

Wildcare 2017

A collection of stories highlighting our year



Table of Contents

Friends of Mt Field	2
Wildcare Friends of GIS.....	5
Wildcare Friends of Wellington Park	7
Wildcare Friends of Lumeah Point	10
Friends of Tasman Island	11
Friends of Maria Island	14
Threatened Plants Tasmania	17
Friends of Melaleuca	19
Wildcare Deslacs	22
Wildcare Friends of The Steppes Reserve	24
Wildcare Friends of Narawntapu National Park	26
Karstcare	27
Wildcare Friends of the Raptor and Wildlife Refuge	29
Wildcare Friends of Macquarie Harbour and Waterways	30
Friends of Maatsuyker Island	31
Get Outside with Community.....	34
Friends of Lillico Penguins.....	37

Introduction

by Co-Chair Appointed (1998-2018) Andrew Smith

2018 marks the 20th Anniversary of Wildcare's very beginning. These stories outline some of the projects being carried out on the cusp of 20 wild years of Wildcare.

The achievements over that time are staggering. Millions of hours volunteering, millions of dollars raised and put to real projects caring for Tasmania's reserves, and natural and cultural heritage. Membership sits at around 7000, with volunteer members working all over the state through around 80 branches. One organisation, with many branches. Wildcare Inc. is the largest incorporated environmental volunteer organisation in Tasmania. Everyone who has been involved over that time, in whatever role you have played, should be very proud of the difference we have been able to make. The things done on the ground are outstanding - whether it's removing millions of weed plants, providing visitor services, being educators, rescuing wildlife, repairing huts and historic buildings, maintaining tracks, monitoring threatened species - the list goes on.

Then there are the millions of dollars raised, including through our Wildcare Gift Fund which has distributed over \$1.5 million to track work, to eradicating rats from islands, to battling the Devil Facial Tumour, to the Orange-bellied parrot conservation program, and towards rescue and care facilities for injured birds and other wildlife. This money is from a myriad of donors, large and small, charging Wildcare Inc. with the responsibility of disbursing it wisely.

We have continued to support the WildsC'OOOL program through small grants to schools along with volunteer assistance, and the Get Outside program with the provision of a Get Outside Coordinator. Like almost all of our activity those programs are delivered in partnership with others, in this case the Community Programs Section of Parks and Wildlife Service.

We have continued to allocate funding to small practical projects undertaken by our branches. A small allocation of \$2000 can make a huge difference when coupled with the enthusiasm and skills of passionate volunteers. All of our volunteering in reserves is of course done alongside the fantastic Ranger staff. This cooperative relationship has achieved outstanding results and built strong personal friendships.

Friends of Mt Field

by Adrian Blackman, Secretary

Our members assist the Rangers with a wide range of management activities including minor maintenance work on walking tracks and huts, mainly in the alpine areas of the Park.

The Friends of Mount Field had another successful year during 2017. Significant funds were obtained by applying for grants and receiving donations, totaling almost \$56,000. This money was used to provide materials and logistical support for several well-defined projects. Two such projects from last year were successfully completed, two new projects were initiated and completed during the year and two projects were further developed. Time was also devoted to more routine and ongoing tasks such as track maintenance. In total, 20 days were spent doing these field activities and this equated to 788 man-hours of work. In addition, an estimated 200 hours were devoted to administrative tasks including those mandated by occupation and safety requirements together with documentation, preparing and servicing grant applications, and publicity.

Perhaps the highlight of the year involved the design and installation of signs on Wombat Moor. The signs give illustrations and information about local plants; there is also a panorama sign with a photo showing names of some of the nearby topographical features. These colourful and durable signs are located so that they can be easily read from the boardwalk to the Woodland Mosaic. This boardwalk provides a short and easy walk and is readily accessible from the main Lake Dobson Road. It is heavily used by the general public, not just bushwalkers. Of all the projects this year, this is the one that will impact on most people. Funds for the project were provided by Wildcare. (The boardwalk was an earlier construction project that the Friends of Mount Field helped with).



Wombat Moor Flora Signs

An ongoing project that was completed during the year was the construction of a boardwalk at the start of the Mt Field East track near Lake Fenton and the associated new bridge over Lady Barron Creek. This work was funded from a Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife grant. Another successfully finished project was the repair of two historic huts. One hut is situated near Lake Belcher and the other is the K Col Petersen Memorial Hut. With altitudes of about 900 and 1200 metres respectively, the huts provided valuable protection, particularly in inclement weather. The Tasmanian Community Fund provided a grant to purchase materials, notably building timber and paint, and to pay for its helicopter transport.



Some of the stained timber for Windy Moor

The path to Russell Falls has recently been upgraded to allow easier access. Some of the area near the Visitor Centre sustained construction damage. A short project, started and completed during the year, consisted of rehabilitating both sides of the track by planting trees which grow naturally in the area. In addition, a group of incorrectly placed Tree Ferns were repositioned into a more natural looking arrangement. This project was supported by a grant from NRM South. Another project started this year and substantially completed involved designing and placing durable signs that display a map and current location on early parts of the Mount Field East circuit track. Other informational signs were also provided. Funds for this signs project were donated by Wildcare and the Melaleuca Walkers.

Several tracks were improved as part of ongoing maintenance tasks. These include the Marriotts Falls track, Pack track, sections of tracks leading to Seagers Lookout and to Mount Field East, and the track joining Lake Fenton and Lake Webster. The work mostly involved removing encroaching vegetation and placing flat rocks in wet and degraded sections. Assistance was given to children from Westerway Primary School to help them plant trees on the Marriotts Falls track.

Last year a substantial competitive grant was obtained from the Tasmanian Community Fund for an ongoing project to repair the badly damaged Windy Moor by construction of a 900m boardwalk. This year involved detailed planning and the purchase of materials. The planking to be used has been stained so that its visual impact is lessened. Construction work is due to commence in early 2018 and be completed within two months.



Seagers Lookout Track

Wildcare Friends of GIS

by Phil Wyatt, President

Friends of GIS are a self help group that meet on a regular basis to learn the [QGIS mapping software](#). We come from a wide range of Wildcare groups across the state and help each other to prepare maps for grant applications or general interest. We also support groups to use the [Fulcrumapp](#) software for in field data collection.



