

Newsletter: October 2025

MILAYTHINA NAYRI

Healthy Country



Rangers gather at Diana's basin property during ranger forum at St Helens

Growing the Healthy Country Unit

Going from strength to strength!

We are growing our team and capacity to care for our Country. We have welcomed 15 new Pakana Rangers. With new projects underway and additional funding, we will be employing more rangers in the coming months. Watch this space!

Project updates

In this issue, meet the new members of our Healthy Country Unit and learn about our work caring for our returned lands and Sea Country. See how we engage our children through the *muylatina milaythina*/Junior Rangers program. Dive in to see the hard work we're doing and the new ways we're caring for our culture, community, and Country. **Read more!**

New to our Healthy Country crew



TOOARN BROWN
– RANGER

ya, I'm Tooarn Brown I'm a proud Umpala, Kanju, Kukuyalanji, Truwulway, Bunurong man. I'm one of the Healthy Country Rangers based at Piyura Kitina. I grew up on Truwana (Cape Barren Island), so I feel very at home over on the islands of Tayaritja (Bass Strait) and I'm grateful that I have been given the opportunity to work on and look after country as a Pakana Ranger.



SEB MANSELL
– RANGER

ya you mob, my name is Seb Mansell and I am 25 years old and born in Launceston, grew up all over the state but now based in Nipaluna where I live with my beautiful partner, Anna and our cat, Toulouse. I grew up in foster care so unfortunately I was somewhat disconnected from community but we always knew exactly who we were and how staunch our old fullas were too.



JOEL WILLIAMS
– COORDINATOR

ya, I'm Joel Williams. I've spent my whole life living in the North of Lutruwita, and I've been lucky enough to join the team as the Coordinator for the North now for about 2 months. I have two young girls aged two and four who I spend precious time with and teaching them to be proud of who they are, where they come from and who came before them.

Prior to joining the Pakana Rangers, I spent nearly 5 years working in the Aboriginal heritage space. In that time, I've learnt a lot about our Old People and gained an even greater appreciation of Country. I too often find myself staring at the ground trying to find stone tools that were made and left by our Old People, while walking Country. I completed my Cert III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management in the last few years, and I hope to use my experiences from that to help guide the new Healthy Country Rangers in their studies.

I am a butcher by trade and worked in different shops between here and the northern territory since I was 18. Believe it or not cutting up meat was no dream job of mine so when the opportunity to work with community while looking after country came up, I was stoked.

Working as a Pakana Ranger gives me a sense of pride and a reason to be proud for the work I do. It gives me the opportunity to feel like an active member of community which is something I have struggled with for the last few years.

My favourite part of the job is that we are all here for the same reason, all have very similar stories or upbringings and most of us are closely or distantly related. I have learnt so much in such a short amount of time and I've loved every second of it.

Very excited for the future with the Pakana Rangers team.



LEROY HART
– RANGER
SUPERVISOR

ya, my name is Leroy Hart, I'm 28, and am a proud Wakka Wakka / Butchulla man born and raised in Nipaluna. I come from a strong and proud Aboriginal family with a background in cultural dance and education, and I'm a passionate rugby fan.

Over the past few years, I have worked in schools teaching the next generation about our culture and lore. It feels amazing knowing I'm getting to follow in the footsteps of some of the great men and women who have built a space for us as Aboriginal men to be able work on country, allowing us to go out on country and know we are doing our role to help look after it for the next generation.



TAHLIA KELB
– RANGER

ya, my name is Tahlia Kelb and I'm 19 and recently I just started in the Healthy Country Unit. I was formally a full-time gardener and did that for a good 2 years then this awesome opportunity to get an interview here and lucky enough to get this job. This job gives me the opportunity to learn more about my culture and be more connected to country.

In my free time I love being outdoors and travelling going to beaches and being with friends and family, fishing and camping are my 2 favourite things to get up to in my spare time.

Since working here in such a short time, I have learnt so much about my culture and have been more connected to land, I'm excited to keep learning and being out on country.



TONI-LEE MAYNARD
– RANGER

ya, my name is Toni Lee Maynard. I'm a proud mum of two and a grandmother to one. I've recently joined the Healthy Country Rangers team.

In the past, I worked for the TAC in a different role, mainly doing reception work and supporting the language program.

When I was young, my dad became a heritage officer, a role he held for many years before becoming a Truwana Ranger. As a child, I always looked up to him and admired his work—being able to care for Country, work on Country, and keep our culture strong.

Now that he is no longer with us, I feel a deep passion to carry on his legacy. I want to honour him by continuing the work he loved and passing on that knowledge and connection to my children and grandson, just as he did for us. This is where my passion for working with the Rangers comes from.

Growing up, I also spent time mutton birding on trefoil island, which is a big part of our culture.

My family come from the islands—Cape Barren and Flinders— and still live there today so I have a connection to the islands where our culture remains strong.

I hope to one day inspire more young people to want to become rangers and lead the way for our younger generation.





DENZEL MACQUEEN
– RANGER

Hi all my names Denzel (and yes I'm named after Denzel Washington), I come from a background of many various professions from Thermite Welding to Deck handing, I like to put my hand at anything.

I've always wanted to be a Ranger ever since I was a little kid, to follow in my grandfathers' footsteps and to leave this place in better shape than I found it, my favorite saying on country is "look after the land and it will look after you"

I feel a great honor in representing my culture and people and appreciate this chance to do my part in healing the land.



GENIE CABALZAR
– RANGER

ya, mina Genie Cabalzar (Brown) I am very excited to be a part of the Healthy Country Team! I have started as a Pakana Ranger in the north/north-east of Lutruwita. I've grown up and lived in Launceston my whole life, making trips onto Country throughout, strengthening my connection and knowledge. I love spending time on Country and feel most connected when practicing my Culture, especially birding with my siblings. I'm grateful to be able to connect more with my Culture and Community while with the Rangers.

One of my biggest achievements was helping design the garden and outdoors area of Riawunna at Inveresk. I love creating art and one of my favourite forms of art media is glass blowing.



**DAMIAN
(DINGO) LOWERY**
– RANGER
SUPERVISOR

ya, I am a proud pakana man born and raised on the Northwest coast of Lutruwita. I was brought up with strong cultural connections to country, hunting, fishing and muttonbirding. Throughout my life have birded on Steep ed, titima/trefoil, walkers, three hummocks, and Big dog where I have ran a bird shed for Tanya Maynard and John wells for close to 20 years. In my working career I have spent 16 years working on a commercial scale fishing boat in the Northwest and have worked in the silvicultural industry for 8 years, supervising crews, streamside and riparian management, game management and weed management.



PETA CABALZAR
– RANGER

ya, I'm Peta. I've recently started in the Healthy Country unit as a Pakana Ranger, based in the north/north-east. I grew up here in the north of Lutruwita. I was raised by my nan from a young age, and I couldn't have been luckier. She is an Elder up here in Launceston and has taught me so much about my Culture growing up and how important it is to be connected to Country and our Community. I was always out on trips growing up visiting the islands and dancing out on Country.

