



PRESS RELEASE

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Pennicott Wilderness Journeys support for the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund reaches \$100,000

Tasmania's multi-award winning ecocruising business Pennicott Wilderness Journeys recently announced a donation of an additional \$35,000 to the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund, which is managed by Wildcare for important Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife conservation projects. This latest donation brings Pennicott Wilderness Journeys' sponsorship of the Fund to a grand total of \$100,000, since Rob Pennicott established it in 2008.

To date, the money has been used for the cat eradication program on Tasman Island, where feral cats have been decimating the island's ground nesting seabirds. This program is due to be completed in May-June this year, ending the environmental destruction caused by generations of feral cats – the descendants of lighthouse keepers' pets – on populations of fairy prions and short-tailed shearwaters.

The Tasman Island project is the first ever cat eradication program undertaken on a near-offshore Tasmanian island. It involves aerial baiting using a humane toxin, which kills the feral cats quickly but without distress, in a manner similar to carbon monoxide poisoning. The baiting will be followed by active hunting of any surviving cats. Remote cameras and other technology will be used to continue surveillance of the island for another one to two years.

The aim is to restore the island's natural ecosystems, put out of balance by the damaging presence of up to 100 feral cats, which kill an estimated 50,000 fairy prions each year.

The Pennicott family has a policy of giving a percentage of net profits to a range of local projects. As well as the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund, Rob's business also supports various local schools, clubs and organisations.

“Understandably, we like to support the local communities in the areas where we operate – Bruny Island and the Tasman Peninsula,” Rob Pennicott says.

“That’s why the feral cat eradication program is a special one for us,” he says. “It’s the first Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund project to be completed – every day, as our boats pass close to the island’s rugged sea crags, it’s great to be able to explain that each guest on board has played a role in saving thousands of ground-nesting seabirds that will no longer fall prey to Tasman Island’s cats.”

The completion of the landmark Tasman Island Project is a positive step forward, proving what can be achieved with assistance from a successful local business, along with the professional expertise of Tasmania’s Parks & Wildlife Service and its Wildcare program.

Rob Pennicott says that as his cruising businesses grow and introduce more local, interstate and international guests to the amazing coastal scenery of south-east Tasmania, there’ll be more financial support to come.

“The Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund protects the special places where we and our staff earn our living, so it’s only fitting that we support the environment in return. And this is just the start – we are excited about the prospect of assisting more significant Tasmanian coastal conservation projects in the future,”

To find out more about the **Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund** or make a donation please visit:

http://www.wildcaretas.org.au/pages/programs.php?corporate_type_ID=4

For more information on the **Tasman Island project** please visit:

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?sys=News%20Article&intID=1895>

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