

Seven trees top the list

THE Manning and Great Lakes region can lay claim to seven of the largest and most unusual trees of their species in Australia.

Thanks to the relatively new 'National Register of Big Trees', members of the public can nominate possible contenders for the national, state and regional species titles which are then scored on a points basis.

The nominations are verified by measuring and photographing, before winning their spot on the non-profit website register.

The purpose of the recording is to promote the preservation of beautiful trees, but the register's founder, Derek McIntosh, explains there is a tourist element too.

That's important in terms of the Manning and Great Lakes region, where all seven local entries are easily accessible by locals and visitors alike.

Middle Brother Mountain's 'Bird Tree' is one of the seven local registrations.

At more than 400 years old and reaching 54 metres (177 feet) into the sky, the Blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) has been a hugely visited tourist attraction for several generations.

Bulahdelah's well known 'Grandis' is also no stranger to locals or tourists. At 77 metres (252 feet), the Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*) is also estimated to be 400 years old.

But the new register contains several other local specimens which are surprising for their nomination.

For example, a Broad Leafed Paperbark located at 179 Christie's Lane at Harrington is among the biggest of its species across Australia and thought to be the second largest *Melaleuca leucadendra* species in NSW.

The Harrington tree falls just short of a NSW rival in Sydney's Centennial Park, with four others making the national register located on Hamilton Island, in the Daintree, at Palm Cove in

Queensland and in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Wingham's riverside reserve boasts another species winner - a Giant Stinging Tree (*Dendrocnide excelsa*) measuring 27 metres (88 feet), and not far from Wingham - on the Bucketts Way at the corner of Saxby's Road - is one of the largest Forest Red Gums (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), reaching 37 metres (121 feet). This one adjoins the road, so is easily inspected.

Other local notables of their species on the register are a 30 metre Scribbly Gum (*Eucalyptus racemosa*) in Wharf Road, Johns River, and a 33-metre Sydney Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) on Sugar Creek Road, Bungwahl.

The latter is known affectionately by locals as Big Bruce's Grandfather Tree, and has been significantly damaged by a lightning strike.

Burrawan State Forest near Wauchope can lay claim to one of the weirdest looking trees, a Red Bloodwood, or 'Old Bottle Butt' (*Corymbia gummiifera*) towering to a height of 52 metres (170 feet).

Located in Bogan Road, it's a talking point (and much photographed) because of its 'old bottle butt' with a massive girth just above its base of 17.5 metres (688 inches).

Mr McIntosh's love of large trees was kindled during a childhood spent birdwatching in South Africa. He is now aged 70.

It wasn't until a couple of years ago that the former real estate developer was able to start Australia's first National Register for Big Trees.

"I always wondered which was the biggest tree, and how you could settle the debates and controversies around which was the biggest," he says.

The answer was a points system based on measurements developed by the American Forests Register of Big Trees, which has relied on a settled formula for tree size for decades.



Middle Brother Mountain's 'Bird Tree' made it onto the national register.

It allows one tree to be compared with every other of the same species, using a quotient based on height, girth of trunk near the base and the size of its canopy.

The register began with 18 large trees in Sydney's Botanic Gardens, but Mr McIntosh says most of the biggest trees grow "in the most unlikely places".

He has criss-crossed the coun-

try looking for good specimens.

"The purpose of recording is to promote the preservation of beautiful trees," he says.

"There is the tourist element too. It would be great for different areas to be nominating their biggest trees and then people would travel to see them."

More than 200 big trees are on the register at www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au

Jam-packed school holiday program

GREATER Taree City Libraries has prepared a busy program of activities this July school holidays and all primary aged children are invited to get involved.

"The library is always a hive of activity each school holidays with mostly free activities that cater to a variety of interests," said Greater Taree City Libraries events coordinator, Danielle Donnelly.

"These holidays we will be screening movies and running a number of workshops across Taree, Wingham, Harrington and Hallidays Point libraries."

The fun starts at Harrington Library with a free screening of popular animated film *Happy Feet*, while Taree Library will screen *Toy Story 3* and Hallidays Point Library will screen new release DVD, *Yogi Bear*.

Hallidays Point Library will run Holiday Chef, a cooking workshop where participants can practise their cooking skills by creating a variety of delicious non-baked dishes.

Taree and Wingham Libraries will run Music Box, a music making workshop facilitated by vocalist and music industry professional, Ian Sandercoe.

Local business Scrapsideaisy Wingham will run craft workshops where participants will make funky flower pots or seaside mini books, while an art workshop and kids bingo will take place at Hallidays Point Library.

"As always our libraries offer an exciting and varied program of activities for primary aged kids across the Manning Valley - we are always trying to offer something for everyone," Danielle said.

"In most cases activities are free, as part of a literacy program which is funded by Communities for Children, an Australian Government initiative. However some incur a small cost."

Activities are suitable for primary school aged children.

Bookings are essential as spaces are limited. Parents are encouraged to book early.

For more information or a program, visit your library or council's website at www.gtcc.nsw.gov.au



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Stewart and Rosslyn sold a property at Bucca Wauka near Gloucester, went around Australia for 12 months looking for somewhere to live and returned to the same area - being Lansdowne near Taree.

They started the business off again concentrating on domestic and maintenance plumbing, servicing Taree, Harrington, Old Bar, Wingham and surrounding areas. They have seen what the rest of Australia has to offer and decided that the Manning Valley has it all and more.

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