

Community news

Student sizes up trees

David Reid

FINDING big trees is all in a day's work for Briagolong Primary School student Donal Watson.

Donal, together with his sister Lily, have found three Gippsland Red Gums which have been included on the national register of big trees. Australia's largest trees of each species are included in the register, with points awarded on the basis of a formula that includes, circumference, height, and crown spread.

Donal's father Don Watson said it began with the large Red Gum near the Briagolong RSL on Landy St.

"We were talking to a friend in Briagolong (about the tree) and Donal was quite fascinated," he said.

"He is always on the look-out and 'lets go and look for more trees' all the time."

Mr Watson said the tree at Tinamba West was the biggest they have found to date.

"We went down to Valencia Creek to look at the floods and he spotted one down there but this is the biggest one we have found," he said.

"We were talking to Chris Kline and he mentioned there was a good tree down here.

"Quite a few people know the tree, when you mention the tree on McLachlans Rd near Glenmaggie Wines, they know the tree you are talking about."

Mr Watson said the Red Gum at Tinamba West, which received a rating of 501 points on the national register, was one of the largest that you could find.

"It's another 30 per cent bigger than the regulation tree around here," he said.

"There are two different methods of measurement and using their triangular method I get the same result of just under 50 metres (in height).

"It's definitely over 40 metres but I am trying to get a more accurate measurement."

Donal has called the tree "the Newry tree".

"I have called it the Newry tree and I like it because it is really old and big," he said.

The register, started in May 2009, isn't just about big trees with garden, pavement and park trees also included. Andrew Blackman nominated a 135-year-old Camellia that he found in Walhalla in 2004 while Brett Misfud nominated a Shining Gum in Erica in 2009.

The register is located at www.nationalregister-offbigtrees.com.au



Lily and Donal Watson found this large tree on McLachlans Rd, Tinamba West.

Photo: Tara Little