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Derek McIntosh measures a Tallowood tree in the Gold Coast hinterland.

STATES' TEST OF TIMBER

In this series, the state with bragging rights is that with the tallest trees and our hinterland has come up trumps in an online register compiled by a former property valuer

A SECRET State of Origin series is slowly gaining speed out there.

This series is not about rugby league games between the Maroons and the Blues but a free outdoor weekend wander played by a growing army of residents from all states.

It's an origin of the species of sorts, about which region is home to the tallest timber. It's also a competition where the green behind the gold on the

Coast can emerge as a winner.

Six years ago Derek McIntosh, a 73-year-old retired real estate property valuer who lives in Manly in Sydney, began creating the National Register of Big Trees in a bid to track down Australia's tallest trees.

Mr McIntosh built the website nationalregisterofbig-trees.com.au, working on a points system where trees are judged on the size of their

trunk, height and average spread of their "feet".

This register is yet to gain any publicity here, which perhaps explains the strength of some of the scores from down south.

Of the 714 trees registered on the site, 306 are from NSW, 105 from Victoria and 101 from Queensland, with the other states notching up smaller scores.

Finding himself recently in

the small village of Chillingham, the gateway to the Springbrook National Park, Mr McIntosh reached for the long tape measure.

"I hadn't been up in your part of the world for a while. I was driving along," Mr McIntosh told your columnist.

The cluster of pecan nut trees along Hopkins Creek Road, despite being more than 20m high, would have been missed by most of us.

"I'm always rubbernecking, looking for trees. I could see those enormous trees to the left. I went to the house nearby," Mr McIntosh said.

"These trees were on private land. One of them was 4.3m in circumference. That is enormous for a pecan nut tree."

At Binna Burra, a tallowwood named Big Foot after its 500-year-old root base is also on the register, and at 8.25m in width it's twice the size of southern rivals.

A search of the register shows Lamington National Park is also home to three national champions: A red

cedar, box brush and New England blackbutt almost 10m wide.

Mr McIntosh spent four nights gathering data there, engaging leading bird guide Barry Davies to take him on walks on tracks which we can all access.

How is it that a region where the timber industry has some roots and renowned wood choppers, that we are left with trees worthy of becoming tourist attractions?

"There wasn't so much logging. They tumbled upon the fact that Lamington National Park was important and it was established many years ago," Mr McIntosh replied.

His hope is someone will spot a giant fig and be the first to register the tree, and his next plan will be convincing Gold Coast Tourism to explore opportunities to promote these attractions.

Autumn is when walkers often choose the tracks rather than the beach and there are enough of them here to ensure Queensland will become Australia's tree champion state.

March no place for dogs, thongs

IS it possible to get a dress, dog and drinking policy before next year's Anzac Day marches?

At Mudgeeraba some marching parents wore thongs and singlets while further north at Coomera a woman brought her barking dog in the dark to the dawn service and by midmorning a bloke was sucking on his first tinnie.

Lest we forget respect.

Broadwater a place for us all

WHAT was a key turning point which sunk the Wavebreak Island cruise ship terminal?

Save Our Spit's Steve Gratton suggests it was Labor's Broadwater candidate Penny Toland getting Anastacia Palaszczuk down here and the then Opposition leader seeing how locals enjoy the Broadwater (below).



Tavern pumps up the volume

LOOKING for the best spot to find your favourite new Gold Coast band?

Rock up to the Rockin' the Goldie music festival at the Currumbin Creek Tavern which starts with an acoustic set from 3pm tomorrow continuing with the heavier acts through to 1am.