Wildcare Friends of Melaleuca

President's Annual Report, 27 Oct 2026

I am pleased to present this summary of FoM's achievements during the year. We currently have a membership of 308 (Wildcare webpage). Thanks to the wonderful membership of willing volunteers with diverse and useful skills and heaps of enthusiasm, plus a lot of interested and generous 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 CEO. A big thank you to Wildcare's bookkeeper, Linda Lever, who handles all our finances and willingly answers our questions, and to Jessie Oliver, the new Community Engagement Manager. Thanks also to the Board and Marianne Gee as chair, for ongoing support.

Wildcare still holds regular Google-Meet sessions 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.

Philanthropic partners

Thanks to the James and Hayley Bailey Foundation who funded reprints of our replacement museum panels and moorland posters, and also to the Mountain Air Foundation, who generously supported the track-work.

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 very generous private donations. FoM still has a Heritage Conservation Appeal account with National Trust Tasmania. Wildcare has now changed rules so that heritage work can also be funded tax free.

FoM and PWS

FoM recognizes the work and dedication of Parks staff in the Melaleuca area, and we commend the PWS volunteer caretaker program. Deb and Russell were particularly supportive during the working bee. Our Ranger on site is Marty Doyle. 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.

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 30 Oct, when the committee was re-elected with the addition of Justin Marshall. Committee and special sub-committee work was done by email with occasional face-to-face on an as needs basis.

Correspondence has been ongoing regarding the RYCT and the VDL circumnavigation, attempting to establish yachting protocols in line with the Port Davey Marine Reserve. Thanks to Andrew Boon, David Mitchell and Peter Marmion for persevering with this.

Presentations:
Oct 2025: Janet and Geoff presented a tribute to Barbara Willson who died in August. This was followed by a short bushwalking film made in 1955-56 by Robert Tanner. A very different style of walking from today!
May, 2026: Photos of the March working bee including a presentation by historian Ian Terry about documenting objects in the smelter at Rallinga Mine.
July, 2026; Grant Finlay spoke about fire and the evidence of Aboriginal people in the southwest landscape.

Events

Off Island 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 15-16 August. Everyone's and Artist was a creative day on the Saturday, followed by and art exhibition on the Sunday. Lucy Landon-Lane's Eagle Dance was a truly amazing performance. The Birds and Islands symposium on Sunday was chaired by Sally Bryant, with speakers Sue Robinson, Els Hayward and Mel Wells. Thanks Tony, who manned FoM's trade table. See https://wildcaretas.org.au/news/a-wonderful-weekend-for-islands-and-bird-nerds

Working bee

FoM's working bee was held between 11-22 March 2026 with 19 volunteers, and was the usual success, keeping up our good safety record. Rangers Marty Doyle and Dan Rowe headed the track-work team for work on the Clydes Hill track.

As well as our routine tasks, a number of major jobs were achieved during the week. Ken and Lauren carried on with *Blueboat*'s restoration, Mitch gave the firebreaks the best haircut ever; Ian Terry (historian) and Nikki King-Smith (heritage conservator), made a good start on documenting heritage objects in the Rallinga Mine smelter, while Chris and team carried out house maintenance, including rendering on the brickwork. At Melaleuca North, the failing southern wall of the garden shed was re-built and tools hung neatly, new carpet tiles make the museum floor look and feel great, and the reprinted interpretation panels were installed; flooring in the First Camp was completed, solar powered light installed in Karina's, airstrip wheelbarrows were renovated and a good start was made on a shelter for the fire barrow. Plus general maintenance, joinery below the windows in big bedroom finished and exterior window frames painted.

Thanks to PWS for RAAs, and Marty and Dan for track-work, patient guidance, and boat transport to Claytons aboard *Leptonyx*. Thanks Anne for writing up the report. All volunteers worked hard

and put in a combined 917 hours on site with enthusiasm and camaraderie. Special thanks to the Willson family for making Melaleuca South available for volunteers. Thanks team for carrying on without Geoff and me.

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 one article 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. 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, 27 October 2026