

**Annual Report July 2024 - June 2025**

**Presented at Friends of Maatsuyker Island – Wildcare Inc. (FOMI) AGM, 4 September 2025**

Presented on behalf of the Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FOMI) Committee, to showcase our achievements over the past year.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS:**

* **On-Island Efforts**: Conducted two successful working bees, including an extended stint
* **Support and Partnerships**: Funding and support from the Pennicott Foundation, Helicopter Resources, TasPorts and the Wildcare Inc. Tasmania Nature Conservation Fund
* **Capacity Building**: Implementing initiatives for growing FOMI capacity and succession, creating a more sustainable organisation

**ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PARTNERS**

**Wildcare Tasmania**

Thanks to the Wildcare team – Phil, Jill, Kim, Linda, Donna, and the Board and Grants Committee. Over the past year, Wildcare has supported us through:

* Grant funding from the Tasmania Nature Conservation Fund
* Promotion of FOMI stories via Facebook and their website
* Managing the FOMI funds and expenditure, alongside our Treasurer Stephen
* Assistance with our online shop

**Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS)**

FOMI recognises the commitment of the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) for their continued care of the island, including ongoing support to the PWS Volunteer Caretaker program and operational expenditure towards the care and maintenance of the lightstation and other island infrastructure.

FOMI values its relationship with PWS staff, Jennifer Mudge (Ranger in Charge), Brett Knowles (PWS Ranger) and field staff, Jeremy Hood (PWS Acting Southern Operations Manager), and Annita Waghorn (PWS Manager Historic Heritage). This year, we held an Annual Planning meeting and a Lighthouse Working Group (LHWG) meeting to prepare for the season’s work. PWS is also developing a Biosecurity Plan for the island, with contributions from FOMI members Sheryl Hamilton and Marina Campbell.

**Combined Preservation Efforts**

The Lighthouse Working Group, a joint effort between FOMI and PWS, continues to make significant progress in preserving the island’s historic heritage. Led by David Milne, the group includes dedicated members from both FOMI and PWS. Plans for the restoration of the Whim Area precinct, are becoming reality with the recladding and painting of the Whim Shed.

**OFF-ISLAND WORK**

Our off-island efforts are crucial and include:

* Attending meetings and managing administration
* Writing grant applications and reports
* Communicating with our supporters, holding and attending events
* Selling FOMI merchandise and developing promotional materials
* Planning and assembling working bees
* Supporting the PWS Volunteer Caretaker program
* Developing the 2026-30 FOMI Strategic Plan.

**FOMI Capacity and Succession Planning**

This year we put our ideas for more distributed leadership and responsibility into action. We are still refining this new model but have continued to grow and had another great year of achievements.

**2025 Australian Wooden Boat Festival**

FOMI proudly hosted our own stall at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart, an achievement made possible by the generous support of a TasPorts Community Grant.

The dedicated space allowed us to showcase Ailsa Fergusson’s amazing detailed model of the whim, the beautifully restored haulage trolley thanks to David Milne’s efforts, and our merchandise, maps, and two newly designed information banners.

The display attracted a steady stream of curious and enthusiastic visitors throughout the event.

Our fantastic team of volunteers brought the display to life, passionately sharing the story of our vital work on Maatsuyker Island and offering a unique glimpse into this remote and truly special place. Diane Masters’ beautiful artwork, generously donated to FOMI, was sold at auction during the festival. It was a very successful and rewarding event for FOMI, boosting both public engagement and our fundraising efforts. It was a testament to the many hands working diligently behind the scenes to make it all happen!

**Off-Island Yarning Event and Pop-Up Museum**

Over 50 island enthusiasts came together for the FOMI and FOTI (Friends of Tasman Island) led Off-Island Yarning event in March at Geilston Bay Boat Club. It was a day of tales, mostly true with a few tall ones for fun. Our artifacts, most from the former collection of John Cook, were made available for a public showing. Participants asked for a repeat event, and we obliged with a Pop-up Museum in August in which Friends of Melaleuca were also involved. This event included an ‘on-line’ participation event, including a live cross to Maatsuyker Island where caretaker ‘Reg’ Grundy gave a tour from the Needle Rocks to the on-island museum in Quarters One.

