

Vale Melva Truchanas | 1930-2022

(From the Australian Plant Society.)

It was with a heavy heart that I learnt of the death of Melva last week. My brother Paul and I visited her over Easter and had a wonderful catchup reminiscing about our families, the environment and my mother Kay Geeves. Melva and Mum were great friends and our families shared many memorable times together, particularly at lake Pedder before the flooding and became even closer after Olegas died.

Melva's involvement with the Society goes back to the earliest days when the first meeting to form a group was held at Essie Huxley's house in Longley. Out of that first meeting an executive was elected with Mum as the first President and Melva as foundation Secretary. They made a formidable team and became very close friends for the rest of their lives.

The Southern Tasmanian Local Group was formed on 30th of November 1968 and by February 1969 had 27 members. Melva was a force of nature and words like committed, feisty and single minded come to mind. Melva was also at the forefront of Conservation issues within the society and as a member of the South-West Committee and the Save lake Pedder Committee.

Melva and her husband Olegas were both champions of the Tasmanian wilderness and after Olegas' early death Melva ensured his photographic legacy remained at the fore of the Tasmanian and National consciousness. Melva was also a life member of the Tasmanian Greens and was wholly dedicated to their work and philosophy. Her quick wit and sharp mind were legendary. Melva called a spade a spade and you knew if she didn't agree with your position. But if she shared your view she was a great inspiration and encourager.

Melva was a tour de force in the society and was attending southern meetings till the last few days before her death. The society is certainly richer for her input and unswerving commitment to the goals of the Australian Plant Society. She has touched so many of our lives both in Tasmania and Nationally through the excursions, state get togethers and the biennial conferences that she always enjoyed.

"Melva was a much-admired, feisty woman who loved Tasmania's wild places and campaigned to protect them throughout her long life. She encouraged and supported young people to get involved and to get out and enjoy nature especially the south-west wilderness," said the Convenor of the Lake Pedder Restoration Committee, Christine Milne.

Bob Brown said that Melva was "a true Tasmanian champion,"

Many of our members will have stories and fond memories of Melva and her zest for life. Her legacy lives on through her children, Anita, Rima and Nickolas of whom she was exceedingly proud. My brothers and I loved her and will miss her sage advice and links to our mother Kay. Here's to a long life very well lived.

She will be deeply missed but fondly remembered!

Mark Geeves