**Beach Access Brings Community Together**

On Saturday 17th April around 30 community members met to officially create a new Landcare group, Friends of Garden Island Creek. A committee of ten was elected. The group will work together to improve and protect the lands, waterways, and beaches of Garden Island Creek.

The first issue the group plans to address is access to the beach at Garden Island Sands. This issue brought the group together after Parks and Wildlife removed the boat ramp that had provided beach access for decades because it had deteriorated and was considered unsafe.

Without the boat ramp, an approximately one metre unstable, rocky drop onto the beach was created, making it impossible for many members of the community to safely step down onto the beach.

The newly formed Landcare group is planning to lobby and work with the Huon Valley Council and Parks and Wildlife to provide access to the beach for the community. According to a committee member Angela Bird, Parks and Wildlife has shown no responsibly for the unsafe condition the beach access area was left in after the removal of the boat ramp and the council has shown no interest in providing access to the beach. “They have been in denial about their responsibilities and very dismissive of community concerns,” Ms Bird reports.

Paul Thomas from Friends of Randalls Bay provided the group with valuable advice about their experience. Rosalie Woodruff, Greens member and candidate for Franklin and Christine Campbell Huon Valley Councillor also attended the meeting.

Other community projects the group are interested in future include: erosion mitigation along Garden Island Sands beach and creek, providing habitat to swift parrot and devil populations, feral cat control and eradication, cultural burning and provision of walking tracks.

Angela Bird

Secretary FOGIC