Many thanks to Georgie Carr for her unrelenting energy, enthusiasm, creativity and resourcefulness to make these events happen.

**Promotion, Events, Merchandise, Creativity, and Artistry**

FOMI merchandise sales have raised $3,400 this year, supporting our work on Maatsuyker Island. Our merchandise is available on the Wildcare Online Shop and at events thanks to Ailsa, our ‘go-to’ creative Committee member.

Merchandise highlights include the Maatsuyker lighthouse tea towel (Diane Masters print) and a fresh batch of our popular beanies designed by Ailsa. Thank you to the working group and graphic designer Salomé Nunes who prepared the artwork for the tea towels and our two new banners.

Our Facebook page and Wildcare stories, managed by Fiona Taylor with contributions from the lighthouse community, continue to engage and inform our supporters.

**Member Day Trips to Maat**

Our attempts to organise an arrangement by which members can visit the Island, other than as part of a working bee, advanced this year by the submission of a lengthy and detailed Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA’ application to PWS. This remains under assessment and discussion.

**ON-ISLAND WORKING BEES**

6-12 December 2024 (Weed Control program: Marina Campbell and Penni Rockliff

Shearwater Monitoring program: Sheryl Hamilton and Alan Wiltshire

26 February - 19 March 2025

Trip co-ordination was undertaken by Marina Campbell and David Milne

Building Maintenance program: Project Leaders David Milne and Derek Inglis. PWS support from   
Phil Duggan. Team: Wendy Milne, David Masters, Don Cameron, Lee Cameron, Eli Jorgensen.

Weed Control program: Project Leaders Marina Campbell and Marguerite Carson with support from Luca Clark. Team: Joh Bloomberg, Mary Stewart, Mike Comfort, Peter Dane, Kaely Kreger, Sarah Coutin.

Shearwater Monitoring program: Jez (Jeremy) Bird assisted the team by recording data. Off island support from Sheryl Hamilton.

A heartfelt thank you to our on-island volunteers with their combined efforts contributing an impressive 1,854 volunteer hours across two working bees.

Our working bees were made possible by generous financial support from grants and donations. We gratefully acknowledge the Tasmania Nature Conservation Fund and the Pennicott Foundation for their significant funding towards our Weed Control and Shearwater Monitoring Programs. Additionally, we acknowledge TasPorts Community Grants program funding toward the Weed Control and Building Maintenance programs as well as thank Helicopter Resources for their support and funding that assisted our Building Maintenance Program.

Special thanks to PWS Volunteer Caretakers Glen and Linda Collis (December Working Bee) and David and Wendy Milne (Feb-March Working Bee) for their terrific assistance, from setting up houses and helping in the field to hosting a special film night and providing treats. We also thank PWS, especially Jen Mudge and Brett Knowles, for their help with planning, logistics, and gear transport.

**Shearwater Monitoring**

This season marked the 12th year of FOMI’s Short-tailed Shearwater monitoring. Each December during the egg incubation period, marked study areas are surveyed to determine the proportion of burrows that contain a nest. The burrows are checked again in March to determine the number of burrows with a chick, providing an estimate of breeding success.

In December 2024, Maatsuyker’s burrow occupancy was close to the long-term average of 63% (from 12 seasons) and, in March 2025, breeding success was also close to the long-term average of 69% (from 11 seasons).

**Weed Control**

The Weed Control program continued its efforts toward the goal of eradicating the invasive target weeds blackberry, *Veronica elliptica*, *Californian Thistle* and *Montbretia*. The March working bee team visited the Tasmanian Herbarium for an information session on plant identification with Matthew Baker, Senior Curator, greatly improving the volunteers’ knowledge of the target weeds on Maatsuyker Island.

A total of 13.49 ha was surveyed by hip-chain and sweep. This was significant, with each volunteer each surveying approximately 1.5 ha.

Of the 4 target weeds the following were found and treated:

• Blackberry: 3 sites with 6 weeds

• *Veronica elliptica*: 2 sites with 4 weeds

• *Montbretia*: 27 sites with 436 weeds

• *Californian Thistle*: no weeds found

We also dealt with an outlier site of Montbretia, dock and onion weed, which PWS removed in a helicopter lift from the site.

