

Is this Australia's biggest pine?

Gerringong Norfolk Island Pine towers above the opposition

DAVID HALL
david.hall@ruralpress.com

THE historical property of Alne Bank in Gerringong has hit the headlines again, not so much for its historic homestead, but this time for its magnificent Norfolk Island Pine.

Planted by Thomas Alfred Hindmarsh and his wife Anna 140 years ago, the tree has now been recognised by the National Register of Big Trees as the largest Norfolk Island Pine in Australia.

Visiting Gerringong from Sydney with his tape measure in hand, was register co-ordinator Derek McIntosh.

Mr McIntosh, who moved to Australia in 1981 from South Africa, is a long-time lover of trees and is now fulfilling his dream of creating the National Register of Big Trees for Australia.

"While I have no specific botanical knowledge of trees that equips me to undertake the task, I have a group of expert supporters that advise on the botanical aspects of the nominated species.

"Once the register is populated with a large number of trees, a nominated expert will co-ordinate the nominations on a regional basis," Mr McIntosh said.

Individuals are encouraged to register on the website and nominate trees they think might be of significant size.

Alne Bank's Michael Hindmarsh went online and Mr McIntosh was amazed by what he saw.

"This tree is truly magnificent, with a height of 34 metres, 6.9m circumference and 24 metre crown spread, giving it a points rating of 610 points," he said.

"Based on the points system adopted by the USA Tree Measurement Standards and could actually be the largest of its kind in the world," Mr McIntosh said.

Other trees at Alne Bank include the Ginko Biloba which achieved 139 points, ranking it equal first with a tree from Tasmania, a Morton Bay Fig which achieved 610 points and placed fifth. One Illawarra Fig tree's branch head was second behind a monster from Milton.

"I read about the register in a Sydney newspaper and decided to contact Derek and now have 10 trees, four of which have been assessed and six more to come and it is a great way to publicise the area," Dr Hindmarsh said.

To register your tree or check out the website go to www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au



• It's a monster: National Register of Big Trees register co-ordinator Derek McIntosh with Hannah Hindmarsh from Alne Bank at Gerringong measuring the trunk of the property's huge Norfolk Island Pine.



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