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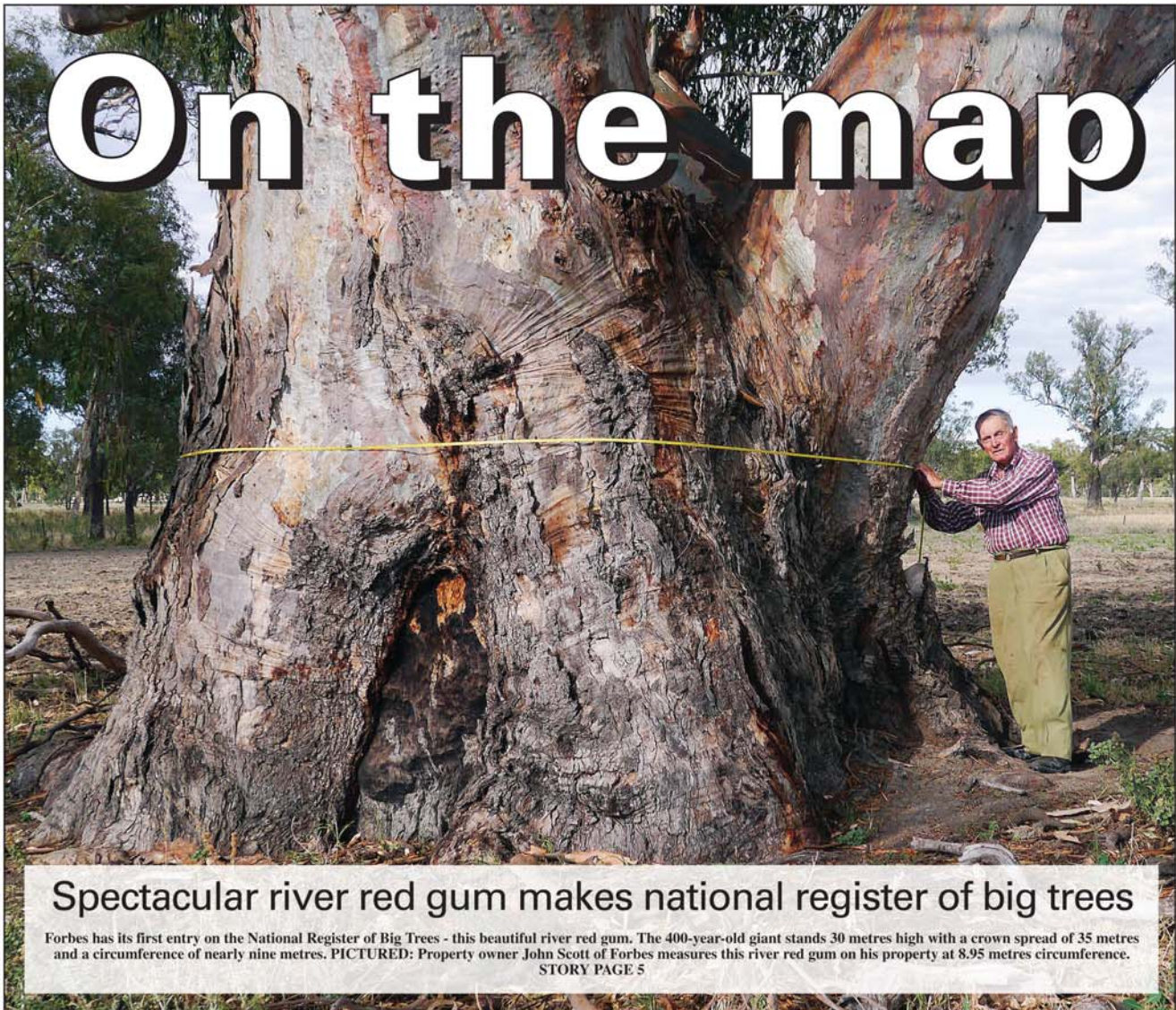
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Spectacular river red gum makes national register of big trees

Forbes has its first entry on the National Register of Big Trees - this beautiful river red gum. The 400-year-old giant stands 30 metres high with a crown spread of 35 metres and a circumference of nearly nine metres. PICTURED: Property owner John Scott of Forbes measures this river red gum on his property at 8.95 metres circumference. **STORY PAGE 5**

One big tree now on the map

Forbes has its first entry on the National Register of Big Trees - this beautiful river red gum.

The 400-year-old giant stands 30 metres high with a crown spread of 35 metres and a circumference of nearly nine metres.

Property owner John Scott says the tree stands out on the property, less than 5km from Forbes.

"Most of this land was cleared before we bought it (14 years ago)," he said.

"Fortunately we were left this tree. I can't imagine anyone wanting to cut it down."

The tree is about 1km from the Lachlan River and Mr Scott believes it has seen many more floods and droughts than Europeans have in Australia.

It seems to have been spared lightning or serious fire.

National Big Tree Register coordinator Derek McIntosh described the tree as beautifully shaped and in excellent condition.

He has put it on the map of big trees, which also includes trees at Cowra, Orange and Grenfell in this region. There are more than 300 NSW trees on the register.

Mr McIntosh has been travelling the country for five years now, seeking out the biggest of each kind of tree and recording the details.

He describes himself as "a lover of trees" rather than a botanical expert. He has a group of expert supporters as advisers.

Trees are awarded points based on their circumference, height and crown spread as per a system established in the United States. The Forbes tree scored 479.

The Forbes example is not the biggest river red gum on the list - that title goes to a 43 metre tall tree near Halls Gap Victoria.

But it is certainly a stand-out in this region.

It also bears a scar where a section of bark has been removed by Aboriginal people to make a canoe.

The scar is growing over - now measuring about 1.5 by 0.5 metres.

Mr McIntosh is looking for other interesting trees in



The tree is so well proportioned that you have to get closer to it to realise just how big it is. If you look closely, you can see property owner John Scott at its base.

this area, particularly those with a potential champion red or yellow box or Kurrajong tree.

The register is open to native and naturalised exotic trees. It is constantly changing as people nominate trees they have found.

Go to www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au to find out more, look through the photo galleries or nominate a tree.



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