Marina and Amy using Fulcrumapp in the field, photo Gary Miller

It's been a good year for Friends of GIS. We have continued to support groups that are organising their work records into a more structured setup for easier long term management. Friends of Maatsuyker Island and Friends of Tasman Island have taken the lead and now use Fulcrumapp for all their environmental works record keeping (Weeds management). Single point feature maps have also been supplemented with zones or areas maps to support on ground survey areas. These have also been transferred to the iPads for easy in field use.

In addition, Tasman Island volunteers are also using it to record historical artefacts, complete with images. We have also put together a trial app for Friends of Cradle Mountain volunteers to monitor wombat burrows.

The most common conversation I have with these groups is about how easy it now is to manage their records. Rather than having to filter through old notebooks or paper maps it's now all at their fingertips on the iPad devices. In some cases, it includes a long history of visits. This makes it much easier to have multiple volunteers, including new volunteers, doing the work over time because the data collection is in a single structured format that never changes.

For these groups, the challenge for the coming year will be to coach them into using QGIS software for custom mapping for grant organising. To date, I have done that on their behalf.

Late in the year we also commenced working with Friends of Deal Island to get their weed mapping into Fulcrumapp. This project followed a common thread of retrieving weed locations from multiple sources (Spreadsheets, GIS files, Google Earth files) and organizing them into unique records across a range of weeds. These are now being imported into Fulcrumapp ready for the working bee in January 2018.

We are keen to support all groups and would especially love to hear from a member in the north of the state that has a keen interest in this sort of technology. We can coach you through the process and provide online and phone support to get northern groups using this technology. There are also opportunities to get more iPads to spread around the state for group use.



Marina Campbell, photo Gary Miller

Wildcare Friends of Wellington Park

by John Street, Assistant Secretary

The aim of our members is to maintain and enhance the native flora and fauna of the major natural icon of Hobart, Wellington Park and to educate Park users of the high biodiversity values and ways to protect them. The major focus is to halt the spread of weed species and where possible, eradicate.

Our work has now expanded to assisting land managers, particularly the Parks & Wildlife Service with maintenance and improvement of walking tracks.

Friends of Wellington Park held 19 one-day working parties in 2017. We were ably led by the evergreen Peter Franklin and cooperated harmoniously with Hobart City Council, Glenorchy Council and Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service. There was only one work party cancellation due to adverse weather.

Our main projects involve walking track improvements and removal of the declared weeds *Ulex Europeanus* (Gorse) and *Erica Lusitanica* (Spanish Heath). We concentrate on the tracks that are somewhat further away from the main tourist areas and that are subject to environmental degradation. We target the weeds invading the undergrowth of the uncleared native vegetation that are difficult to treat. We weed using hand tools to minimise damage to adjacent native plants and we rely on the councils and power line managers to deal with the infestations in the cleared areas that are more easily attacked by spraying.

Over the last 5 years we have created more than 2 kilometres of new tracks to replace braided, degraded and boggy tracks.



At the Devil's Throne Re-route

Our achievements in 2017 were as follows:

Devils Throne Track

We created a re-routed track to Devils Throne. This was our biggest project for the year, requiring 7 work parties.



Devils Throne Re-route – the track goes over the edge of these

The new section of track was planned to be 800 metres in length, a daunting task for volunteers to construct. The undertaking was made more difficult since the site is about 1100 metres in elevation and it takes a little over one hour to walk there (tools had to be carried too!). Work commenced in February 2017 and was completed four months later in mid June. Towards the end of this time the winter weather became a problem in selecting suitable visiting times and occasionally there were small patches of snow on the ground while working.

Mount Connection Track

We continued work from previous years on clearing overgrown vegetation from the Mount Connection Track. This was undertaken over 3 days.

Tom Thumb Track

We did some clearing of the Tom Thumb Track (one day).

Weeding

We continued work on weeding out Gorse and Erica from sites at Inglewood Fire Trail, Tolosa Park, New Town, Old Farm Road and Goat Hills. This involved attacking new areas of mature weeds as well as monitoring and follow-up removal of weeds from sites previously covered. Seed banks in the soil as well as invasions from untreated weed sites in private properties adjacent to Wellington Park mean that monitoring and treatment of seedlings will be required for many years to come.

Planning

We submitted a plan to land managers to re-route the track that connects the Devils Throne and Thark Ridge Tracks. This is awaiting final approval from some land managers before we commence work.

Equipment

We purchased a hedge trimmer and protective gear with a Wildcare Grant.



Morning Break Inglewood

Wildcare Friends of Lumeah Point

by Garry Hulme

Lumeah Point is a 'pan handle' on the north western side of Pipeclay Lagoon, with Cremorne to the east and Clifton Beach to the south. The area is home to just over 40 residences and has nurtured several generations of youngsters over the past 40+ years.



The major project for 2017 was the planting of native species along the North side of Honeywood Drive. A core group monitor and water the plantings as needed.

In collaboration with the Clarence City Council's (CCC) Natural Assets Officer we obtained a CCC Land and Coast Care Grant to replant the northern verge of Honeywood Drive with native plant species. As part of the council's Morrisby Gum Flora Recovery Plan, Morrisby Gums (*Eucalyptus morrisbyi*) form the bulk of the overstorey, along with other native shrubs and groundcover. Preparatory work, including the removal of Briar Rose and other exotic weeds was completed in June. On Sunday 13th August, 9 volunteers planted 50 Morrisby Gums and over 150 shrubs and ground cover. A good morning's work ably assisted by Justin Burgess, CCC Natural Assets Officer who set up the roadside safety signage and stayed to work with us. Ongoing watering and maintenance will be coordinated by the Wildcare group.

All feral oyster clean up work has been suspended until issues faced by the industry in dealing with Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome have been resolved.

The industry has indicated that feral oyster removal will resume in 2018.

Friends of Tasman Island

by Erika Shankley

Our members are a very dedicated group of volunteers and supporters who are interested in the conservation of both the cultural and natural environment on Tasman Island. We work in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service fundraising for, and implementing conservation plans for the heritage-listed buildings on the island. We also support environmental and wildlife programs on the island.