I started muttonbirding when I was 13 and have made so many amazing memories along the way, I've worked 4 birding seasons on Babel Island and the last 2 years on Trefoil which is what lead me to this job being out on Country and working with my people, this opportunity has been more than I would have ever thought, I'm so grateful to be here and grow my knowledge so much more.

I love to travel and hope to travel more broadly in the future. My favourite place to travel to is Larapuna/Eddystone Point where I love spending time on the beach and the beautiful views of Country. I have a year-old American bulldog as well who loves coming on adventures with me.



JUSTIN MANSELL
– VESSEL
MAINTENANCE AND
SUPPORT

ya, my name is Justin Mansell. I am currently living on Truwana/Cape Barren Island. I have a great love of boats, this was brought about at a very young age by my father and I hasn't stopped. I have my master's 5 have vast experience working with vessels small and large throughout my career. I have come onboard with TAC to support with the maintenance and skippering of the vessels. I'm grateful to be able to come work for my community and to put my boating knowledge to good use.



TIM LOWERY
– ASSETS AND
MAINTENANCE
OFFICER

ya, I'm Tim Lowery. For those who don't know me, I have recently come on board with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre as an assets and maintenance officer. I come from broad range of backgrounds, truck driving, machinery operations, fishing, mining, horticulture, agriculture, conservation land management, building and real estate maintenance and mechanical.



**JAMIE
GRAHAM-BLAIR**
– RANGER

(mostly known as Jam) is a loud and proud trawlwoolway and plangermairenner pakana who lives on muwinina country in nipaluna/Hobart. As the Grandchild of Dick Graham, and the Great-Grandchild of Lois Farley (Nee Green) Jam holds bloodlines back to the old fellas through the West's, the Green's, the Maynards, Everett's, Beeton's, Brown's and the Armstrong's. An avid photographer, runner, ecologist and researcher he has recently rejoined the Healthy Country Unit, in the Sea Country Team supporting the unit with research and scientific support of our communities' goals and aspirations. Part of this work includes conducting his Honours Thesis on foraging behaviour of our yula around Tayaritja, understanding where old birds are foraging to feed their chicks over the summer months. This work will help the Sea Country team understand and protect important foraging grounds for the birds and their breeding success. This work is something Jam takes great pride in coming from a long line of birders.



LARNI EVERETT
– RANGER

ya, I'm Larni Everett, I am 39 years old, I am an ex-firefighter turned boilermaker welder. I have 15 years' experience working with Aboriginal organisations in the Furneaux and the two-time border of the year recipient.



SCOTT PHILIP
– COORDINATOR

My name is Scott Philip, Healthy Country Unit Coordinator. Based in Nipaluna and working with the southern crew of Pakana Rangers on lands in Southern Lutruwita.

It's an absolute privilege to be a part of the team and unit. I'm look forward to working together to strengthen cultural, environmental and community outcomes.

Prior to taking on this role, I have been working on the Muylatina Milyathina Junior Ranger Program team to further community aspirations in strengthening connections for youth to Community, Culture and Country

For 15 years I have worked in Science Education, Program Development and Delivery, Camp Coordinator and many years in Indigenous STEM Education Projects across the mainland. With a Bachelor's in Science Communication (Marine Science) and Graduate Diploma in Science Communication, I bring a depth of knowledge in understanding, applying and communicating science in systems thinking.

A bit more about me, I'm a Eurasian man, Scottish on my Dad's side and Macanese on my mum's side and call Lutruwita home. I have been connecting to the Palawa community over the last 6 years through family, community and events.

I love being out on country spending time with family. I like cooking and going on epic adventures too. I've also represented Australia at three world Championships in Underwater Rugby, and captained at the most recent two, but that's a story for another time.



REUBEN WEST
– HERITAGE
WORKER

ya, I am Reuben West, and I am a proud Pakana man from the Spotswood family (you might know my mum Di) and I have grown up in Launceston my whole life. I am 26 years old and have just recently got engaged to my beautiful partner, Sophia. I am currently studying for a

bachelor's degree in Geoscience with a Major in Geology and a Minor in Archaeology. Outside of work and study I love walking Country, photography, and I am nfortunately a diehard Carlton Blues fan.

Over the years I have worked in retail, for TasRacing and as a trainee Aboriginal Heritage Adviser in which I completed Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management. At the start of this year, I started working for myself as an Aboriginal Heritage Officer (AHO) where I worked alongside senior AHOs on heritage surveys. Recently, I joined the Healthy Country Unit as an Aboriginal Heritage Project Officer, and it has been such an incredible experience already.

My role is currently focused on the North-East areas of Lutruwita and identifying our culturally significant sites that need protecting. I have also had the opportunity to take community and our newer members out on Country to share knowledge about heritage places.

Common Threads

First Nations Climate Justice Dialogue

At the beginning of July, Alice and Fiona attended the Common Threads First Nations Climate Justice Dialogue, held on Bundjalung Country. The three-day event took place in Lismore and brought together First Nations people nationally and globally, including people from the Torres Strait, Pacific Islands, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. In February 2022, Bundjalung Country was devastated by the largest flood in modern Australian history. In Lismore, floodwaters rose to 14.4 metres. In the four days leading up to the disaster, unusual rain patterns contributed to the catastrophe, which affected over 31,000 people and destroyed homes and businesses—many of which are still being rebuilt today. The impacts of climate change, and the ongoing recovery from that event, made Lismore a powerful and relevant place for the dialogue. Over the three days, participants visited important cultural places of the Widjabul Wia-bal people, such as Cubawee Reserve. The final two days were spent in discussion, sharing ideas and strengthening understanding around climate change and climate action. A key focus was on embedding First Nations social and environmental determinants of health into climate action frameworks.



The aim of the dialogue was to highlight and strengthen the vital role of First Nations leadership, knowledge systems, and lived experiences in climate change mitigation, adaptation, resilience, justice, and transition planning.

A major outcome was the importance of taking these conversations back to our own communities and translating them into action. This includes equipping our people with the tools, knowledge, and platforms to engage in both local and international spaces—such as the meetings convened by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with next years meeting being held in Australia. These meetings are held annually to provide a forum for countries negotiate global action on issues like emissions reduction, climate adaptation, and support for vulnerable communities.

Some key actions from the dialogue included:

- Creating safe spaces for First Nations voices in climate action—both online and in our communities.
- Supporting First Nations participation at next years United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting and in other decision-making spaces.
- Continuing conversations around climate action locally, nationally, and globally.



Badger and Hummocky (Mt Chappell) Islands

This year our Pakana Rangers have been out on Badger and Hummocky (Mt Chappell) Islands, caring for Country and keeping an eye on the health of our wildlife. In March, the Rangers set up 50 solar-powered wildlife cameras across the two islands.

Over four months we captured more than 30,000 images of animals — from yula (short-tailed shearwaters) and cape barren geese to forest ravens and payathanima (red-necked wallabies). These are the most detailed wildlife surveys undertaken since the islands were returned to our community.

