



Wildcare Friends of Melaleuca

President's Annual Report, 30 Oct 2025

I am pleased to present this summary of FoM's achievements during the year. We currently have a membership of 276 (Wildcare webpage). Thanks to the wonderful, active membership of willing volunteers with diverse and useful skills and lots of enthusiasm, plus a lot of interested supporters working together to care for this place that we all love. Thank you also to our dedicated committee who work hard behind the scenes making decisions.

FoM and Wildcare

Thanks to Wildcare, especially Phillip Laroche who took over from Kim Willing on her retirement a year ago from her position as membership officer. Phil has done a great job learning the ropes, assisting presidents with the new Wildcare website, and he was also elected CEO during this year. A big thank you to Wildcare's bookkeeper, Linda Lever, who handles all our finances and willingly answers our questions. Thanks also to the Board, chaired by Donna Burton, for their ongoing support.

Wildcare still holds regular online chats (now on Google-Meet) with members and with branch leaders. These are informative and also offer an opportunity to meet 'virtually' with leaders and members of other Wildcare branches around the State.

Rob submitted a grant application to Wildcare's Nature Conservation Fund for further track-work in 2026 at Clyde's Hill and Mt Beattie.

FoM and PWS

FoM recognizes the work and dedication of Parks staff in the Melaleuca area, and we commend the PWS volunteer caretaker program. There has been yet another change of Rangers at Melaleuca! Our Ranger on site is now Marty Doyle, taking over from Dan Rowe. Jennifer Mudge is still Ranger in Charge at the Huonville Field Centre, and Emmalene Maher continues as Regional Volunteer Coordinator, South. Emm is always very responsive and engaged, and from our group's point of view this is a very important PWS role. We have a current three-year Program Plan, running until 2027. On 11 September, Rob, Janet and Geoff met with Marty and Emm at Huonville to talk about the working bee, especially plans for track-work in March 2026.

Heritage meeting: On 4 September Chris Creese, Tony, Janet and Geoff Fenton, Ian Terry and Nikki Kingsmith met with PWS Heritage officers Annita Waghorn and Katy Ross. We discussed documenting objects in Rallinga Mine smelter, the current re-write of Tas State Heritage listing for Melaleuca, and the Heritage officers planned visit to Melaleuca.

On 25 September, committee members got together to plan submissions to the review of the 2016 TWWHA Plan. Following this discussion, a Myriad Research submission was prepared by Janet, and a separate written submission was prepared by Peter.

Meetings

Our three meetings over the past year were all held at the DSS with a meal before the meeting and a presentation after the formal part of the evening. Last year's AGM was held on 26 September, when the committee was re-elected with the addition of Will Oliver. Committee work was done by email with occasional face-to-face on an as needs basis. This year we tragically lost two of our stalwart committee members, Stephen Mattingley and Barbara Willson, who died within 3 months of each other. Valé Stephen and Barbara. We miss them both.

FoM along with other groups, nominated Stephen Mattingly for a Volunteering Tasmania award. At the awards ceremony on 19 September, Stephen was the recipient of a special award, the Enduring Contribution Award.

Presentations:

Sept 2024: Peter Marmion, on foot around Tasmania's coast - Low Rocky to Cape Sorell. This was a forerunner to his stampede-inducing presentation at the Maritime Museum talk this September.

May, 2025: Photos of the March working bee.

July, 2025; Tony Fenton presented a well researched and entertaining talk, 'An Unloved little light', the history of the Whalers Point lighthouse.

Events

Colour in Nature – special event on 14 November '24 at the Fern Tree Tavern. Justin Marshall spoke about his research, and his recently published book *Colour in Nature* and showed fantastic images.

Social event, Ferntree Tavern on 17 July – an enjoyable evening, a good venue and great photos. Thanks to Keith Drew for technical support and organising the photos and, Pete for organizing the venue.

Pop-up Museum event – FoM was invited to participate in an event organized by Friends of Tasman Island and Friends of Maatsuyker Island at Geilston Bay Boat Club on 10 August. Lighthouses were of course the theme, and among other speakers, Tony gave his presentation on the 'Unloved Little Light' in Port Davey, and FoM displayed banners and a rolling slide-show of the creation of our museum at Melaleuca.

Working bee

FoM's working bee, held between 12-21 March 2025, with 17 volunteers, was the usual success and we kept up our good safety record. Rangers were Dan Rowe and Liam, a range borrowed from Hastings.

As well as our routine tasks (draining, weeding, brushcutting), we achieved a number of major jobs during the week. Track work with Dan and Liam between Moth Creek and the bushwalkers huts was memorable for deep mud and banging in tall posts with the deadblow hammer. Twenty metres of fiberglass-reinforced plastic track was installed and 42 posts averaging 2m tall were driven in as supports. And to add interest, Huey put on an interesting and very intense hail storm late one afternoon.

Four volunteers installed the heritage interpretation panels around the tin mine, with some bespoke additions by Simon Ward. On the waterfront, *Scamp* received some TLC (thanks Mel); at Kings' Andrew made wiring to the house compliant!!; building maintenance was done on two 1930s New Hb Co huts in the garden; more re-stumping on the tractor port...and lots more (see working bee report in FoM files).

Thanks to PWS for RAAs, and Dan Rowe for trackwork, patient guidance, and boat transport to Claytons aboard *Leptonyx*. Melaleuca caretakers Tom and Mel pitched in with a will, Tom giving us daily weather forecasts and writing a report for our web page. All volunteers worked hard and put in a combined 851 hours on site with enthusiasm and camaraderie, thanks to all! Special thanks went to Barbara for making her home available for volunteers even though she could not be there.

In July Rob Banfield organized a subsidiary working bee at Mel's place for prep work on Wiles Shed parts for Claytons.

Funding

The donation box in the museum continues to provide some revenue. Cards sell quite well in the museum over summer. Thanks to Erika for looking after card sales in the Wildcare online shop. And thanks to Marianne for sales at stalls.

Otherwise funding comes from grants, sponsorship, donations and in-kind support and some generous private donations. FoM has now opened a Heritage Conservation Appeal account with National Trust Tasmania.

Reporting

Thanks to Erika for the group's Wildcare Facebook page. Wildcare's website 'News Page' is also a great forum for FoM's stories but we have only posted two articles on that site during the year.

FoM's FILES page on the Wildcare website offers a site where more formal files can be placed and viewed. Our minutes and reports go here, including working bee reports, museum policy and heritage conservation management plans.

We appreciate the support from Wildcare and from PWS staff. And thanks to committee members and other volunteers who kept FoM active during the year. Special thanks to VP Rob Banfield who is good at making things happen, Peter Marmion for terrific secretarial work, Geoff for all his steady behind the scenes input, and Tony for his long-standing treasury duties. Few people can make a treasurer's report entertaining! And of course to those volunteers who gave their all at the working bee or input in various ways during the year.

Janet Fenton, President, Friends of Melaleuca, Wildcare Tasmania, 30 October 2025