

## **Friends of Deal Island**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday 6 September 2025**

Supreme Court meeting room, Oatlands

Meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. Chaired by Jo Widdowson (president)

**Apologies:** Robert Banfield, Jenny and Ralph Baulis (currently caretaking on Deal), Christine Bowman, John and Ros Burgess, Anne Goldizen, Rose Grant, Steve Greig, Alison and Angus Moore, Lily Neyland, Sue Robinson, Cassie Strain, Sue Walker.

**Attending:** Lesley Ashburn, Gabriel Balon, Jo Burke, David Butler, Don and Lee Cameron, Mike Comfort, Jane Davis, Georgie and Stuart Dudgeon, David Fletcher, Phillipa Foster, Shirley Fysh, Natalie Holman, Cathie Plowman, Simon Roberts, David Reynolds, Tamara Terwal, Jo Widdowson, Peter Wiseman.

**Acknowledgement of Country:** (Jo)

### **President's Report: Jo Widdowson**

- **Highlights over the last year**

- Working Bees. Two working bees held both very successful and productive
- Bank stabilisation project. Lot of work, planning and logistics involved with this. Congratulations and well done to Stu, Mike and Cassie acknowledging this work will continue on at least the next two working bees
- Grants. We are fortunate to have again received a grant from Wildcare enabling us to proceed with the stabilisation project.
- Beetles. Project deemed a success with 12 months on island,
- Fortunate and thankful branch member caretakers - Karen Ziegler, Craig and Debbie Searle, the Widdowsons, John and Ros Burgess, and now Ralph and Jenny Baulis.
- Thank You - committee members, Cathie and David, merchandise assisted by Marianne Gee (Friends of the Orange-bellied Parrot).

- **Challenges**

Widespread membership (engagement/meetings), working bees are a lot of work and a lot of money. Need to share the load

- **Opportunities**

Projects and ongoing opportunities to add value to working bees/contribution, engaging caretakers, building relationships

### **Social media:**

Like many things this has also suffered from a lack of time from me this year. However there have been posts especially around working bees etc

FB followers: 991 (from 116 in 2018)

Instagram 197 (started 2018)

Wildcare Branch membership: 263

### **Parks and Wildlife Service**

Update from Dominique Couzins reported by Jo.

Dominique's report is included as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Jo mentioned that Dominique will be retiring in March 2026, and it will be appropriate for FODI to give her a gift to thank her for her support and wish her well.

### **Treasurer's Report: Stuart Dudgeon**

Treasurer's report is included in this document as Appendix 2.

Stuart reported that there are sufficient funds to cover the next two working bees (November 2025 and March 2026).

Stuart would like to hear of organisations that might be suitable for FODI to apply to re possible grants.

### **Election of Officer Bearers *for 2025-26 year.***

President: Stuart Dudgeon.

Secretary: Jane Davis.

Treasurer: Jo Widdowson. Jo will also continue social media role.

Newsletter: Georgie Dudgeon.

Committee members: Gabriel Balon, David Butler, Lee Cameron, Mike Comfort, Natalie Holman, Cathie Plowman, Cassie Strain, Tamara Terwal.

AGM business concluded.

## Other discussion

- David Fletcher from Ballarat, Victoria (thanks for coming David) was a caretaker in 2008 and has bought an album of photographs with him. Happy to provide photos to FODI at no cost for use by the group.
- Wooden Boat Festival. This will be held 5 to 8 February 2027. Usually, FODI combines with Friends of Maatsuyker Island and Friends of Tasman Island to run a stall with shared expenses and staffing. Some support for costs from Wildcare. This is a big effort and would need members to commit, also some new stock and contributions to a combined raffle with the two other groups. (In 2025, Friends of Tasman Island had their own stall as it was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the group, and FODI and Friends of Maatsuyker Island did not participate in the Wooden Boat Festival.)

This event can be a big fundraiser for all three groups but needs member support.

- FODI merchandise. David and Cathie have been managing this, with support from Marianne Gee from Friends of the Orange-bellied Parrot. Marianne regularly attends any market or event with an 'eco' or nature theme and has sold about \$150.00 of FoDI stock in the last 12 months. Thanks Marianne.