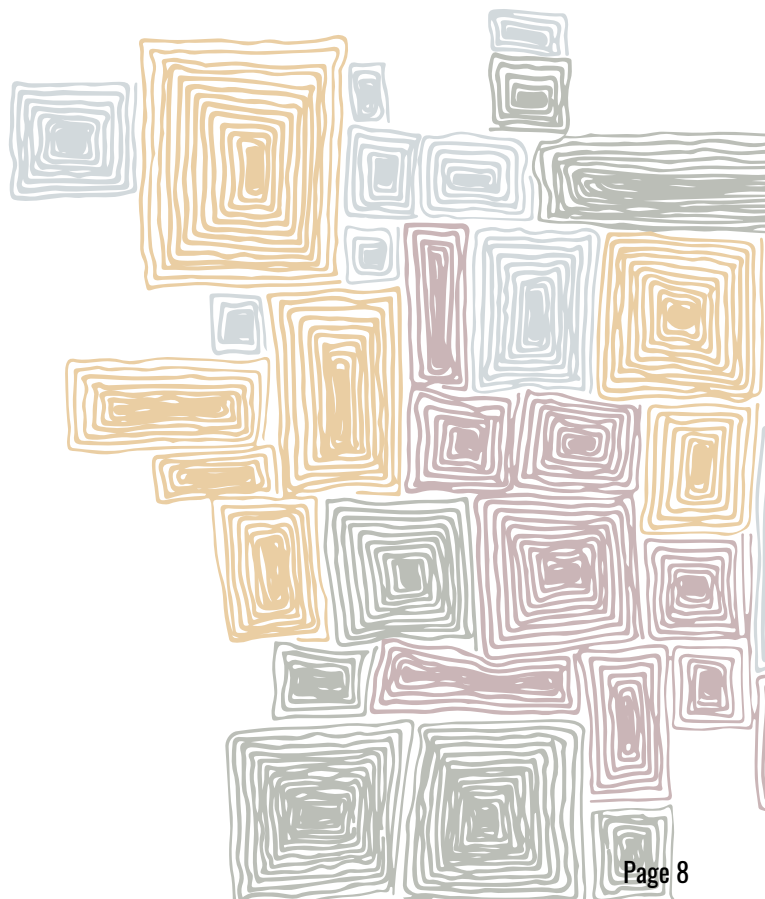
During these surveys we found we had a feral cat on Hummocky and have now deployed traps to eradicate cats from the island. Thankfully we have not found any cats on Badger Island, which means our native animals on Badger have a much better chance to thrive.



Pakana Ranger Nick Hammersley setting up a wildlife camera on Badger Island



Rangers setting up a Felixer grooming trap on Hummocky (Mt Chappell) Island



On Hummocky Rangers have set up special Felixer traps, which safely target cats, and will be on the lookout for signs, like cat tracks and scats to ensure that our eradication efforts there are successful.

This work strengthens our skills and our leadership in looking after Country. By keeping cats out, we can look forward to a future where birds are safe and consider further the potential for small animals to be returned to these islands.

Our thanks to supporters who made this work possible—Wedgetail Foundation, PurryBurry Trust, WWF-Australia, Invasive Species Council, and Biosecurity Tasmania have been helping us protect the places and species that mean so much to our people.



Little penguin on Hummocky (Mt Chappell) Island



Tabby cat, on Hummocky (Mt Chappell) Island



White-faced heron, on Hummocky (Mt Chappell) Island



**Hummocky (Mt Chappell)
Island, as seen from
Badger Island**

Environmental DNA (eDNA) training

Our Sea Country Rangers participated in eDNA training session to broaden our knowledge on science-based approaches to caring for Country.

Through the training we learnt that eDNA collection is a process of taking samples within an environment, in our case a water sample and testing the sample to see what species are within the area. For testing water, we used an eDNA Sampler Backpack, which filtered the sea water and left behind the DNA within that area. These samples are then tested in the lab to identify the DNA of animals present.

The eDNA training consisted of learning more deeply about DNA itself and how testing environmental samples can help us in conservation by determining if rare or threatened species are within certain ecosystems.



The training for our rangers was delivered as part of an Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) project supported through the Our Marine Park Grant program. This project is aiming to improve understanding of handfish in the Huon and Tasman Fracture Marine Parks located offshore of Lutruwita (Tasmania). Handfish have been observed in these marine parks in previous surveys, but the species of handfish present was not identifiable in the recordings made.

Through this IMAS project remotely operated vehicle (ROV) are being used to find handfish and water samples are being taken near these handfish. The DNA found in these water samples will be used to determine what species of handfish are living in these marine parks.



Red Handfish

Our Sea Country Rangers have toured the red handfish (*Thymichthys politus*) captive breeding facility at the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). This program has been established to support the recovery of this critically endangered species. It is funded by the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered species with support from Tasmania's Seahorse World and in consultation with the National Handfish Recovery Team and the Tasmanian Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE TAS).

Red handfish have a very restricted range, with very small and fragmented populations found in shallow waters, in south-eastern Lutrúwita. It appears that the species may only be found at less than ten sites. Key threats to the species include collection, climate change induced warming waters and changes to habitat which affect their breeding.

The captive breeding program has successfully hatched hundreds of individuals since 2022, with the goal of creating a robust captive population, to act as an insurance for the survival of the species and returning fish to the wild to help bolster wild populations.



In addition to the captive breeding program IMAS are looking to understand whether there may be red handfish found in deeper waters. This is why the eDNA work is being conducted, by using a remotely operated vehicle to collect water samples that can be analysed to identify what species of handfish may be present in deeper waters.

By visiting the captive breeding aquarium, we were able to learn more about how red handfish breed and grow, and their diet and how they feed. We also were able to see how small red handfish are, as they only grow up to 14cm.



Trawtha Makuminya

New outdoor cooking shelter

The Assets and maintenance officer Tim Lowery, with the support of the rangers have built a new outdoor camp kitchen shelter at trawtha makuminya with lighting, hot and cold water and cooking amenities to support community visits to the property.



Piyura Kitina

Creek weed eradication

The rangers have been busy during late summer and autumn with weed removal alongside the creek, brush cutting and spraying periwinkle, blackberries and cutting and pasting non-native invasive trees like hawthorn and willows from in and around the creek.

Once the area is weed free the rangers will begin revegetating the creek with natives.



BEFORE



AFTER

Heritage trip

Northeast Project

The aim of this project is to identify, record and protect Aboriginal heritage sites that are located within the proposed Tayaritja Milaythina Muka Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), with a focus on the northeast of mainland Luruwita. The IPA area extends from Waterhouse Point to Larapuna and includes areas of extreme importance to the Aboriginal community. During consultation for the IPA, the Aboriginal community has identified key targets and considerations for Country to be healthy, and this includes the protection of cultural heritage places.

During the first few weeks of this project, our heritage records for these areas have been sorted and analysed to create a priority list of what is known to be under threat and highly significant to the Community. Although most of the records for these areas date back to the 1980's/1990's, they do provide a small insight on the conditions of these places and has been a useful tool on prioritising where to survey first. This project has involved research and assessment of heritage places along the coast to identify priorities for heritage protection and for facilitating community access and connection to these places.

So far seven heritage places have been surveyed and recorded within the IPA area including within Waterhouse, Tomahawk, Cape Portland and Wukalina. Two heritage places (Stumpys Bay Living Site and Policemans Point Living Site) are being closely monitored due to past disturbances from 4WDs and impacts from cattle.