Working Bee team 2 outside Quarters 2: Back Row - Chris Creese, Jo Castillo, Chris Smith with Michele Smith, Mark Dickenson, Brett Hall, Ian Ross; Front Row - Erika Shankley, Rob Banfield, Carol Jackson

Photo: Erika Shankley

2017 was an action-packed year for Friends of Tasman Island Wildcare volunteers. Events held both on and off the island included:

- The Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February
- April working bee & Rotary's, Tasman Peninsula Branch, fundraising day
- A weekend of future planning at Low Head
- Ongoing restoration of the Cape Sorell 2nd order lens
- Ongoing restoration of the original lantern room from the Tasman Island lighthouse
- Ongoing compilation of images of historic artefacts on Tasman Island
- Acquisition of lighthouse artefacts from QVMAG at Inveresk, thanks to AMSA
- Crowd-funding campaign

- Lighthouses of Tasmania tea towels
- November working bee & restoration of verandah and sunroom of lightkeepers' Quarters 2
- FoTI products on Wildcare on-line store
- Tasmanian Community Achievement Awards



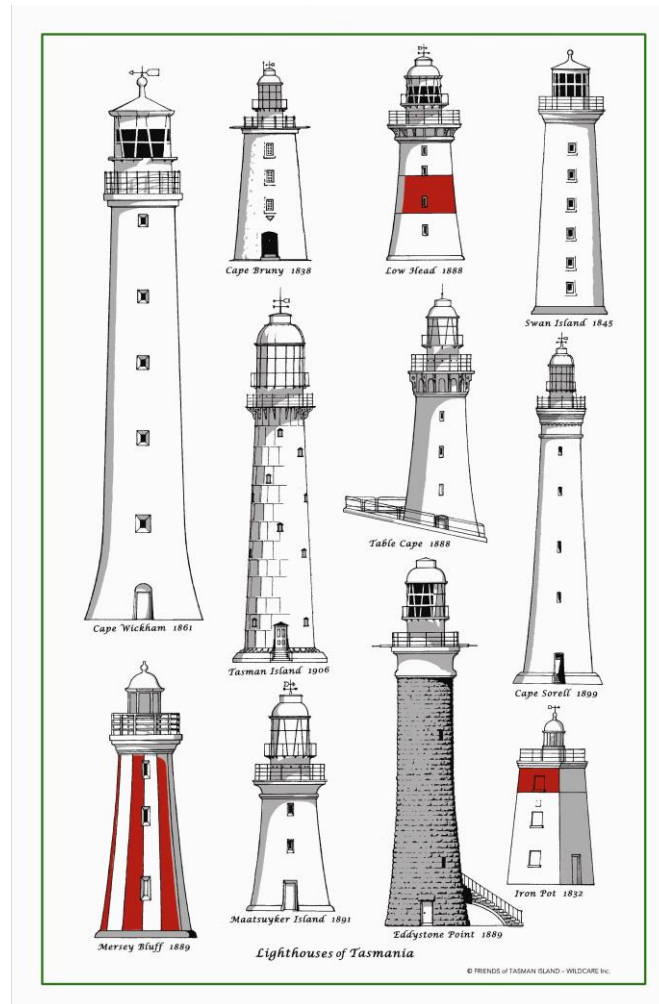
Installing the windows in the sunroom, Quarters 2: Chris Smith, Robert Banfield, Chris Creese & Mark Dickenson

Photo: Erika Shankley

Working in partnership with the Parks & Wildlife Service, conservation and restoration work on Tasman Island began with our first working bee in April 2006. By November 2017 we were preparing for working bee No 26 and needed to find a large amount of money in order to restore the verandah and sunroom of Lightkeepers' Quarters 2.

However, competition for funds through government, semi-government and philanthropic sources had become more intense. In a first for a Wildcare group, FoTI planned a crowd-funding campaign, hoping to raise up to \$20,000 towards the restoration. That we succeeded beyond all expectations was thanks to our many supporters who were able to follow the work in progress via Facebook. Our two volunteer builders, Chris and David, with their offsiders, managed to complete the work to lock-up stage in just 8 days!

Since 2007, FoTI has raised funds through the sale of the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* calendar the last, and tenth in the series, being published in 2016. As a replacement we now have the *Lighthouses of Tasmania* tea towel – designed by Tasmanian artist and FoTI volunteer Peter Gouldthorpe. The tea towels initially appeared on the market through our crowd-funding campaign, but are now for sale through the Wildcare on-line store and other outlets around the State.



FoTI has been doing ongoing weed management on Tasman Island since a plan was devised by Bob & Penny Tyson in 2009. Together with FoTI, Bob & Penny were nominated for the Tasmanian Community Achievement Awards in 2017. FoTI volunteers were pleased to reach the semi-finals and Bob & Penny made it to the finals. Congratulations!

It's thanks to FoTI volunteers and our supporters that Tasman Island's heritage infrastructure and environment has been preserved - but there's still more to be done ...

Friends of Maria Island

by Anne Booth, Convenor

Our group developed from an initial involvement in the renovation of historic farm buildings, but now has broadened towards sustaining the long term future of the island's ecosystems as well as its cultural heritage. We came together through a common interest in preserving the environment and heritage of the island.

Maria Island lies off the east coast of Tasmania. It has a wide range of habitats, with a rich variety of animals and birds and World Heritage listed convict buildings. For many years volunteers worked on various projects on the island, including renovation work on heritage buildings.

Background

Prior to the establishment of our Wildcare group a dedicated band of volunteers worked for many years on various projects around the island including renovation work on heritage buildings. Sporadic attempts were made to control areas of Broom but this had only a short-term effect. In 2005 the Head Ranger established the overall extent of the Broom (2sq km – Skipping Ridge and Bernacchis Valley) and Spanish Heath (7 hectares – Haunted Bay) and subsequently initiated a systematic eradication programme based on a mapping system and centred on volunteer work.



Rose, Rob, Pete, Russell, Phyl – Bernacchi's Creek

This led in 2007 to the formal establishment of our group and this enabled grant applications to employ weed contractors to spray readily accessible infestations with the associated necessity for detailed mapping. Mapping consequently took up much of our time in the next 2 years and in the process, organisers had to acquire survey, GPS, computer and digital mapping skills; we were left to our own devices to further develop specific systems of weed control, data collection and recording. Challenging but rewarding! And there was always the intimidation of facing an extensive hillside choked with Broom and the sheer physical effort involved in clearing it; some of our members revelled in it all!