Only about five sales via the Wildcare website in the past 12 months. Currently selling buffs/neck-warmers at reduced prices. Stock sold at today's meeting raised \$180.00. Thanks everyone. Also, another \$180.00 sold (mostly to caving friends) in the past week.

Cathie and David away for three months caretaking on the mainland in 2026. Jo Burke will kindly take on packing stock for website sales in that period.

Marianne Gee (Friends of the OBP) is having at stall at Tasmanian Nature Festival, Saturday 18 October 2025. Time: 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. Location: Kingborough Community Hub, Kingston. Phillipa Foster and David Reynolds from FODI will assist.

- Working bees. Stuart reported that he gets feedback that working bees are a 'closed shop'. He detailed the considerations that need to go into selecting each working bee crew. Firstly, there are only six spots available due to cost, logistics of the plane, capacity of the house and septic system. Every application is carefully considered with an effort to include two or three new people each working bee, plus the

remainder in experienced people who know the projects being done. There is a need to combine skill sets, and the issue to get the most value from the expensive exercise of each working bee. Spread the word that it's not a 'closed shop' and to encourage people to keep applying.

- Stuart suggested that FODI might consider a raffle. Cathie said that she is thinking similar and undertook to organise a raffle in 2027. If people can start thinking about options for suitable prizes. Do people know of conservation minded people who own an accommodation property who might donate? Other business? David Fletcher would donate a framed print.

### **Working Bee Reports**

Stuart reported on the March 2025 working bee, including an update on the ragwort biological control. The report is published in Appendix 4 in this document.

Mike Comfort reported on the November 2024 working bee. The report, from Cassie Strain, is published in Appendix 3 of this document.

Stuart expressed appreciation for the help of Christine Bowman who has been collecting, packing and weighing our food purchases from Flinders Island.

### **Ideas for future working bees**

With sea spurge now becoming controlled and needing less working bee time and effort and ragwort currently being left for biological control, Stuart asked for ideas for future working bees/projects. The following were raised:

- Painting of buildings to seal of asbestos.
- Lighthouse road drainage.
- Asbestos issues with buildings. Lobby PWS to attend to asbestos issues re buildings deteriorating, safety issues. (David Reynolds reported that specialists had been funded for removal of asbestos on Tasman Island, Mike Comfort reported that buildings with asbestos issues were having treatment on Maatsuyker.)
- Bio Blitz type efforts for QVMAG. (Also, there is a biologist from SA Museum who is seeking to collect a cave cricket from Deal. Previously documented by John Whinray.)
- Weed control on heritage ruins in lighthouse precinct. Needs input from heritage experts re where to spray and where not to.
- Fire-break of vegetation in lighthouse heritage precinct. Tea-tree has grown up.

### **Slides and stories:**

With 25 years plus of caretaker involvement on Deal Island a slide show with contributions from several previous caretakers had been collated for today by Tamara Terwal. Thanks Tamara.

Along with the photos, people shared stories from their times as caretakers. These were all enjoyable to hear. They included David Reynolds and David Fletcher both recounting times from the 2000s when the island power supply was limited. And Georgie Dudgeon recounting her three children restoring the grave of Fanny Baker who is buried on the island.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Parks and Wildlife Service update and information.**

#### **Dominique Couzens, Ranger in Charge**

A big thank you to the FODI team of volunteers who has assisted PWS with never ending maintenance across both land management and heritage on Deal Island for another year; Most specifically and importantly painting, weeding activities and the stabilisation plan for East Cove with jute matting and a subsequent replanting program

I would also like to share the acknowledgment, appreciation and awe that both PWS staff and caretakers have expressed regarding the physical energies that FODI members exert when on island. It has left many realising ‘just what a FODI day’s work’ means.

#### **Heritage**

Last year I shared the exciting project news that the PWS Heritage unit scored a successful funding bid for roofing replacement works of the museum. Post then, Heritage team members have been to island and included into the works, the replacement of the dormer windows also. Unfortunately, as the year has flown way too quickly for many, the Heritage Unit needed to reschedule this work, and I am pleased to advise it is now scheduled for February 2026 with a specific PWS project representative appointed to assist and oversee this work.