Nearly all seven heritage places are being impacted by wind erosion, and any site close to the coastline is under threat due to sea level rise.

This project has also allowed new rangers to come out on Country and connect with some of the places our old people left behind while learning about the different elements within these places and how to record them. A big part of this project is understanding Country as a whole and putting our story back into the landscape.

For community members interested in being involved in future heritage trips.

Please contact Reuben West at
reuben.w@tacinc.com.au



Yula tracking project update

Our marine park grant

Through this project, funded through the Our Marine Parks Grant program, we are fitting GPS trackers to adult yula (muttonbirds) over two seasons to learn more about where the birds feed when they are raising their chicks. This will help us better understand where the birds forage around the islands and better understand the role that the Australian Marine Parks play in protecting the birds during the chick rearing season.

The project will run over two breeding seasons, with birds on Big Dog Island and Titima/Trefoil Island being fitted with GPS trackers.

In late January 2025, we deployed 25 GPS trackers on adult yula on Big Dog Island. We did this with the advice and support of some of our Community's experienced and knowledgeable birders and with the support from scientists at the University of Tasmania and from the Marine Conservation Program in the Tasmanian Government Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

We are excited to share that out of 33 total birds tracked this season on Big Dog we received 30 successfully downloaded flight tracks from the birds. Of these 30 tracks, 9 were long trips, and 21 were short trips around Tayaritja.



The data shows that the tracked birds were most likely foraging extensively in our proposed Tayaritja Milaythina Muka IPA on their short-range trips as well as in the Flinders Marine Park. The next step is to analyse these GPS points statistically, to confirm what parts of their short-range trips were commuting, or foraging.

The birds that we received tracks from were also recorded making long-range foraging trip to the Southern Ocean near Antarctica. When the birds go feed in the Southern Ocean they can be away from the rookery for an extended period.

The record for longest flight goes to kipli, who went on a 14 day foraging trip, followed by Ruby with a 13 day trip, and rrala wingani and waypa muta in third with 10 day trips each, and the deepest dive was made by tunawurungkili who dived to a depth of around 35m.

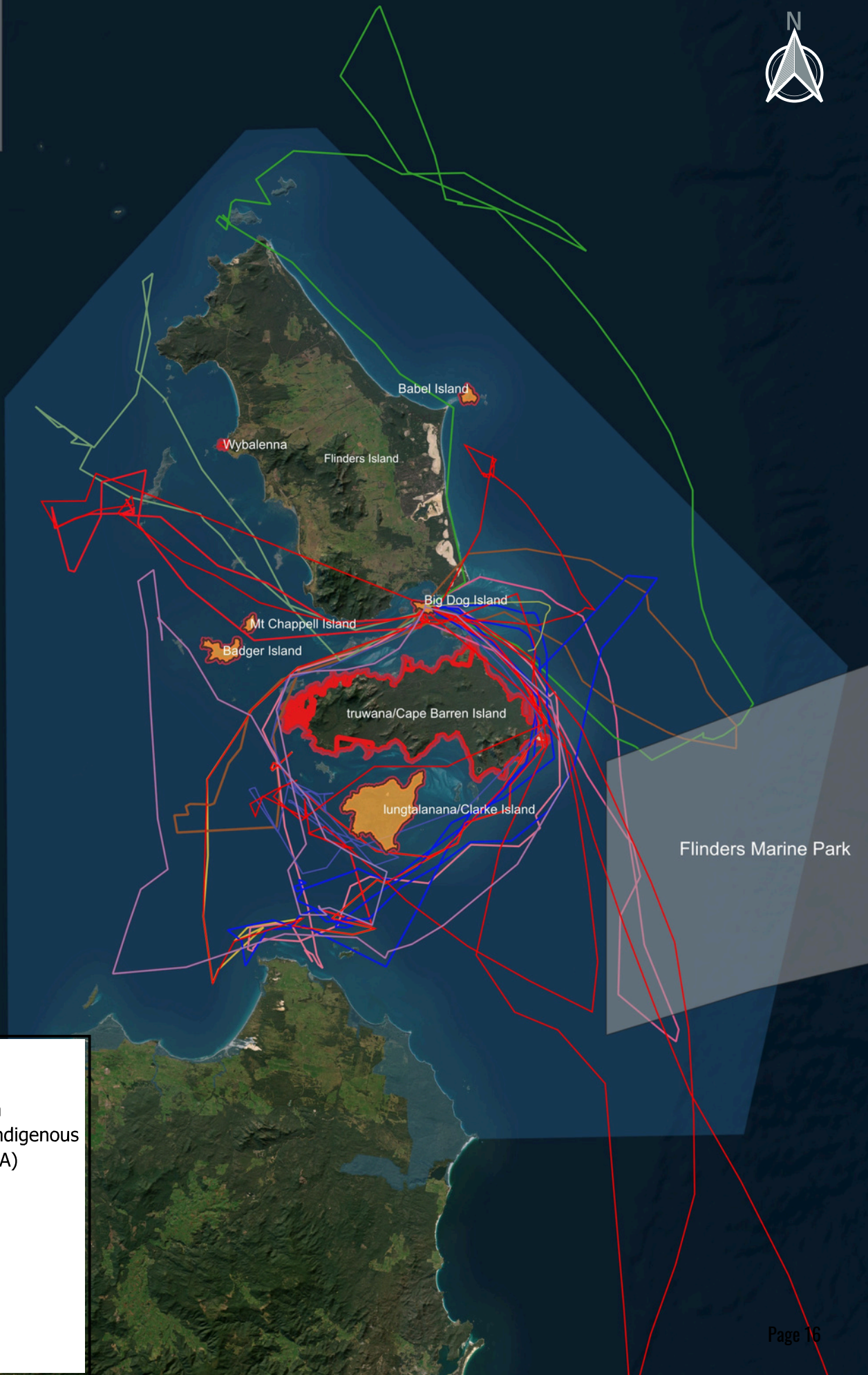
Whilst the trackers were on the birds Pakana Rangers, researchers, and volunteers all put in long nights in the rookery quietly watching for returning tagged birds to check that the tags were securely attached, and at the end of the field season to remove as many tags as we could.

The team is now analysing the tracking data to build a more detailed picture of the birds foraging habits, and planning for next year's fieldwork on Titima/Trefoil Island.

We are also planning for a workshop we will be hosting to discuss yula research and monitoring priorities to support improved conservation and management of yula. This will assist the community and Rangers to better understand how the birds are responding to the threats that they face, what community can do to help the birds, and provide for the continuation of cultural practices.