“The most extensive threatening weed problems in otherwise intact native vegetation occur on Maria Island. The potential impact of the spread of Broom and Erica** is frightening and these infestations are rated as having the most serious long term impact on the nature conservation values of national parks within the district.”*(South East District Weed Management Plan 2000-2003).

* Montpellier Broom – *Genista monspessulana*

** Spanish Heath – *Erica lusitanica*

“Practical and effective options for control have not been found.” (Maria Island National Park Management Plan 1998).

The first grant included funding for the control of a remote, isolated patch of Spanish Heath in the south of the island. After assessment by a weed contractor this was deemed to be impractical for professional work. Volunteers were transported by boat to camp at Haunted Bay and, over two extended expeditions, effectively cleared the site.

Outstanding support from Parks was instrumental in the success of this venture. During 2017 we continued our weed monitoring on the island with a committed band of regulars supplemented by a welcome seasoning of newcomers. Of particular note was our first ever ‘local’ participant from Triabunna.

Montpellier Broom

We have been working on the broom for 12 years. 3 years ago primary control was completed on the 290 known sites in Bernacchis valley and on Skipping Ridge. Using a dated ‘colour coding’ mapping system we can systematically work through the broom infestations to avoid plants maturing and seeding.

The current level of working bees (4 days x 4 per year) appears adequate for this follow up; ensuring patches are done within 2 to 3 years. By strategic use of our volunteers and the help of Parks we are also able to deal with a number of other minor weed infestations within this timeframe.

Because of the variability of broom growth, we are flexible in our approach. Bernacchis Creek needs monitoring twice annually because the broom can grow to 2 meters in 18 months whereas on dryer exposed slopes the seedlings can be cleared every 2 years. We are now beginning to find sites which are weed free.

The biological control Psyllid introduced to the inaccessible broom patches on the fossil cliffs in 2014 has prevented any flowering, with many dead plants and any regrowth dying.

Sea Spurge

Annual late summer and spring checks on Riedle Beach found just a few small plants scattered along the beach.

Unfortunately a new infestation has been found around Bloodstone Point. A single plant found in 2013 should have been a warning (there must have been more). In 2017 over 5 trips by Parks and other groups cleared the area around Bloodstone Pt: however, in November a thorough search found plants spread from the Point and north along the length of Bloodstone Beach. One plant had seeded and some were flowering. This will need monitoring biannually.



Weeding Broom – Bernacchi's Valley

African Daisies

To add variety to our Sea Spurge work at Bloodstone Pt., time and energy permitting, we have begun to work on the scattered infestation of African daisies along the foreshore. A few plants per trip should eliminate it in a few years.

Spanish Heath

Annual monitoring of the 2 hectares at the Robey's Creek site is showing a continuing reduction in regrowth since 2009. In Nov. 2017 four of us spent 3 hours searching, clearing seedlings and removing 17 flowering plants. The persistence of the regrowth will require annual checks compared with the 2 year monitoring at the Haunted Bay site.

Blue Periwinkle

The 5 small isolated patches around Darlington appear to now be permanently clear.

Wild Mignonette

One area of focus has been an isolated, dense and spreading infestation near the French's Farm shearing shed. Because the site is on route to other projects we have been able to regularly monitor here. After 23 clearings since 2007, our last count was 1 small+ one tall. This looks good, but we are unsure of the Mignonette's seed longevity.

Return Point pasture weeds

The removal of Mignonette, Horehound, Thistles and Mullein from the Point will resume in 2018. David Reynolds was successful in obtaining a NRM grant to set up a wash down station at Triabunna.

Thank you

We appreciate funding from Wildcare to cover ferry fares to the island and thank Parks for transport to the distant weed sites and for general assistance.

Threatened Plants Tasmania

by Carol Markby

Our members assist threatened plant species conservation and recovery throughout the State in close cooperation with the Threatened Species Unit specialists from the Biodiversity Conservation Branch (DPIW). Our main activities are searching for and monitoring threatened plant populations. We also do some priority weeding and management of key sites, especially where we have successfully applied for funding.

Threatened Plants Tasmania (TPT) has a very active annual field trip program, which includes plant surveys, rescoring transects, long term monitoring projects, mapping, weed control, species recovery programs and collecting new census data for key species. The group is a very successful example of citizen science contributing to the scientific knowledge of Tasmania's rare and threatened flora. Long term site monitoring and data collection of threatened species is vitally important in our changing climate.



Caladenia campbellii Photo: Keren Smithies

Key achievements for 2017

- Conducting over 22 single-day field trips, 4 weekend field trips and 3 training workshop weekends held across Tasmania, a total of 955 field trip hours and 357 workshop hours and participation by 61 individual members
- Attracting and increasing volunteer participation in TPT
- Maintaining working partnerships with DPIPW Threatened Species Unit, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Tasmanian Herbarium, Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre, NRM North, NRM South, Derwent Catchment Project, Parks and Wildlife Service, Launceston Field Naturalists, Understorey Network, Local Councils, private and corporate land owners
- Continuing long-term monitoring and involvement with the Tasmanian Orchid Conservation and Research Program. Contributing to the Threatened Tasmanian Orchid Flora Recovery Plan through the Tasmania Seed Conservation Centre. Conducting orchid field surveys in a range of habitats from sub alpine grasslands to coastal heathlands
- Monitoring, caging and site assessments of Miena Cider Gum *Eucalyptus gunnii* subsp. *divaricate* on St Patrick's Plains and Barren Tier in the Central Highlands
- Involvement with *Eucalyptus viminalis* regeneration trials on Bruny Island
- Expanding records for saltmarsh ephemeral species at Cape Portland, Mt William, Marion Bay and Lauderdale

Highlights

- TPT member Phil Collier recently described a new orchid *Prasophyllum abblittiorum*. Other TPT volunteers also contributed in the field and to the final paper
- Surveying and finding hundreds of *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* juveniles in amongst the dead adults at Calvert's Hill Nature Reserve

Learnings

The importance of training and upskilling members is essential, and to this end TPT ran a number of training workshops, including:

- Establishing a new role for members as data managers and conducting two GPS /Natural Values Atlas (NVA) weekend training workshops. The workshops focused on improving our understanding of GPS recording, The LIST, Google Earth, and a phone app called Handy GPS
- Fern identification weekend workshop run by Mark Wapstra, Tasmanian Herbarium

Friends of Melaleuca

by Janet Fenton, President

Our group aims to assist with reserve management to protect the natural values and cultural heritage of Melaleuca, while retaining the essential spirit of the place. We aim to undertake practical projects involving general maintenance work on heritage listed buildings as well as Parks and Wildlife Service facilities.