#### **Weeds**

PWS recently took to island a new ‘gadget’ to assist with weed management works around the compound, in the form of a Silvan battery re chargeable 20L spray pack to sit on the back of the UTV, or creatively as the current caretakers have been doing, pulling it around on a little garden trolley. Who would have thought a simple little gadget, which is so easy to use with hours of battery life, would thrill caretakers so much! It’s the little things in life that sometimes make the big things much easier!

#### **Fires:**

As you are aware, our precious island was no stranger to fire, ignited by a lightning strike in February 2025. If it wasn’t due to the enormous efforts of our PWS fire crew team and the right wind directions provided by the weather gods, the fire most certainly would have reached the lighthouse, and further. Post-fire it’s nice to see some regrowth taking place well.

#### **PWS caretaker program**

Later this year we celebrate 25 years of the Deal Island caretaker program! Many faces, experiences and changes have occurred over this time on in this stunning island paradise. More information will be forthcoming as to how PWS will be looking to acknowledge and celebrate this milestone.

The volunteer caretaker program will be advertised in the coming weeks with a six-to-eight-week period available for submission of applications.

If you know anyone who has an appetite and strong experience with remote and isolated living for extended periods, problem solving and is a jack of all trades please share the opportunity. The program will be advertised through the NRE Tas website, with a link also provided to Jo for sharing on FODI's Facebook page. Due to the significant popularity of the program, this opportunity is open to anyone who has not been successful in securing a caretaker period previously, to ensure as many people as possible get to experience this spectacular part of the world and incredible, once in a lifetime opportunity.

Finally, two things -

1. While I cannot promise, it's still on PWS radar where we may have helicopter works, to see if we can fly in a new sofa for the PWS visitor house – the opportunity just hadn't occurred yet!

2. If anyone knows of any yachties heading to Deal Island and then on to Flinders in the near future, PWS has several fire extinguishers and a small empty barbecue gas bottle to come off-island that cannot be flown.

## Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report

### Deal Island Treasurer's Report for 26/8/24 - 13/8/2025

Account	Date	Transactions	amount	balance
TNCF24	18.3.2025	Initial Grant		\$13,145.00
	17.11.2024	Flights	\$4,700.00	
	9.1.2025	Jute Matting	\$3,158.41	
	4.3.2025	Timber stakes +	\$208.64	
			\$8,067.05	
	13.8.2025			<b>\$5,077.95</b>
Deal Gen				
A/c	26.8.2024			\$5,293.97
		Airfare contribution*	\$1,100.00	
		Merch Sales	\$238.90	
		Donations	\$500.00	
		Exp.AGM venue	-\$92.05	

	Cuttings supplies	-\$39.60	
	income	\$1,707.25	
13.8.2025			<b>\$7,001.22</b>

One airfare contribution paid but not yet allocated to FoDI\*  
 More timber stakes in transit to Deal but payment not yet showing +

### **Appendix 3: Deal Island Working Bee 2 November – 12 November 2024**

#### **Report from Cassie Strain**

#### **Participants**

Cassie Strain (Captain grizzo), Catherine Stringer (Sketchy), Jane Davis (Cookie Blow), Mike Comfort (Floaty/Greg), Jenny Baulis (Loafy/Greg) and Ralph Baulis (Loggy).



#### **Summary**

The working bee can be summarised by three things: hill climbing, tussock grass clambering and splendid.

The spring working bee continued to see a good focus on our main weed control efforts on the island; to further consolidate the search and removal of sea spurge, arum lily, horehound, great mullein and ragwort in our managed areas. We added propagation to our regular task list and carried out some professional development.

This was the third FoDI visit for 2024.

Key outcomes from our 10 days were:

- Thorough searches and removal of Sea spurge at Garden Cove, Winter Cove, Pegleg, Little Squally, Big Squally and East Cove.
- Follow up removal of ragwort on the Garden Cove slopes and Barn Hill - Little Squally track area and slowing its encroachment towards East Cove from the airstrip.
- Commencement of propagation for bank stabilisation in East Cove; by seed, cuttings and tillering.
- Continuation of repainting of the radio room exterior.

