

Australian comedy legend Rob Sitch joins push to restore Tasmania's Lake Pedder

One of the most revered figures in the Australian screen industry has thrown his weight behind a campaign to restore Lake Pedder in Tasmania's South West Wilderness.

[Rob Inglis](#)

January 15, 2022 - 3:12PM

He's played a bumbling current affairs host, a harried public servant, and made his name as a master of impressions.

But Melbourne-born actor and comedian Rob Sitch's latest role is no laughing matter.

The 59-year-old, who starred in hit TV satires *Frontline* and *Utopia*, and directed and co-wrote the classic Australian comedy *The Castle*, is a high-profile backer of the campaign to restore Lake Pedder in Tasmania's rugged South West Wilderness.



Rob Sitch says he has followed the multiple campaigns to have Lake Pedder restored. Picture: Hwa Goh / Supplied

Sitch said he had been enamoured with the site since his Year 8 science teacher showed his class a documentary on the lake in the early 1970s.

“Mostly, whenever you saw amazing natural places in the world, they all tended to be on the other side of the planet with Jacques Cousteau putting on a scuba tank,” he told the Mercury.

“But this was next door. And I just looked at it and I just thought it was amazing.

“And then the documentary didn’t have a happy ending. As a kid, I’m just thinking, ‘Why would you flood that?’”

Lake Pedder was inundated by the Hydro-Electric Commission in 1972 to create a dam system, galvanising Australia’s nascent environmental movement in the process. Today, the new lake supplies 40 per cent of the water used in the Gordon power station.

Sitch said he never forgot the film he saw at school all those years ago, and has since followed the multiple campaigns to have the lake restored. He even had a framed poster of Lake Pedder hanging in his office for a time before it was stolen.

“At least the thief has good taste,” he said.

Former Australian Greens leader Christine Milne is the latest to push for the lake’s restoration.

The summer of 2021-22 represents the 50th anniversary of the flooding of Lake Pedder and the Restore Pedder campaign also coincides with the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Ecological Restoration.



From right, Rob Sitch, Alison Whyte, Steve Bisley, Tiriela Mora and Jane Kennedy in TV show Frontline.

A Melbourne supporter, Sitch said his beloved Demons' long-awaited Grand Final victory last year showed that anything was possible – even the resurrection of Pedder.

“I think it would amaze,” he said.

“I think it would instantly be an aspirational place to see for every backpacker, every grey nomad.

“Exploiting something for its resources makes sense at one level and makes no sense at another.

“You wouldn't break up Stonehenge for garden pavers.

“It's a resource but its highest value is as an international tourist destination.”

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