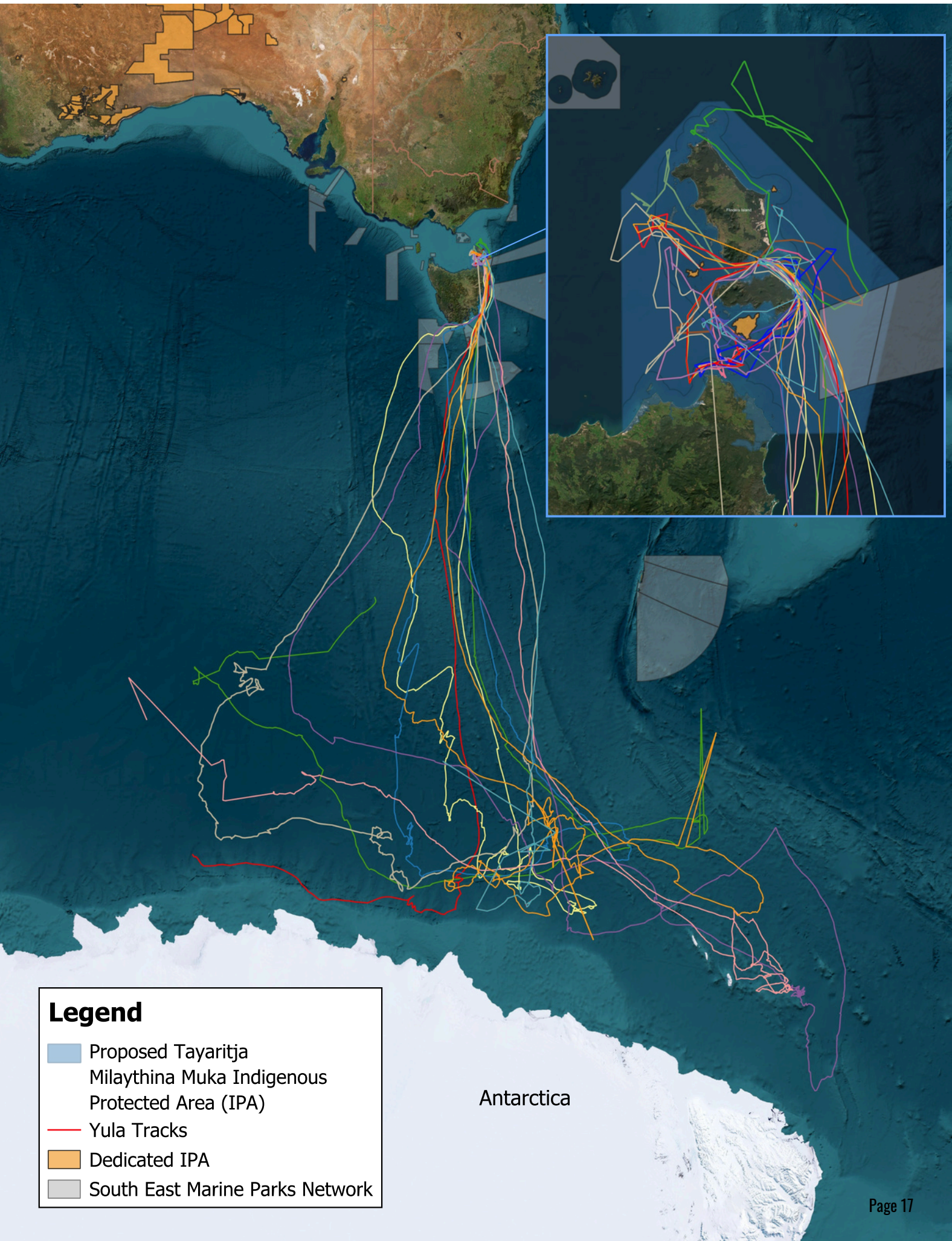
Short range yula/short-tailed shearwater foraging trips around Tayaritja (Bass Strait Islands in the Furneaux Group)

Beagle Marine Park



Legend

-  Proposed Tayaritja Milaythina Muka Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)
-  Dedicated IPA's
-  Aboriginal Land
-  Marine Parks
-  Yula tracks



Legend

- Proposed Tayaritja Milaythina Muka Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)
- Yula Tracks
- Dedicated IPA
- South East Marine Parks Network

Avian Influenza (bird flu) surveillance

Since 2021, a new strain of avian influenza (bird flu), known as H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, has spread rapidly around the world, causing widespread disease and death in birds and other animals, including marine mammals.

The H5 strain of bird flu has not been detected in Tasmania, or Australia, but it is expected that it will arrive here at some stage, most likely through wild birds migrating from places where outbreaks continue to occur.

To respond to this emerging threat, we have been working with Biosecurity Tasmania to undertake bird flu surveillance on Big Dog Island. Earlier this month we supported Biosecurity Tasmania to test 60 yula (muttonbirds) for bird flu.

The preliminary results from the swabs taken from the birds did not find active H5 bird flu present in our yula, which is great news!

We will be testing the birds again in December and March and will be sure to keep community updated on the results of bird flu surveillance activities.



What to watch out for:

Signs and symptoms in birds:

- Difficulty breathing, coughing or gasping.
 - Difficulty moving or paralysis
 - Disorientation or lethargy
 - Diarrhea
 - Swollen heads or eyes
 - Unexplained bird deaths
-

If you suspect bird flu:

- Do not handle sick or dead birds.
- Record the type of animal, numbers, location, time, what you see, and take photos or videos if possible.
- Notify authorities by calling the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Vessel maintenance

Lucy Beeton Barge

Pakana ranger Larni Everett with the support of Justin Mansell who has been contracted to help with the safety and management of the vessels- including skippering, have been busy getting the vessels ready for survey making sure all safety equipment is checked and everything on the vessel meets the AMSA (Australian Marine Safety Authority) requirements for survey.



With the support of a contractor pakana ranger Larni Everett (ex-boilermaker welder) and Justin have welded aluminum plates have also had some 10 tonne, heavy duty lugs welded to the deck of the barge for safe tie down points for when transporting heavy equipment at sea.



Larni & contractor welding in aluminum plates to deck of the barge, so lugs can be attached



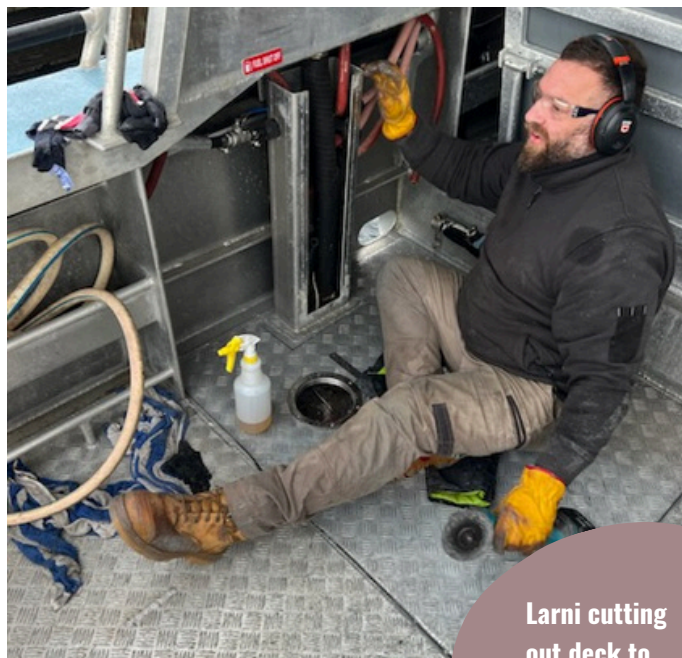
Justin Mansell getting down inside the bilge of the barge to hold lugs into place

Vessel maintenance

Andra Maynard - SharkCat

The Andra Maynard was due for a 10-year full out of water survey. The survey included a full inspection of the fuel tanks which are inside the bilge.