- Cleaning three rooms of the visitor house.
- The spring caretakers had put in great efforts to control slender thistle, which had built up in numbers, so we were able to remove the bulk of slender thistle again.

Transport logistics were as usual, with tight weight restrictions, especially from Barnbogle.

Having most of our supplies purchased from Flinders Island again worked well. Thanks to Jane Davis's diligent collating of dietary requirements and ordering of a good array of food options. Thanks to Jenny and Ralph Baulis for purchasing the fresh food and providing very comfortable accommodation pre-trip. Thanks also to Christine Bowman for collecting, boxing up, freezing and delivering all our Flinders purchased food.

Thanks also to regular Deal Island visitors; Scott and Dan (D-up) and friends for donating and delivering two bags of native potting mix and an excellent captain's hat! Thanks also to Chris and Sue Read of Five Bob Farm, Birches Bay for donating 270 tube pots.

## **Weeding Results**

### **Sea spurge**

The group spent 132 person hours on searching and removing sea spurge.

We traversed the slope with a thorough search pattern above East Cove with the higher numbers being found on the drainage line/ Whim tramway end. 287 plants were removed, with 22 plants flowering.

Fifty person hours were spent at Garden Cove resulting in the removal of 454 plants. A large portion of these were again low to midway up on the elevated dune on the west of the cove. No new sites were located; however, two mature plants were found approximately 300 metres inland within the past known infestation area. Only seven plants were removed east of the creek line.

Winter Cove again delivered significant numbers of tiny seedlings, the dune search producing 153 plants.

No sea spurge was found in Little Squally, Big Squally or Pegleg.

### **Horehound**

The western end of East Cove was thoroughly searched by the team with 348 plants found. 18 of which were flowering.

### **Ragwort**

The group spent 105 person hours on searching and removing ragwort.

We spent two half days thoroughly searching and removing ragwort between the compound and Little Squally with approximately 3600 plants removed, dominated by patches of dense seedlings. Though no spraying was carried out on this working bee, it was noted that having a couple of the crew following along and spraying the areas of dense seedlings would be the most efficient use of time.



The area of moderate density of ragwort has expanded out from the 2023 area, indicating that more time needs to be spent in this area. Due to the density and height of the tussock grass, asking the summer caretakers to remove flowering plants, that are much easier seen in this zone, would also be very useful.

The upper slope of Garden Cove was thoroughly searched with 2210 ragwort removed.

The tree line from Garden Cove around to Flag Hill was thoroughly searched with 2617 ragwort removed. The infestation on Flag Hill, through decreasing in density, has spread towards the eastern tree line. It is worthwhile searching the tree line around from Garden Cove, as seed appears to be blown to and settle near the tree lines (as observed by Stuart Dudgeon on previous working bees).

The East Cove bank behind the Telstra chair, between the coast and the airstrip was searched with 900 plants found from level with and above the Telstra chair. The density increased three-quarter way up the slope, and we stopped weeding, drawing a line in the chest high tussock grass.

The caretakers have removed a few ragwort plants from within the East Cove enclosure and in the dieback area of the Flag Hill ridgeline.

The group looked for evidence of the ragwort flea beetle at the beetle release site, however this early in the (beetle) season there was little evidence. The adults lay eggs in late summer and the larvae feed below ground from autumn until the end of the following spring, when pupation commences and the adults emerge.

### **Arum lily**

While searching for ragwort on the East Cove bank behind the Telstra chair, between the coast and the airstrip, 41 arum lily plants were removed from nine clumps of lilies. We dug out the clumps with a shovel and carefully collected all the little tubers.

The six-regenerating arum lily on the side of the Barn Hill track were also removed with a shovel.

### **Great mullein**

Several locations were removed by hand including 20 plants around a new vehicle turning circle at the airstrip and eight plants along the hill track going down into Winter Cove.

### **Slender and other thistle species**

Inspired and supported by the caretakers spraying greater than 10,000 slender thistles within the East Cove enclosure, the group followed this up with hand removal of 1500 scattered plants on the upper bank of East Cove.