For Friends of Melaleuca, 2017 was a significant year. All the hard work towards establishing the Deny King Heritage Museum at Melaleuca came to fruition. Interpretation panels were installed in the building in January and display cabinets soon followed. Our March working bee, funded by a Wildcare grant enabled our usual Melaleuca maintenance program and further work on the museum displays. Selecting appropriate objects, arranging them and labelling them is precise work and for this we were privileged to have professional help from new volunteer Melissa Smith. We are fortunate to have several volunteers with museum experience in our group who have helped the rest of us on this big learning curve!



Museum view Photo: Melissa Smith

In spite of Melaleuca's isolation there are plenty of visitors from day tours and multi-day adventure tours as well as independent bushwalkers and boaties. The museum is well used, much appreciated, and brings the work of Wildcare volunteers into the public spotlight. The beauty of the displays is largely due to the generosity of talented photographers and our great graphic designer.

The museum was officially launched in Hobart on 30 June to a crowd of 150 guests in the Carnegie Gallery at the Maritime Museum of Tasmania.



Museum launch event Photo: Pip Gowen

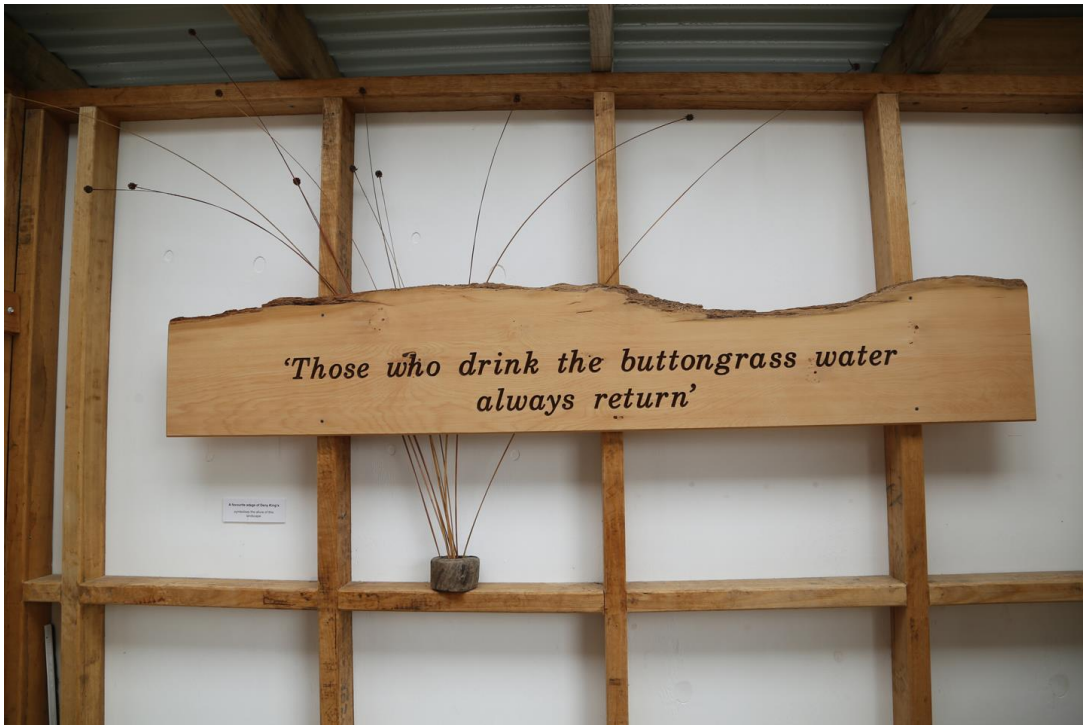
We displayed our far away museum in the form of images projected on the walls. Our thanks to MMT for that wonderful space and especially to curator Rona Hollingsworth for helping to set up some static displays for the launch, and to heritage consultant Chris Tassell for his speech. MMT facilitated our promotional display at the entrance to the gallery for several months.



Visitors in the Deny King Heritage Museum Photo: Peter Marmion

Further exposure of our group happened at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston when one of our exhibits went 'on tour' as part of Arts Tasmania's *Ten Objects, Ten Stories* exhibition.

During the year we have produced two more interpretation panels for the museum and a welcoming quote routed on an old huon pine plank which particularly appeals to visitors.



Deny's favourite quote Photo: John Redeker

But the more you do, the more you see there is yet to do! At the time of writing Friends of Melaleuca is preparing for our March 2018 working bee at Melaleuca, where there is plenty of scope for volunteers to exercise their skills, not only with museum curation but with our ongoing maintenance of heritage structures and assistance to Parks and Wildlife Service. Our thanks again to the Wildcare Board for supporting this working bee.

Wildcare Deslacs

by Carol Markby

Our members are dedicated to the natural area around Clifton Beach including Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve, Clifton Beach Conservation Area, Pipeclay Lagoon Public Reserve and Clarence Council parks. We undertake a variety of work including marine clean ups, feral oyster removal, native revegetation plantings, feral cat control, as well as weed management programs. All of this work contributes to making the area a great place for our local community.



Clean Up Australia Day – Photo: Elizabeth Shannon

Key achievements for 2017

- Conducting monthly working bees with an average participation of 8 members
- Maintaining working partnerships with the Parks and Wildlife Service, DPIWE Threatened Species Unit, Clarence City Council, TAS Marc, UTAS Cares, Birdlife Tasmanian, Pipeclay Lagoon Oyster Growers Association, Clean up Australia and Clifton Beach Surf Life Saving Club
- Continuing long-term monitoring and involvement with TasMARC
- Continuing a long-term Feral cat control program
- Achieving very noticeable results with a number of weed species in our weed program including boneseed, serrated tussock and radiata pines
- Protecting Cape Deslacs Shearwater rookery from Spanish heath encroachment

Highlights

- Supporting UTAS Cares in their involvement with *Eucalyptus viminalis* regeneration trials on Bruny Island
- Heading towards our TEN-YEAR anniversary for the group. Planning has already begun for community celebrations in 2018

Learning

- The importance of executive renewal for the group. At our 2017 AGM a new President and Communication Officer stepped into these roles and are now being mentored by the retiring office bearers ensuring a solid transfer of group knowledge.