Given the deck was welded down Ranger Larni had to cut open the deck so the tanks could be inspected. Before the inspection rangers found a small hole in one of the fuel tanks and some pitting in the aluminum in the bilge below the tanks. New tanks were designed and made ready to be fitted and some sections of the pitted bilge/hull were to be cut out and repaired.



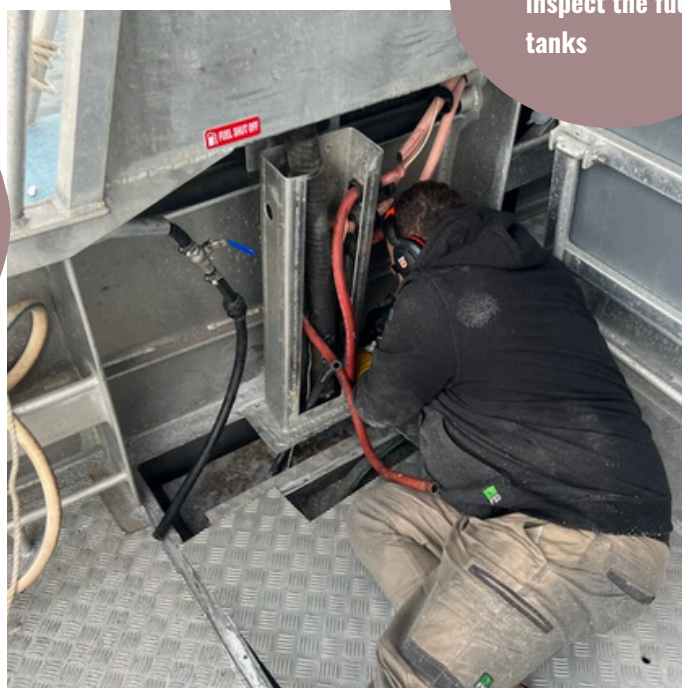
Larni cutting out deck to inspect the fuel tanks



Justin Mansell & Larni Everett looking happy to be out working on the vessels



New safety gear & equipment getting added the vessel



Pakana Rangers Forum

Strengthening connections for Healthy Country

In August, Pakana Rangers from across Lutruwita/Tasmania came together in St Helens for the 2025 Pakana Ranger Forum a week of learning, planning, and connection.

Held from 25–29 August, the forum included planning sessions, practical workshops, and on-Country Day experiences. The week also featured scenario-based learning focused on workplace communication and Work Health and Safety, supporting both professional and personal development.

The forum began with a powerful session where participants learnt about the struggles of the past and reflected on the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's 50 years of dedication to self-determination through video and conversation. This set the tone for a week grounded in pride, resilience, and collective purpose.

The day continued with discussions on organisational structure, strategic planning, and expansion areas, followed by a DiSC session focused on understanding personality types and improving ways of working together. The afternoon finished with GROW and project planning.



The group spent the next day on Country at Policeman's Point, visiting a significant cultural heritage site. Rangers explored the area's rich cultural and environmental values, sharing stories and reflections on caring for Country in ways that respect both culture and ecology. Later that afternoon Rangers took part in a working bee at the Diana's Basin property, contributing to on-ground care for Country and maintenance of the property, with sessions focused on workplace communication and Work Health and Safety. These hands-on activities encouraged discussion and problem-solving, helping Rangers apply their knowledge to real-world situations.

As the week ended, the group reflected on the importance of gatherings like this to learn, connect, and celebrate the work being done across the state. The forum strengthened relationships, encouraged knowledge sharing, and celebrated the collective commitment to self-determination and caring for Country. Participants left feeling re-energised, connected, and proud of the work being done to protect and sustain our lands and culture across Lutruwita/Tasmania.

Seagrass monitoring

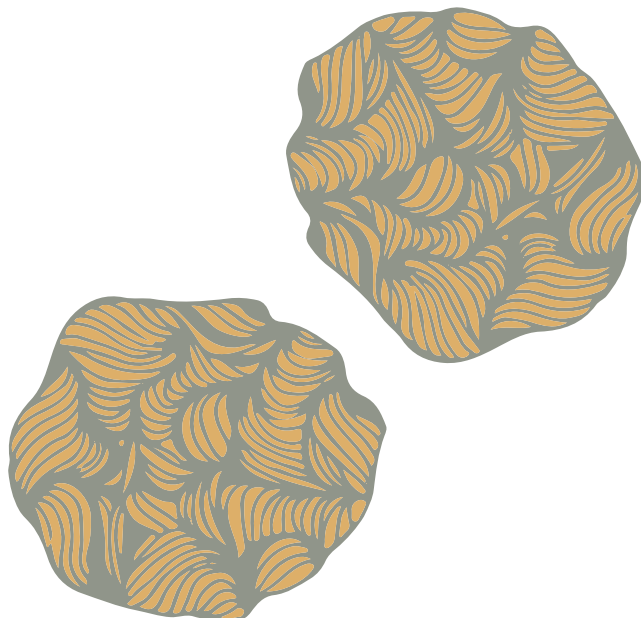
Understanding impacts of port development

We have been using a drop camera to map the extent and condition of seagrass beds in the Lady Barron area.

The drop camera allows us to take photos of the seafloor and determine the extent and condition of seagrass beds.

We are doing this work to establish the impact that the construction of the Lady Barron port development will have on these culturally significant seagrass beds.

As the port development is extending over seagrass beds, and results in sedimentation we are concerned that the development will have a significant impact on seagrass beds in the area. Our efforts to map the seagrass beds will enable us to monitor changes that occur and identify any actions we can take to care for seagrass beds in the area.





Working with our kanalaritja knowledge holders

We have in our community, some of the most incredible saltwater women who rely heavily on shells, specifically maireener shells to create our kanalaritja (shell necklaces). Our saltwater women work to ensure their cultural knowledge is preserved and that the cultural practices of shell collection and stringing can be handed down to future generations.

The practices of shell collection connect our saltwater women to Sea Country, and support the continuation of storytelling, keeping our reciprocal relationships with each other and Country strong and vital, which is key to our health and wellbeing.

Through generational observations of Sea Country and the continuing cultural practice of shell collection, we are seeing some big changes happening in our waters, specifically regarding the shells we use for kanalaritja making but these changes are also affecting abalone and other shellfish that have sustained our people for millennia.

Some causes for change include:

- Pollution which drives nutrification, which leads to changes in the marine environment upon which our kelps, seagrasses, and shells depend,
- Climate change is driving the warming of our seas and increasing acidification, which both affect the productivity of our seas and our shellfish.
- Increasing frequency and intensity of marine heatwave events, which are driven by climate change

Port development, like the marina development being built at Lady Barron on Flinders Island, despite our objections about the threat that it poses to our people's connection to Sea Country and our cultural practices.

Some other local-scale threats to our shellfish include invasive species and overcollection of shells.

The Sea Country Rangers are not only aware of this but are actively working with kanalaritja women to explore the needs and the most urgent priorities to help our Kanalaritja women care for the shells as they always have done, but in a rapidly changing environment.