Another infestation of about 300 slender thistles was controlled by the caretakers at the inland east end of Garden Cove after being identified by the group.

Several Scotch thistles were removed on searches for ragwort around Garden Cove and outside the compound fence toward Little Squally. These were not mapped.

### **Weed mapping and documentation**

Three GPS's were again borrowed from the SPRAT's group, with new or dense populations marked. The group were also keen to develop their GPS skills. There was however very little new information to record as most of the weed occurrences were within existing search zones.

It was made obvious that it is very important to set up the GPS's with the latest weeding data from the previous working bees, which was not done for this working bee.

### **Visitors house**

The group continued the work of the previous working bees and sugar-soaped the balance of the house; the hallways and one of the bunk rooms. The caretakers had regularly aired the house before our arrival, and the house was not mouldy. It is recommended this airing is carried out during periods when the house is not occupied.

No painting was carried out in the visitor house during this working bee, though there is some paint available.

The asbestos register specifies keeping all painted surfaces that are in a stable condition regularly painted. Our aim is to complete painting within the house interior, ensuring occupants are not exposed.

### **Radio room and generator shed**

The asbestos register identifies the exterior walls as stable and in fair condition. Parks and Wildlife Service provided us with exterior paint to ensure the cladding of these two buildings remains stable.

The north-west facing wall of the radio room was in the most weathered state. The treatment was hosing and washing painted surfaces, before being given two coats.

### **Whim maintenance**

The East Cove whim got a coat of fish oil. The larger items got oiled i.e. the main cog, the harness for the horse and the lever. But we ran out of fish oil, so the smaller elements didn't get oiled and still need to be done.

No maintenance was done on the lighthouse whim.

### **Bank Stabilisation East Cove**

Initial surveys and planning were carried out on renewed stabilisation of the highly erosive calcarenite East Cove bank. Areas of the bank are continuing to erode especially in the area below the whim where there is bare ground.

In other areas of the bank the natives; coast groundsel, yellow speargrass and the rare plant coast twinleaf are naturally regenerating. The herb, medick (*Medicago sp.*), a legume, is also spreading throughout the enclosure and though introduced, it is a short-lived plant that is acting as a useful soil binder and soil improver.

245 plants were propagated. Seed collection for coastal teatree, common teatree, drooping sheoak and coast groundsel was carried out on Barn Hill and the eastern slope of East Cove.

Cuttings were collected from East Cove of grey saltbush, coastal saltbush and bower spinach. Tilling was also carried out using coastal tussock grass and coast speargrass.

The vegetation along the mid-western fence line was removed, after observing wallabies using the vegetation as a springboard to jump back into the enclosure. The height of about 20 metres of this fence was also increased.

Approximately 30 wallabies are still present in the enclosure, after another 13 were let out via the two gates during the working bee. Removing wallabies via the top gate and topping up the water container could be a task for caretakers to take on.

### **Professional development, odd jobs and fun stuff**

To break up the intense hill climbing and tussock grass clambering we did some professional development; basic GPS training, erosion options discussion (Mike Comfort) and sketching workshop (Catherine Stringer).

Ralph Baulis carried out FoDI tool maintenance, sharpened kitchen knives, fixed the vacuum cleaner and put bracing on the barbecue to stabilise it!

Marine rubbish/debris was collected from Big Squally, Little Squally and Pegleg.

The water temperature in each of the coves was checked: 14.5 degrees, with Winter Cove coming in at a balmy 15.

Boogie boarding was carried out by two brave members in 15-centimetre swell.

We had two lovely dinner parties with the caretakers.

We also got locked into the vegetable garden by the caretakers.

But we coped as we ate many cakes, including lighthouse mince pies and sticky date pudding.

Other fun things: Hike out to the lighthouse and down to the plane wreck. Sunset walk up Barn Hill. Last morning walk up to the splendid view.

### **In progress**

The plan to introduce a second ragwort biocontrol agent, the crown and stem boring moth to the island is also continuing. This will hopefully be carried out during a summer caretaker handover.

