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## ***Wild* man's dedication led environmental publishing**

James Porteous

***Ecos* marks, with great sadness, the passing of Chris Baxter OAM, an inspirational Australian, who served as a vital member of the Editorial Advisory Committee from 2006 to 2008.**



Chris Baxter in 1983, at Lake St Clair, Cradle Mountain, Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania. Glenn Tempest

Despite battling cancer on different fronts, Chris chose to reach out and provide *Ecos* with his invaluable wisdom as a successful independent magazine publisher-editor and an environmentalist. We are indebted to him.

Chris became known internationally for his tenacious 'first-time' rock-climbing and bushwalking feats, which led to him publishing *Rock* in Victoria. But it was establishing *Wild* magazine, with chance bushwalking friends Brian Walters and Michael Collie in 1981, that provided an avenue by which his first-hand experience of the preciousness of nature – and his determination to raise our awareness of it – could be enjoyed by millions of readers. Chris was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for this dedication.

His magazines now live on, firmly loved and relied on by the outdoors community because they espouse common-sense responsibility for the protection of the wild places that uplift our souls and sustain diversity.

Brian Walters described his publishing relationship with Chris as the most creative period of his life and pointed out that *Wild*'s launch coincided with Tasmania's pivotal Franklin Dam controversy. He said Chris's vision for *Wild* was that it should celebrate Australia's wild places and provide positive information on important environmental issues, while at the same time steering clear of the minutiae of political controversy. *Wild*'s 'Green Pages', particularly, continue that job today.

'*Wild* was an important innovation,' Mr Walters wrote in the magazine. 'It has been a consistent voice for the protection of our wild places from the ravages of those who would spoil it for the sake of a dollar.'

The words of Chris's wife Sue reflect the thoughts of all who knew him: 'His spirit rests in the places we loved together.'

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