

Landcare evolving at Eastwood

East Gippsland's newest Landcare group has evolved.

Located below founder and now president Pauline Stewart's Eastwood home, the group was officially launched on Monday along Tulaba's Walking Track, with some of the group's 22 members, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority staff and Member for Gippsland East Tim Bull, who officially opened the group, in attendance.

Ms Stewart, who moved to Eastwood last December from a farm, wanted to find a Landcare group she could join to facilitate one of her hobbies of pruning plants.

When she learned there was no Landcare group near the "wonderful reserve" below her property, she called a meeting, and 29 people turned up.

She said the idea of the group was to make the walking track and reserve a peaceful setting.

Ms Stewart had praise for the work of developers Ray and Maureen Hack and contractor Richard Vuat, of Wildseed Nursery, who con-



Eastwood Landcare Group members Richard Evans, Pauline Stewart (president), Noel Williams and Joanne Jones (treasurer), East Gippsland Catchment Authority regional Landcare coordinator Amanda Bartkowski and Member for Gippsland East Tim Bull planted a yellow box gum at the opening of the Landcare group along Tulaba's Walking Track on Monday. K936-96

structed what is now in place.

"As a group of residents, we want to continue what has been started here," she said.

"We wanted to take it back to what it was

probably like before European settlement," Ms Stewart said.

"I had the idea of making it a more peaceful place to visit in Eastwood - for families in the area and their visitors.

"It's a pleasant place to work."

Ms Stewart said there had been six working bees to this point, with 11 on average lending a hand.

Work will firstly be done along the track towards the Mitchell River Backwater, before heading back to the Goose Gully end.

"The group is a good chance to meet residents and their neighbours, as well as a joining a group," she said.

She said most of the members come from the backwater end of the track, but she welcomes people from the Goose

Gully side to join, along with Eastwood Retirement Village residents.

On behalf of Minister for Environment Ryan Smith, Mr Bull said it was fantastic that Eastwood now has its own Landcare group.

"We have in East Gippsland an extensive Landcare network," Mr Bull said.

"On behalf of the Minister, I wish you all very well."