Plan for an increase in bank stabilisation work at East Cove now that sea spurge is in such low numbers.

Painting asbestos surfaces that are stable and previously painted.

Renegotiating our Volunteer Partnership Plan with the PWS staff.

Negotiating with PWS staff for the caretakers to care for FODI propagated plants.

### **Not yet acted upon**

Vegetation management around the lighthouse precinct and ruins needs to be reviewed considering increasing vegetation height and fuel loads that are likely to increase the chances of damage should a wildfire occur.

### **FODI owned supplies/ equipment on island**

Equipment held on the island was reviewed and checked.

*Thanks again to all those involved for making this working bee such a memorable one*

## **Appendix 4: Deal Island FODI March 2025 Working Bee Report**

### **Report from Stuart Dudgeon**

Participants were Stuart and Georgie Dudgeon, Christine Bowman, Simon Olding, Paul Chisolm, and Sue Walker. Caretakers were David and Maggie, who participated in several working bee activities.

### **Summary**

The group was treated once again to a perfect weather window for achieving our mission on the island. We couldn't have achieved what we were able to without preparatory assistance from Parks and Wildlife Service staff through delivery of approximately 550 metres of jute soil saver matting, and 200 garden stakes. And thanks again to Wildcare and the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Fund for enabling our fortnight on the island through funding our flights and materials.

Our main work effort was creating erosion control barriers through the staking and placement of jute matting rolls on the highly erodible East Cove embankment. This was guided by a rehabilitation plan for East Cove developed by one of our committee members, Mike Comfort.

The group contributed approximately 276 hours on this project and post two rainfall events all concluded the 200 metres of barrier installed was working effectively by filtering soils from the small rivulets that cascade down the slope after the two rains. This also provided a good chance to plant and have watered in approximately 230 plants that had been propagated from cuttings and seed on the November working bee.

To enable watering of the plants the old jetty waterline which had been cut and removed in places was located. We are now able to feed water to a hose at the top of the embankment for watering. Thanks Simon and Paul for your persistence.

Weeding results were significant, due to the lack of numbers of sea spurge found, East Cove in particular had very light numbers. This may have been partly the result of the summer

caretaker efforts as they removed 61 plants in February. The group members who had been before were again frustrated by what appears to be the relentless march of ragwort across the island.

Other tasks completed included taking measurements and pictures of the roof and cladding structure on the museum dormer windows scheduled for repair in 2025, painting another wall of the generator shed (it and radio room now half painted) repair of slumping interpretive banners (thanks Simon), internal de-moulding of visitor house bedroom walls, and continuing to remove wallabies from the East Cove enclosure and compound.

A big thank you to all the working bee participants, who all brought good energy to the island as well as a range of specialist expertise, skills and a willingness to learn new skills including playing Catan of a night.

### **East Cove stabilisation and rehabilitation project**

After several goes at making and placing the jute sausages, we settled on the procedure of:

1. Driving stakes along the length where the roll is to go (horizontal to the slope where practicable).
2. Cutting double the length of the sausage from the jute at the top of the embankment.
3. Lay the jute stretched out and doubled above the stakes.
4. Lay the whole poas across the length of the jute.
5. Roll into a sausage with the open end tucked underneath the roll.
6. Wire the tops of the jute (through several layers) to the stake.
7. Pin the uphill lower side of the jute to the substrate with a tent peg sized piece of wire.
8. Scrape some fines from above the sausage to commence the silting up process.
9. Plant into open flatter spaces where plants are unlikely to have roots exposed.

Chipping poas along fence lines around the compound meant that some members of the group were occupied with carting them in bags down to the worksite.

Others specialised in making the rolls and fixing them to the slope.

We were all able to participate in the planting-out session once the rolls were in place.

Approximately 280 hours was spent on island on this project. Thanks again to all who assisted in planning and approving the works, those involved in handling and transporting materials, and the November working participants for establishing cuttings and seedlings to go into the benched areas, and lastly the caretakers who maintained the plants before and after they were placed.