Serrated tussock working bee – Photo: Elizabeth Shannon

Wildcare Friends of The Steppes Reserve

by Ian Hayes, President

Wildcare Friends of The Steppes Reserve works with local Rangers to maintain and upgrade The Steppes Reserve in the Central Highlands. We aim to maintain and upgrade the outbuildings and fences and keep the grounds in a condition suitable for visitors. We also show the many local and overseas visitors around the site.



In June 2017 we obtained a State Government Infrastructure Community Fund Minor Grant for renovations of the exterior of the 130 year old homestead.

The weather boards, window frames, guttering, downpipes and verandah shingle roof had deteriorated from harsh snow, rain and wind over many years and while the Friends volunteers had patched window sills, leaking downpipes and drain outlets, the exterior had not received professional attention for a number of decades - primarily due to limited PWS funds.

Heritage builders and painters familiar with Central Highland weather conditions were employed to work during the summer months.

Timber for a number of heritage weatherboards was milled to the same width and thickness as the original ones and shaped to conform with existing boards. Some sections of the old boards were recycled. The jagged edges of the stone chimney necessitated the careful cutting of weather boards to prevent gaps between the boards and stones and metal flashing was inserted in places.

One end of the verandah had pulled away from the main building and required jacking up, bolting and repositioning onto the stone foundation. PWS heritage funded this part of the project. Over the years, the window frames had been damaged by birds and repair work had been carried out. This time, a new type of putty was used in the repairs, that will hopefully prevent further attacks.

Timber for the verandah roof was obtained with a Forestry permit, cut into billets and then split into shingles. Some of the rotted roof framing was replaced.



The weatherboards were stripped of many layers of faded paint, by pressure washing and much scraping and sanding before fresh paint was applied. Daytime temperatures even in summer months can change quickly at this location - an extra factor that has to be taking into consideration.

The finished result of the whole project is admired by visitors and above all is now a worthy feature of the Central Highlands – a credit to all involved.

A Wildcare (BOM) Grant has been used to purchase a number of tools for use in the upkeep of the site and to purchase timber to replace the front picket fence, posts, rails, gates, hinges and nails etc.

Other notable highlights for the year have been:

- A weekend art exhibition of Central Highland paintings by the Sunny Coasters art group
- Development of a Banksia Garden area with a loop track
- 25th Anniversary of The Steppes Sculptures
- Discovery of the native plant *Cardamine tryssa* (delicate bittercress) on The Steppes Reserve. This plant has not been sited in Tasmania since the 1880s
- Visits by 2 groups from the Australian National Native Plants Society Conference
- A steady increase of overseas & interstate visitors, who often remark on the peaceful atmosphere and uniqueness of The Reserve.

Wildcare Friends of Narawntapu National Park

by Helen Plaister, President

*We are a committed group of volunteers based mainly on the North West coast who have seen a need to rid the beautiful Narawntapu National Park coastline of the invasive plant sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*).*

Sea Spurgung Review – 2017 the year that was.

Between 22nd- 27th February 2017, we held our first 6-night camping session. 5 core people stayed the entiretime with 22 others visiting over the 6 days.

This turned out to be a fabulous idea with a great deal of hand weeding done along the Griffiths Point - Bakers Point section where we first began the sea spurgung assault. We managed to hand week all but 50 metres.

During that camp we spent 334 man hours weeding 3,965,000 plants.

Throughout the rest of the year we had fewer weeding sessions, but the enthusiasm was still evident as we continued to target Griffiths Point - Bakers Point.

During one session in November 2017, we attempted to weed the new growth where contractors had sprayed the previous November. It is disheartening to see so many small plants coming through but the numbers were a lot less. Eventually the blazing sun drove us from the dune but we still managed to clear the access path from Archers Knob to the beach for those that know the area. A concentrated effort on this section will occur in March 2018 as per our agreement with PWS.

We are concerned about the effect of sea spurge invasion on the availability of nesting locations for our endangered sea birds. It was fabulous to continue to see Pied Oyster Catchers and Hooded Plovers going about their daily rituals. During our weeding session in October, we were working beside an Oyster Catcher's nest and were delighted to spot 2 eggs inside. The birds, although signaling the nest was there, were very tolerant of our weeding close by.

March 2018 will see another camping situation. We will camp at Picnic Point and continue to work along the beach near the Rubicon river towards Griffith Point. This section should be free of Sea Spurge by the time we complete the camp for another year.

All details about 2018 Volunteer sea spurgung can be found on the calendar located on the Wildcare website.

Karstcare

by Dave Wools-Cobb, Karstcare President/Coordinator

Our members assist the Rangers with a wide range of management activities, mainly underground. These activities include cleaning, track marking, placement of advisory signs and surveying. Some of these caves are under a limited access code requiring affiliation with the Australian Speleology Federation (ASF), others are less restricted.

The bunch of Karstcare volunteers and many 'ring-ins' have been particularly busy over the first part of 2017, totaling 179 hours, mostly in Kubla Khan Cave, Mole Creek.

Many years ago, poly-weave bags were filled with clay from within the cave and placed over muddy areas and also used as steps on some muddy sloping areas. Attitudes about 'extraneous' materials have changed and PWS decided that where possible these would be removed. This involved considerable planning and a lot of hard work over six trips.

"Normal" trips guiding visiting interstate cavers were used to place plastic poly piping in preparation for cleaning areas, as well as filling up boot wash stations throughout the cave. Some track marking with string lines was also carried out; this keeps caves to a cleaned route, avoiding picking up mud on boots and tracking it to other areas of the cave.



Clay bags were hauled up an 8 metre pitch above an area called the Opium Den, and later transported through to the base of Pitch 3. We found this exhausting, as each bag, weighing about 15kg, was placed in a bag and hauled up the pitch using a pulley system. The friction involved required three people to haul whilst one caver was positioned above to remove each bag from the rope. Fortunately, assistance came from some southern cavers who hauled these bags up the longer 25 metre pitch 3 and dumped the clay back into the 'quarry' area it had originally come from.