We are hoping that by supporting kanalaritja women to connect and share their knowledges that we will be able to help care for Sea Country as a strong collective of saltwater women and continue the work of our Elders to provide a restorative future for Pakana luna (Aboriginal women), muka (salt water), and rina (shells), for future generations.

We are doing this as we recognise the collective rights and interests of our Community, and the deep value of the knowledge of our kanalaritja luna, and we know we must support our knowledge holders to ensure our saltwater cultural resources are looked after. As Sea Country Luna Rangers, we see this as a very high priority and a core responsibility.

“For our Tasmanian Aboriginal Community to maintain healthy Sea Country, we need to be involved in the study and monitoring to support our ongoing cultural practice for our future women. Our family has noticed a decline in the condition of some shell beds. With our shell beds under threat, it is important that we monitor shell beds and do not over-collect or gather juvenile shells that are not fully mature. To do this we need to develop strict protocols around the protection of undersized shells. This is about maintaining our cultural practice. Having been a collector and a stringer for 33 years, my first rule is to collect for a short time, once per year. I hope this helps everyone to understand our situation prior to yarning further about how we can care for our shell beds into the future.”

Lola Greeno, July 2025



Sea Country IPA News

Proposed Tayaritja milaythina muka Indigenous Protected Area

Over the last 3 years the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Pakana Rangers have been working to establish a Sea Country Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) in north-east Lutruwita (Tasmania), extending from Waterhouse Point to Larapuna/Eddystone Point and around the Furneaux Group of Islands.

The Lumaranatana/Cape Portland area in northeastern Lutruwita and our Tayaritja islands are a very significant area for our people, as these areas are the homelands of our Old People.

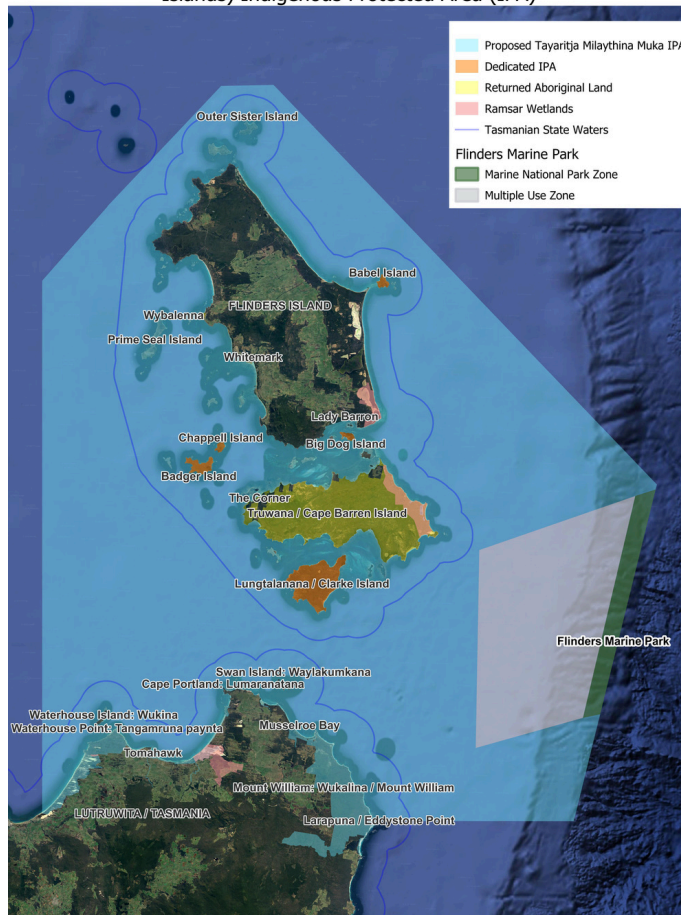
The proposed Sea Country IPA is called the Tayaritja milaythina muka IPA and is the first proposed Sea Country IPA in Lutruwita.

Sea Country IPAs support Aboriginal people to care for their Country, including through establishing partnerships with government, but do not affect fishermen or prevent development.

Our work to establish the IPA has involved developing a management plan. Working on the management plan has allowed our Community to identify key targets, consider threats and identify goals and objectives to support us care for our Sea Country. Over the next year we will be consulting widely on our draft management for our proposed Sea Country IPA.

By making this plan for our proposed Sea Country IPA, our Community will be inviting local, state, and federal governments, as well as local communities and stakeholders, to work with us to care for our Tayaritja milaythina muka.

Proposed Tayaritja Milaythina Muka (Sea Country around the Bass Strait Islands) Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)



Targets in our management plan

Junior Ranger Program update

muylatina milaythina

The muylatina milaythina, Junior Ranger Program has continued to provide unique and meaningful opportunities for young people since our last newsletter. Participants have been eager to engage in hands on activities and learn about the environment, showing strong commitment to caring for Country and building their knowledge of how to read and connect with it.

Community members once again played a vital role in our camp success, generously sharing their knowledge of land, culture, and history. Their presence not only deepened the young people's connection to Country but also created a sense of pride and belonging. The importance of understanding the history of place, and our people's ongoing and continuous connection to Country, was at the heart of all activities, reminding participants that they are living the dreams and aspirations of all those who have come before them.



The Pakana Rangers were again central to the program delivery, passing on their expertise in land and sea management, cultural practice, and conservation. Their guidance provided valuable learning experiences that strengthened both cultural identity and environmental awareness among the Junior Rangers.

The Junior Rangers have participated in a diverse program of activities designed to strengthen cultural identity, build environmental knowledge, and develop personal skills. Key events such as the Sky Country Camp, the Putalina Camp, and participation in various NAIDOC Week events provided opportunities to engage with Palawa culture and community, while the inaugural Wybalenna flag raising, exploring the Greeno exhibition, and participating in Black-led tours deepened understanding of history, resilience, and leadership.



Environmental and outdoor learning experiences at Cradle Mountain, Kunanyi, Hollybank tree top adventures, and Moulting Lagoon saltmarsh restoration fostered awareness of land management and conservation practices, while also providing physically challenging activities and connecting with culture in a different manner.

The Palawa kipli masterclass, bee hotels project on Truwana, and Aboriginal astronomy at the Beaker Street festival further encouraged innovation, curiosity, and applied learning. Collectively, these experiences have supported the Junior Rangers to grow in confidence, strengthen their sense of cultural pride, and develop knowledge and skills that will contribute to both their personal development and the wellbeing of their communities.



Our Junior Ranger staff have actively engaged in a range of professional development opportunities to strengthen their skills, knowledge, and capacity to support the program and community.

Participation in initiatives such as Living Languages workshops and the Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA) program has enhanced cultural and leadership capability, while Side by Side and 4WD training has equipped staff with practical skills for safe and effective on Country work.



Capacity-building workshops tailored to the Junior Rangers program, along with involvement in the Pakana Ranger Forum, have fostered collaboration, knowledge sharing, and stronger links with community led land management practices. In addition, de-escalation training has supported staff to respond appropriately to challenging situations, and engagement with the National Roadmap for Adolescent Health has ensured alignment with broader strategies for Aboriginal young people and empowerment. Together, these opportunities have continued to build a strong foundation for staff to deliver meaningful, culturally grounded, and safe experiences for Junior Rangers.