We are fortunate to have the expertise of Phil Wyatt from Friends of GIS, providing ongoing data and mapping support. A full report can be found on our Wildcare page.

**Building Maintenance**

In March 2025, our dedicated volunteers took on the task of completing internal painting of Quarters Two and Three, thus ensuring the space was ready for the arrival of our weeders and shearwater volunteers. The team painted the rebuilt the Whim winch shed, removed scaffolding and completed site cleanup. Site cleanup was carried out at Quarters Three chicken house after the completion of recladding of this building. Ten bulker bags of rubbish were heli-lifted off Maatsuyker Island. Three Sash windows were refurbished and made operational in Quarters Two. Timber steps and landing were constructed to provide safe access to the paint store. Measurements and tests were carried out in the lighthouse lantern room to determine the cause of a hesitation issue with the lens rotation mechanism.

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**

Our work is powered by the incredible generosity of our volunteers, both on and off Maatsuyker Island. Over the past year, FOMI members and friends contributed an impressive 2,314 volunteer hours. This includes:

* **Working bees**: 1,854 hours
* **Promotion and merchandise sales**: 30 hours
* **Meeting attendance**: 200 hours
* **Lighthouse Working Group and Whim Committee**: 50 hours
* **Administration**: 100 hours
* **Grant and sponsorship efforts**: 80 hours

Thank you all for your many hours of effort and contribution. ***Conservatively, 2,314 hours @ $45 per hour (recommended in-kind rate) = $104,130 in-kind.***

**GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

This year, Joh, Marina, Sheryl, Amy, Peter, Stephen and Derek led our grant applications and donation efforts.

**Pennicott Foundation**: We are proud to receive a $7,000 donation for our Weed Control and Shearwater Monitoring programs for the 2024/25 season. This marks the eighth year of support from the Pennicott Foundation with an increase in donation from $5,000 to $7,000. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Robert Pennicott for his commitment toward our conservation work.

**Helicopter Resources:** For the second year, Helicopter Resources has generously donated one hour of flight time to support our efforts on Maatsuyker Island and committed to ongoing support.

**Volunteer grant:** (through local Federal member Julie Collins) expended on fuel for volunteers and first aid supplies with the purchase of a field Automatic Emergency Defibrillator.

**Donation summary**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pennicott Foundation | Weed Control & Shearwater Monitoring Programs | $7,000 (GST excl.) |
| Helicopter Resources | Gift toward FOMI on island works | $2,481\* (GST excl.) carried over to Dec 2025 |
| Diane Masters’ | Beautiful artwork | $855 (GST excl.) |

***Total donations received 2024/25 = $7,855\****

**The following grants were awarded during the 2024/25 financial year:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Funding source* | *Awarded/ notified* | *Title and brief description* | *Amount  (GST excl.)* | *Completion/ Final Report* |
| Wildcare Tasmanian Nature Conservation Fund Round 2 - 2024 | Nov 2024 | Protecting the unique biodiversity and seabird habitat values of TWWHA Maatsuyker Island | 20,612 | August 2025 |
| TasPorts Community Grant | Sept 2024 | Friends of Maatsuyker Island | 5,000 | March 2025 |

***Total grant monies received 2024/25 = $25,612***

**With Thanks**

The FOMI Committee and friends, working alongside PWS, are dedicated to preserving the unique heritage of Maatsuyker Island. Special thanks to our committee members: Treasurer Stephen Anstee, Secretary Amy Saunders, committee members Fiona Taylor, Ailsa Fergusson, Marina Campbell, Sheryl Hamilton, David Milne, Derek Inglis, Peter Blackwell, Penni Rockliff, Joh Bloomberg, and Peter Saunders. After four years as our Treasurer, Stephen is stepping off the Committee due to other commitments. Thank you, Stephen, for your diligence and assistance in this role and others.

We also appreciate the contributions of non-committee members Don Cameron, Georgie Carr, Lyn Graham, Gwen Egg and Amanda Blakney.

Thank you to all ‘friends’ for your support toward the care and protection of Maatsuyker Island.

Your outgoing FOMI Committee