Northern Caverneers were fortunate to have a stonemason as a member, so she was engaged to make new natural stones steps down to the Opium Den. A siphon hose was then used to clean the whole route, eventually right back to the base of Pitch 2. One part of the track was suffering from a gradual collapse on a steep bank, so this was relocated, string-lined to keep cavers to this new route and a boot wash station relocated appropriately. Below Pitch 3 is an area called "The Waiting Room" where cavers normally remove their vertical gear before continuing. The clay bags covering the mud below were removed and a temporary floor of plastic tube mat was placed until PWS can supply a more permanent replas (recycled plastic) floor.

Other jobs completed were:

- Vertical profiles for the digital map of Blackshaw/Spider Complex Cave system were drawn
- Mud was cleaned from the Golden Stairs area of Croesus Cave
- Continual transport of water in bags for storage in preparation for a cleaning job about 4 hours into the cave.

The total time worked over this year has been 279 hours, plus planning and travel.

We have just completed negotiations with PWS for the next 18 months. There's always plenty of cave management to do, giving us a different reason to go caving, where the cave benefits from us visiting.

Wildcare Friends of the Raptor and Wildlife Refuge

by Craig Webb

We support the work of the Raptor and Wildlife Refuge at Kettering, providing assistance with maintenance of facilities and educational visits. The centre rehabilitates birds of prey that have been injured and releases them back into the wild.

I am happy to report that the aviary project and all that was involved with it is complete. Birds are in some of them and I am more than happy with the result. The photos are of the new bank of aviaries and the stand alone larger slatted aviary off the Education Centre.

It is planted inside and along the front with natives and I am sure that as they grow and the aviaries mature, they will prove to be outstanding facilities.

Thanks once again for the assistance from Wildcare.



Wildcare Friends of Macquarie Harbour and Waterways

by Jack Binder, Secretary

Our group works in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), Forestry Tasmania, and land owners to help maintain the cultural and heritage tracks and infrastructure within Macquarie Harbour and its waterways.

In our first year of operations, Friends of Macquarie Harbour and Waterways have achieved much.

- Macquarie Harbour Clean-up in April 2017 – Youtube video produced
- Sir John Falls rebuilding design and funding applications
- Betsys Bay track cleaned and remarked – Youtube video produced
- Foreshore Harbour trash collected from Goulds Point area – Youtube video produced
- Clearing and remarking of the historic Eagle Creek Track scheduled for March 2018

Our group has doubled in membership and we are actively seeking equipment to further our maintenance of tracks and facilities within Macquarie Harbour and Waterways.



Team about to embark on Macquarie Harbour Community Clean-Up April 2017

Link to vids on our blog. <https://jackandjude.com/log/>

Friends of Maatsuyker Island

by FOMI Committee

Maatsuyker Island is recognised in Tasmania, nationally and internationally as one of a group of Tasmanian islands which has important heritage, natural and Aboriginal values. The Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FOMI) formed in 2003 to contribute to the conservation, protection and recognition of these values. FOMI work collaboratively with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and other key groups.



Mark Sheriff, heritage lighthouse expert and volunteer, waving off first load of volunteers after a successful Maatsuyker Island working bee. Photo: James Stone

It is a pleasure to present this report on behalf of the FOMI Committee as a highlight of the year's achievements.

1. Craig Saunders Memorial Fund

FOMI were honoured to have received funding from the Craig Saunders Memorial Fund toward the restoration of the Lightstation's Quarters 2 veranda floor. The restoration was completed during the March 2017 FOMI working bee. It was very special to have Desley (Craig's partner) on the March working bee to see the transformation first hand.

2. Partnerships

We are fortunate to have a strong working partnership with PWS, and together we continue to deliver terrific outcomes for Maatsuyker Island. FOMI value the positive working

relationship with a range of PWS staff especially at the Huonville Southwest Field Centre and Heritage staff. We have also developed a strong three-way partnership between PWS and the PWS volunteer caretakers on the island.

3. On-Island Working Bees

FOMI held two combined working bees, made possible through grants, FOMI fundraising and logistics support from PWS:

1. 1 to 6 December 2016; weed control and shearwater monitoring (total 4 volunteers) and
2. 1 to 9 March 2017, weed control and survey and shearwater monitoring rebuilding of the Quarters 2 veranda and general maintenance Objects Catalogue project and lighthouse restoration works (Total 11 volunteers). Phil Wyatt, Friends of GIS (Wildcare Inc.) has continued to provide invaluable in-kind support with assistance in the now fully-implemented 'Fulcrum' weed management system for the island.

4. Pennicott Foundation donation

FOMI received a \$5,000 donation from the Pennicott Foundation towards the on-island shearwater monitoring and weeding programs for 2017. FOMI value the support of the Pennicott Foundation and hope to continue to develop this relationship into the future.

5. Off-Island work

The off-island work continues to be the greatest commitment from the FOMI Committee. This includes attending meetings, writing grants and reports, developing promotional material, planning and running working bees, day trips and events, and providing support to the PWS Volunteer Caretaker program.

6. Promotion, events, creativity and artistry:

FOMI again successfully combined with the Friends of Tasman Island and Friends of Deal Island in sharing a stall at the 2017 Australia Wooden Boat Festival. It is one of FOMI's main fundraising events. FOMI again had a stall at the annual family Seafarers Festival in October, and two FOMI members presented at the inaugural Tasmania Lighthouse Conference in November.

In October-November FOMI, with support of the Clarence City Council's events team, hosted an art exhibition, *Inspired Solitude: artistic interpretations of Maatsuyker Island* at the Rosny Farm, Schoolhouse Gallery. The exhibition was supported by a number of invited artists presenting their inspiring works featuring the island.

The Signal Flag project, a major project involving a number of FOMI volunteers, has created two sets of signal flags, a larger set for the Maatsuyker Lighthouse and a smaller set for FOMI off-island events. The majority of the flags were sponsored, and sewing workshops were held as part of the Rosny Farm exhibition.



