

Tumut and Adelong Times

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Derek McIntosh with what he says is Australia's biggest elm tree.



Derek McIntosh travels Australia hunting for the country's biggest trees.

Treemendous elm

From front page

Derek has awarded it 448 points on his register, which he allocates to trees based on the above characteristics.

However, perhaps the most astonishing thing about the tree is how Derek came to find it in the first place.

He was encouraged to go and see the tree by Peter Bourne, an elm expert based in England. Peter had discovered the Tumut elm simply by using Google Earth.

"He's retired, and he's always googling Elms. Elms, elms, elms. He's been a bit of a fly in my ear, and he keeps telling me the biggest elm in Australia is in Elm Drive in Tumut," Derek explained.

"He's been nagging me for three years - get down to Tumut!"

A tree enthusiast who lives in Manly, measuring an unassuming tree amongst many in Tumut, based on the recommendation of an expert in London, who discovered it via satellite. Welcome to 2016.

Derek has been running his tree register for nine years. He grew up in South Africa, where he says he was an avid tree-climber, but it wasn't until he relocated to the United States and learned of their national register that the penny dropped.

"The thought of writing a book or that sort of thing really didn't sound likely - but then the internet happened, and it became possible," he said.

"I didn't realise the depth of people's interest and love for trees until I started this."

Derek said he is regularly contacted by people who hear of his register and want to suggest a tree. It's how he met Peter Bourne.

In fact, he's only staying in Tumut for a couple of days before he's off to meet with fellow tree enthusiasts at a dendrology (study of trees) conference in Beechworth.

The National Register of Big Trees can be found at www.nationalregisterof-bigtrees.com.au.

Overwhelming find

DEREK McIntosh, a tree aficionado, reckons he has located Australia's biggest elm tree, and it's tucked away on private property in Tumut's Elm Drive.

He's the creator of National Register

of Big Trees, which is exactly what the name implies - a list of the biggest trees in Australia, which Derek goes around and measures himself.

His search has brought him to Tumut, where he's struck gold - a few quick

measurements confirms that this elm is the biggest in the country, he said.

Thirty-nine metres high, 7.9 metres at its circumference, with a 25 metre crown spread. It's definitely a big one.