



## **STATEMENT FROM TOM UREN**

(Government Minister responsible for gazettal of Namadgi National Park in 1984)

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The National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory has asked me to make a short statement for their 40th Anniversary.

I had the great privilege of being a Minister in the Labor Governments of 1972-1975 and 1983-1987. During most of that period I had portfolios associated with the ACT. I have always thought that Robert Menzies' great achievement was setting up the National Capital Development Commission and the consolidation of modern Canberra.

I am proud of Canberra - warts and all.

My ministerial responsibilities gave me the opportunity to work with people who loved and respected our environment.

With Moss Cass in 1973, we set up the Inquiry into the National Estate and arising from the report introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament the Australian Heritage Commission that included the National Register. Many of the treasures of Canberra are a part of our National Register.

It is with some pride that I mention the environmental breakthroughs achieved in the years I was associated as a Minister with the ACT.

- Any further leases of land on Bowen Island adjacent to Jervis Bay are not to be renewed. Residents are able to live out their existing leases however Bowen Island should return to its natural habitat, home to thousands of penguins. It is one of our precious native fauna reserves.
- The boundaries of Reid Park in Civic were gazetted.
- Development was prohibited on the western side of the Murrumbidgee River. This created a conservation zone on both sides of the river.
- A rural belt has been maintained around the Lanyon Homestead ensuring Lanyon will remain forever in its heritage setting.
- During the 1983-84 period, the most rewarding decision we made was the creation of the Namadgi National Park. A young adviser working with me, Frank Muller had a vision one day, through the co-operation of the respective governments, that a great national park would link Namadgi and Kosciusko National Park in NSW with the Victorian Alpine National Park.
- The Namadgi National Park was created in 1984.

All these decisions were opposed by the NCDC as it would close off their planning options. I congratulate your National Parks Association as the guardians, protectors and enhancers of Namadgi and our environmental treasures in the ACT.

Tom Uren