A further 100 cuttings were established from poa and creeper species



## **Weeding Results**

### **Sea spurge**

At East Cove sea spurge numbers continue to decline with only 320 plants removed, with 39 flowering/seed setting. There were no plants found on the more vegetated airstrip end of the embankment.

Garden Cove infestation is also reducing in numbers with 292 plants in total, 96 of which were flowering/seeding.

Winter Cove had 43 plants removed.

Note that these figures don't incorporate caretaker control efforts in these areas, so reductions can only be indicative. Over 100 hours were spent on sea spurge control in total

### **Horehound**

Christine and Sue tackled the horehound infestation with great diligence spending nine hours at East Cove removing 114 plants.

### **Ragwort**

The regular search area at Garden Cove was completed. The new plants discovered and removed were predominantly on the northern side of the grasslands on the edge of the casuarina forest. A lot of these had flowered and seeded.

A lesser number that had been weeded previously on the flagstaff saddle, where traditionally the main infestation has been, may have been because of caretakers and the November working bee actively weeding the area over the spring and summer

The infestation levels between the lighthouse track and Barn Hill continue to increase with flowering/seeding plants being found in March when at least some have dropped seed.

The group however still believed this was a worthwhile exercise in slowing the progressive saturation of the area with ragwort.

Follow up on the beetle release site strongly indicates that the beetles have completed a full lifecycle on the island with a strong concentration of shothole in plants from the release site including up to 20 metres from there. The plants in the release site also lacked the growth vigour of the surrounding area with limited flowering stems evident.

The crown and stem boring moth release site was not looked at given the short period since the release in early January.

### **Arum lilies**

Given the limited number of plants found over the last several years, the one follow-up on known locations in spring is considered adequate to prevent further establishment.

### **Heritage maintenance projects**

The continued monitoring and reporting on the museum house conditions has assisted PWS to prioritise funding replacement for the roofing.

Initially the waterproofing around the dormer window has been prioritised, with re-roofing and guttering to follow. To support this, 20 hours were spent assembling the portable scaffold and measuring and photographing the detail for the works to be progressed. Hopefully this summer will see this occur, and then the removal of all the 'leak catching' Forticon ponds from inside the upper floor of the museum. (Work now rescheduled by PWS for 2026.)

The interpretive banners and their condition have been a frustration for some time with many sagging making them hard to fully appreciate. We were lucky to have Simon Olding on this working bee as he had produced similar banners as part of his business and was very quickly able to pull apart, reattach and reassemble them.

The ongoing management of internal mould was continued in the visitors house with the worst wall areas being done in the central bedroom. The more freshly painted areas of the kitchen and living room appear to be resisting the re-establishment of mould.

Another exterior wall of the generator shed was cleaned and painted which now means we have completed the two most weathered sides of both the generator shed and radio room.

### **Wallaby enclosure and wallaby removal**

Wallaby numbers in the East Cove enclosure have remained low, and while on the island we removed another eight wallabies when they were around the two gates. I estimated there were ten or less, which if the numbers remaining inside the enclosure do not increase, will dramatically improve the chances of our plants surviving, and longer term, the stabilisation of the East Cove embankment. Maximising the benefit of this will be important while the existing fence remains in reasonable condition, which may only be for a further five to ten years given the effects of salt air.

### **Future working bee priorities**

- Continue the weed work program.
- Monitor biological control agent populations and the impacts they are having.
- Use photo monitoring of the rehabilitation works as an assessment of the effectiveness of the works already completed
- The intent is to have delivered enough jute matting and stakes to continue to work on priority areas for stabilisation. Approximately a third of the jute has been used. However, to reduce foot traffic over the works already completed, future work should commence from the bottom of the slope in the same area or tackle the upper slope to the west of the haulage way line which appears the next least stable area. This would however require further water supply extension to providing watering should the young plants require it.
- Continue to establish more cuttings.
- Look at options for repair or replacement of flyscreens on the visitor house.
- Discuss with PWS solutions for above the gas stove to more effectively prevent dust /dirt/soot falling onto the stove and potentially into meals being prepared.
- Discuss with PWS replacement of washing machine and broken lounge.
- Discuss with PWS the leaks occurring in the south-west verandah in southerly-south westerly weather.