TOM FARRELL

RADICALS, RENEGADES & REVOLUTIONARIES

Tom Farrell (1904-1996) was born in Brisbane. Once in Newcastle he attended Cook's Hill Junior High School, later working at R. Brickenridge Timber Merchants located on the site of the present Civic Park. He went on to take up a position at the State Dockyards, and finally at Newcastle Abattoirs where he was General Manager until 1968.

He is considered one of the "founding fathers" of the University of Newcastle, as he was instrumental in acquiring the land at Shortland for the campus. One of Newcastle's early environmentalists, when a branch of the National Parks Movement was formed in Sydney during the 1920s, he joined and became an active member. He eventually became Vice President of the Northern Parks and Playgrounds Movement and was responsible for bringing the Movement to Newcastle in 1952, where it continues today, safeguarding the environmental heritage of the region.

He was involved in the conservation of Mt Sugarloaf, Barrington Tops and the Myall Lakes, and during the 1930s he and Joe Richley successfully lobbied New Lambton Council to have the area known as Blackbutt Reserve set aside for public recreation. Later, during the 1960s and early 1970s, Tom was a prominent figure in the successful campaign to prevent a highway being built through the reserve.

Image: Courtesy Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment