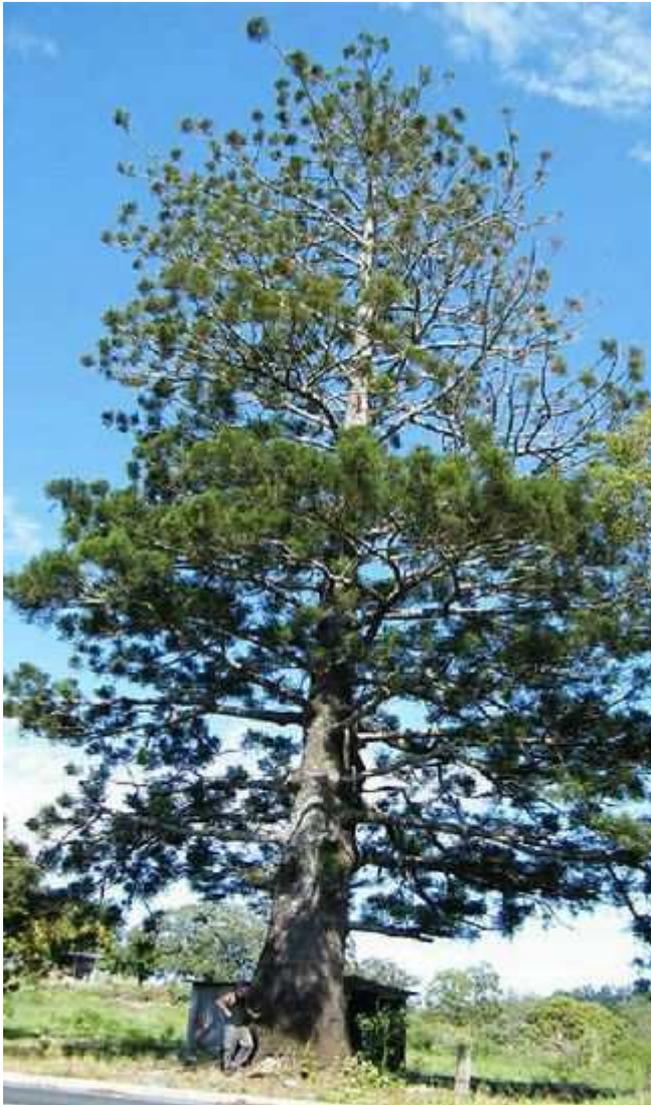


Region has nation's biggest trees

Amanda Sproule | 9th January 2010



Martin Soutar stands under the giant hoop pine he found and measured to be the biggest registered in Australia at Tullera.

LISMORE is home to the cedar 'big log', but as Martin Soutar has found out, the region may also be home to some of the biggest living trees in the country.

The Lismore City Council Parks co-ordinator spotted a giant hoop pine tree at Tullera near his home along Dunoon Road, and has registered it on the online Big Trees register.

Currently it is the largest hoop pine registered, beating four others from around the country.

“We saw it along Dunoon Road, and knew it was a big tree,” Mr Soutar said.

But he found out just how big it was when he and a friend took on the colossal task of measuring the gentle giant, recording the height, circumference and crown spread of the tree.

“We measured the height of the thing with an inclinometer, and the rest with a normal measuring tape,” he said.

“It’s officially the largest hoop pine registered, but it’s by no means the biggest out there.”

The Australian-based tree registration website, created by Sydney-based Derek McIntosh, currently has 290 trees registered from around the country.

He has based his measuring system on the American way of measuring trees, allowing for some friendly competition between tree lovers in the two countries.

It meant Mr Soutar had to convert all his measurements to imperial measures in order to come up with a point score for the tree based on a composite measurement of the tree’s circumference, height and crown spread.

“We had to convert it all to inches, so we can compare ours with theirs,” he said.

And with Mr Soutar’s hoop pine achieving 333 points with a massive 5.75m circumference, Mr McIntosh believes it is the largest in NSW and possibly in Australia.

However, Mr Soutar thinks there are bigger ones around the Northern Rivers, prompting him to start a competition of his own.

“I’ve had reports of some big ones at Terania Creek, and it’s just a matter of getting up there and having a look,” he said.

“We’ve lost a lot of the Big Scrub, so hopefully this will get some good publicity to highlight the importance of trees.”

In his work as an arborist, Mr Soutar knows first-hand that ‘trees struggle in urban environments’.

“These trees live 200 to 300 years plus,” he said.

“We’re looking to try and preserve as much as we can, so the more attention people have in trees, the better.”

Mr Soutar hopes to start the Northern Rivers biggest tree competition in February, based on interest from the local community.

To register your interest, or for more information, contact him on 0427 299 058