Primingkana/ Preminghana

Weed eradication and vegetation management

The rangers are continuing to work on spraying any new gorse plants as they emerge, as it is a core task at preminghana due to the gorse seed stock in the soil, picking their days due to the strong Westcoast winds.



Ranger Brenton
brown having a
good day out
spraying Gorse



The crew have also been removing and burning the coastal wattle, as it is becoming a very invasive native plant taking over the grasslands and tracks. Once these areas have been cleared and burned the rangers will plant new poa grass and eucalyptus trees.



Seal foraging in the South-east Marine Region

Documentation of species, prey, and activity

During the voyage on the RV Investigator that our Sea Country Ranger Alice Wise joined last year, she reviewed footage from the 2023 South-east Marine Ecosystem Survey (SEA-MES), looking at seals captured on the deep-tow camera. The review of the imagery collected was done to determine whether it would be possible to identify the species of seals observed, and to determine whether the seals were actively foraging.

Two species of seal are known to be in the region are the Australian fur seal and the long-nosed seal.

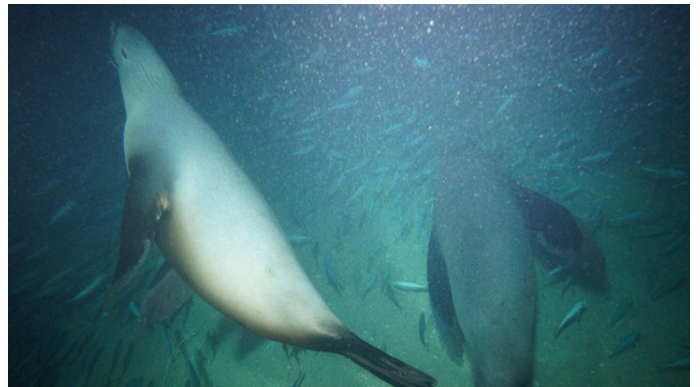
Three seals were captured on camera within the proposed Tayaritja Milaythina Muka IPA, just south of Babel Island at a depth of approximately 100 meters. All were seen foraging on a sandy bottom. From the identification markers, it's suspected that they were Australian fur seals.

During the 2023 SEA-MES voyage a total of 16 seals were recorded on the deep-tow camera, seals were captured at depths ranging from 80 meters to 230 meters, often foraging, playing and feeding on fish such as mackerel.



Seals were an important food source for our old people and played a key role in our people's survival post-colonisation. This is because sealers who arrived in Tasmania to exploit seals recognised the seal hunting skills of Palawa women — many of whom they abducted into sealing. These women were often taken to Tayaritja (the Bass Strait Islands) and forced to hunt seals. Despite this brutal time and the major impact on seal populations, our people survived.

Seals continue to play an important role in marine ecosystems, influencing prey dynamics and overall ecosystem health. The SEA-MES voyage offered a unique opportunity to study seal foraging behaviour and distribution, and to compare this with other data collected during the voyage to better understand ecosystems in the South-east Marine Region.



Primingkana/ Preminghana Beach clean ups

During the ranger's weekly beach clean ups, the rangers find all types of interesting rubbish including many different types of buoys that have washed into shore. The collection of buoys in the ranger shed gets that big that we have to throw them out or give them away.



Ranger Jesse Cruse
and a Big Buoy that
was found on the beach
(above).

Just a few of the collection of
buoys that wash up on the
preminghana beach (below).



The rubbish and
the buoys below
is just one week of
rubbish collected
off the beach at
Preminghana (left
and below).



Ranger expansion

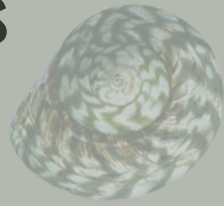
New rangers and activity areas

Through the ranger expansion funding we have had the opportunity to create a more gender diverse workplace employing more female rangers and are to expand on our activity areas.

Some of the new activity area include- Pungatina, Saltwater river, Nimarina nala, Titima, Steep ed, the dough boys, the WTACHL and partnerships have been made with TasWater and Wellington Park trust to have rangers working in the Meehan ranges and on Kunanyi. We also have as support from the state government/Parks & Wildlife to have ranger activities on our tribal homelands Wukalina/Mt William national park.



Monitoring and protecting cultural sites Westcoast



The ranger expansion has allowed us to be able to employ extra rangers and to expand on our activity areas. One of the areas is the WTACHL (Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Heritage landscape) which is extremely rich in our heritage with some of the largest living sites (shell middens) in Lutruwita which extends from just below Marrawah down to the Pieman River. It is great having these extra rangers on the ground to be more present in the area.

One of the biggest impacts to these sites is off road vehicles, such as 4-wheel drives, side by sides, ATV's and motorbikes.

The rangers will be actively monitoring the heritage sites, with motion cameras and frequent visits to try to prevent these impacts. Also maintaining fencing that was put in place in the past to assist in protecting the sites and installing signage.



Pictures of recent off-road vehicle damage at sandy cape.



Windsong/Little Swanport

Gorse mulching and burning

With support from NRM South the TAC Rangers are coordinating a gorse control project on Aboriginal Land at Little Swanport. Windsong was returned to the Aboriginal community in 2019. The project will run for three years and aims to remove gorse from the property. As part of this project a contractor was employed to mulch the dense gorse on the property.



After the gorse was mulched, the rangers conducted some burning of the mulched gorse to allow for new grasses to grow.



milaythina patrula - ta (fire on country) Good and bad

Wildfire on Lungtalanana – Rangers & TFS in Action Monday 24 February 2025

The eastern side of Lungtalanana near Kangaroo Bay and Seal Point (GR 604918E 5516457N). Lightning strikes started a fire which moved quickly, but so did we. With aircraft bombing from above and rangers hitting the ground running, the flames were pushed back. By **Friday 28 February**, the fire was contained.

In total, **534.4 hectares** were burnt, with a perimeter of **11.9 kilometres**. Not all areas were affected — pockets around the wetlands and other sections remained untouched — but where it burned, it burned hot. The landscape will take time to heal, and we're already planning for its recovery.

Wildfire -
Kangaroo Bay/
Lungtalanana



Our Burning Program – Caring for Country

This season's burning program has been a true collaboration of knowledge, culture, and action:

- **Putalina** – Pre-assessments with Rangers and Junior Rangers opportunity of sharing knowledge and a deeper dive into understanding of reading country and seasonal indicators.
- **Piyura Kitina** – Small demo burn as part of *Igniting Communities*, keeping cultural fire practice alive.
- **Windsong** – Tackling mulched gorse through burning, lifting the “blanket” from the soil so native grasses can return.
- **Hobart Airport** – Continuing FFS burns to protect lowland grasslands listed under the EPBC Act.

One highlight was our Rangers, Junior Rangers, Palawa Kipli elders, and scientists worked side by side — sharing cultural fire knowledge, exploring soil characteristics, hosting a native pollinator webinar, and leading on-country workshops. A short film was also created, capturing the spirit of the project and the deep connection between people and Country.



Rangers burning
mulched gorse at
Windsong/Little
Swanport

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