Flag Making



Finished Flags – Proud Makers

Photos: Jenny Scott

The Art Card series produced by FOMI has been very successful, reaching \$3000 in sales in just over 12 months. This project involved design, research, printing, production and sales of 11 designs of high quality gift cards. The project was undertaken by FOMI volunteers.

FOMI and PWS took receipt of two original Maatsuyker Island haulage way trolleys, donated by Australian Maritime Safety Authority. FOMI members, with assistance from PWS and local sponsorship, have undertaken the extensive restoration of one of the trolleys.

FOMI have improved communications with 'friends' and the general public with regular stories and posts on the Wildcare page, FOMI Facebook and email to friends; provided numerous articles for publication locally and nationally; and spoken and/or appeared on local and national radio and TV. FOMI were shortlisted as a semi-finalist in the 2016 Tasmanian Community Achievement Awards.

FOMI conducted two separate 'day trips' by boat to Maatsuyker Island this past season. These trips are always popular and successful and are an excellent way of promoting the island's values to the wider public.

7. Grants and donations

FOMI thank the funding bodies NRM South, Wildcare Inc (Internal Grant) for support toward the FOMI projects, and PWS for their assistance and support during grant applications.

Total grant monies received during 2016-17 = \$12,550 (GST excl.). This includes the Pennicott donation mentioned above. Note that FOMI's reporting is on a financial-year basis. FOMI also contributed substantial money from its own fund-raising efforts and from donations.

8. In-kind support

The work of FOMI is possible due to the generosity of all our volunteers who contribute on and off Maatsuyker Island. Over the past year, FOMI (Committee and friends) contributed at least 2,710 volunteer hours. At \$35 per hour this equates to \$94,850 in-kind support.

Get Outside with Community

by Sonia Chirgwin

Old and New Tasmanians getting to know and understand national parks. We organise activities for people new to the state to get outside and enjoy our national parks, whilst making new friends and finding out about the world of volunteering experience that is Wildcare. Our trips generally depart from Hobart in the south of the state.

This year has been an exciting one for the Wildcare Group, *Get Outside with Community (South)*. The most rewarding aspect has been watching our leaders flourish as they deliver bushwalks and experiences to their communities. We continue to witness a growing sense of connection – to Tasmania and to each other. Being immersed in nature and forming connections with community are essential to good mental health outcomes for new arrivals, particularly those from a refugee and asylum seeker background. Our unique parks and reserves underpin belonging for many Tasmanians and sharing this love of nature is a great way to diversify park users, teach the leave no trace principles, and create opportunities for participants.



Guided walk to Russell Falls – Harmony Week March 2017

The following are just some of the highlights of the past year –

- Parks employed two bi-cultural Discovery Rangers, both Get Outside leaders who now receive seasonal employment as Mandarin speaking guides
- 70 members of the Karen community enjoyed a day at Mount Field National Park, with young and old participants enjoying the Lady Baron Falls circuit
- 12 young participants met the challenge of climbing Cathedral Rock, a steep and rewarding walk followed by a community music event at Neika
- Two Nepali community walks were organised and led by Get Outside leaders; one at Mount Field and one at Waterfall Bay. An aboriginal cultural demonstration provided Nepali elders the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of indigenous history, story and art
- Get Outside worked with TAFE to provide bush skills training to 60 young migrants in a day at Taroom Beach
- 2 walks targeting women and children were held at Chauncey Vale and the Hobart Rivulet Track. This group can suffer from additional isolation given their childcare responsibilities, and it was great to see them feel relaxed and comfortable as the day unfolded
- The Mt Field Harmony Week event has become an annual highlight, with over 200 participants joining a day of guided walks, Discovery Ranger kids activities, cricket, soccer, frisbee, music, and shared food. The inter-cultural cricket match is a highly anticipated event amongst Parks staff and diverse community members
- The leadership camp this year was at Maria Island, where young people learnt styles of leadership, along with skills in the planning and delivery of walks and interpretative experiences. The walk up Bishop and Clerk was an excellent challenge for these new bushwalkers. It was rewarding to see the confidence and skills develop over the three days. These leaders are the core of the programme, working throughout the season to plan and deliver walks to diverse audiences
- Get Outside collaborated with the Writers Centre and worked with local author Gina Mercer to provide the opportunity for story telling on Maria Island as a means of connection to place. Poems and stories were presented to a Writers Festival forum, leaving no dry eye in the house



Nepali Bushwalk – Tasman Peninsula November 2017

In the words of a young Karen man on a recent walk, “I feel happy. I feel like I am in my place”. *Get Outside with Community* provides the opportunity for connection. With the support of TPWS

and Tas Community Fund, we are bringing unique experiences and tangible benefits to people looking for belonging and a sense of home in Tasmania.



Leader's Camp – Maria Island

Friends of Lillico Penguins

by Shirley Tongue, President

Throughout the penguins' breeding season, from late September to early the following April, we assist the Parks and Wildlife Service to supervise the visitors to the Penguin viewing platform. We interpret the wildlife through talks, question and answer sessions as well as recording counts of visitors and wildlife.

2017 was a big year for the Friends of Lillico Penguins. We organised a reunion lunch in September to celebrate the 21st birthday of the penguin viewing platform at Lillico Conservation Area. However, between the initial planning and the staging of the event, the platform was demolished and completely rebuilt. We still had a reunion lunch, notwithstanding.

The Parks and Wildlife Service architect is more accustomed to designing viewing platforms for daytime use, so designing one for predominately night time viewing presented a few challenges. Some of these only became apparent once it was completed and in use. By next breeding / guiding season, we should have all the teething problems sorted out. It is certainly a very attractive structure and more visitor friendly.



Because the platform area was a construction zone during last winter, our working bees were seriously curtailed, but we still managed a bit of weed removal and native planting before and after the construction work. While preparing historical photographs for the reunion lunch, I was greatly impressed by the significant improvement in the habitat around the platform over the past 21 years. Friends past and present have invested many hours of toil and it has certainly not been wasted.

The construction of the new platform attracted a lot of media attention and that, in turn, has brought more visitors to see the penguins. With the increase in visitor numbers, the pressure is on our group to find more volunteer guides to attend to them. We began the 2017-18 guiding season with a promising number of guides, including several trainees, but over the months our active volunteer numbers have dropped alarmingly, due to illness and injury (not workplace related!). We are looking forward to a less challenging season for 2018-19.

