born in 1944 and educated in rural New South Wales, before becoming the captain of Blacktown Boys High School and graduating in medicine from Sydney University in 1968. He helped establish the Wilderness Society, which organised the blockade of the dam works on Tasmania's Franklin River in 1982–3, and acted as its Director for five years. The blockade saw 1500 people arrested and 600 jailed, including Bob who spent 19 days in Risdon Prison. The day after his release in 1983, he was elected as the first Green into Tasmania's Parliament.

As a state MP, Bob introduced initiatives such as Freedom of Information, Death with Dignity, lower parliamentary salaries, gay law reform, banning the battery-hen industry, nuclear free Tasmania and protection of native forests. Labor and Liberal voted against his 1987 bill to ban semi-automatic guns, nearly a decade before the Port Arthur massacre.

In 1989, he led the five-member Greens parliamentary team, which held the balance of power with the Field Labor Government. The Greens saved 25 schools from closure, created more than 1000 jobs through its local initiatives job scheme, 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 rid the state of the previous Liberal debt. 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 he was a leader of the national debate on climate change, Australia's involvement in war, the green economy, preventative healthcare, conservation, and human rights. He introduced many private senator's bills including electoral and parliamentary reform, for the rights of the territories, junk food advertising, against mandatory sentencing of Aboriginal children, and forestry. Elected leader of the Greens in 2005 Bob saw the federal Greens parliamentary team expand to five in 2007 and ten in 2010.

Bob Brown has been a life-long activist. He was assaulted at protests against logging at Tasmania's Farmhouse Creek in 1986, in 1995 was jailed twice for demonstrating to protect Tasmania's Tarkine Wilderness from logging and in 2006 he began years of legal action to protect Tasmania's Wielangta forest. In 1990, Bob established the Australian Bush Heritage Fund using his Goldman Environmental Prize and in 1992 was a driving force behind the formation of the Australian Greens. His books include *'Lake Pedder'*, *'Wild Rivers'*, *'Tarkine Trails'*, *'The Greens'*, *'Memo for a Saner World'*, *'Earth'*, *'In Balfour St.'*, *'Optimism'* and *'Green Nomads'*.

Bob resigned from the Senate in June 2012 to establish the Bob Brown Foundation, a not for profit organisation dedicated to supporting environmental campaigns and green causes in Australia and our region. He is a published author and acclaimed photographer.

Bob lives in Tasmania with his partner Paul and enjoys photography, bushwalking, poetry, and philosophy.

## Timeline

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- Born a twin, 27 December 1944, Oberon, NSW
- 1950: Began school at Trunkey Creek, NSW
- c 1956–1961: Coffs Harbour High School and Blacktown Boys High School (School Captain)
- 1968: Graduated in Medicine, University of Sydney
- 1968–1980: Medical practice Canberra, London, Sydney, Perth, Launceston
- 1972: moved to Tasmania to work in Launceston general practice.
- 1975: A United Tasmania Group for Senate election
- 1979–84: Director, The Wilderness Society
- 1983: Elected to the Tasmanian House of Assembly
- 1989–92: Leader of the 5 Green Independents, formed an accord with the ALP
- 1990: Founding president, Australian Bush Heritage Fund
- 1992: Formation of the Australian Greens
- 1994–6: Australian tour as Australian Greens national spokesperson
- 1996: Elected to the Senate for Tasmania as first Australian Greens Senator.
- 2001: Re-elected to Senate and hosted first Global Greens Conference, Canberra
- 2005: Elected parliamentary leader of the Australian Greens
- 2007: Re-elected to the Senate until 30 June 2014
- 2010: 9 Green senators and 1 House of Representatives member.
- 2010: Greens sign historic agreement with the ALP which allows Prime Minister Julia Gillard to form government.
- 2011: At the Greens instigation Australia introduces a price on carbon.
- 2012: Resigns from Senate. Establishes Bob Brown Foundation and Tarkine campaign.
- 2012: Chair of Sea Shepherd Australia. On Sea Shepherd's *Steve Irwin* to the Kimberley coast campaigning to stop Woodside's gas factory.
- 2013: Book '*Optimism*'
- 2014: With Paul, tours Bush heritage properties. Book '*Green Nomads*'
- 2016: On *Steve Irwin* to Great Australian Bight as part of campaign to stop BP oil drilling

## Awards

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- 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" award.
- 1997: Republican of the Year – Australian Republic Party
- 1998: National Trust's 100 living Australian national treasures
- 2006: US based Rainforest Action Network – World Rainforest Award
- 2008: National Portrait Gallery/ABC My Favourite Australian, top 10
- 2009: Australian Peace Prize – Peace Organisation of Australia
- 2010: Humanist of the Year – Australian Humanist Societies
- 2016: Order of Timor Leste

## Contact Details

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Bob Brown Foundation  
PO Box 83  
Cygnet Tasmania 7112

0408 855 261

[www.bobbrown.org.au](http://www.bobbrown.org.au)

[contact@bobbrown.org.au](mailto:contact@bobbrown.org.au)