

# A natural giant

## Gum a contender for region's biggest tree

IS this the biggest tree in the region?

After the Somerset Regional Council put the call out to find the biggest tree in the Brisbane Valley, resident Eric Frei thinks he has found a winner.

The "burl", a Queensland Blue Gum, is located by the highway at Toogoolawah and has been nominated to be placed on the national Register of Big Trees.

There are currently no trees in the Ipswich, Somerset, Scenic Rim or Lockyer Valley area on the register.

The burl, named after a distinctive natural woody growth halfway up the trunk, has a trunk circumference of 5.93m, a height of about 46m and a crown diameter of 23m.

Mr Frei said the tree was

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distinctive and could become an attraction for the area.

"To me this isn't about which tree is biggest. It's about something taken for granted that can be utilised for more, like tourism," he said.

"This tree is a veteran. It is entering the over mature phase of its life and provides extremely valuable habitat for our unique parrots, other birds and marsupials.

"It has been said that it can take gum trees upwards of 75 years of age to start developing hollows.

"This tree is a valuable asset to the people of Somerset with its size, location, prominence on

the landscape, the burl, the age and its environmental value."

Somerset natural resource management officer Trevor Page said the council was continuing to look for more large trees in the region.

"The register includes many different tree species, so there can be many different champion trees," he said.

"We have received a number of nominations so far for spotted gums, forest red gums and bunya pines, but we would like as many entries as possible."

Mr Page said nominations should include a photo and measurements of the height, location, the spread or crown of the tree as well as the circumference of the trunk at around chest height.



**ATTRACTION:** Being dwarfed by one of the Somerset region's largest trees are (from left) Trevor Page, Lindsay Frei, Kenneth Wilkonson, Tegan Frei, Isaiah Lyon and Eric Frei.

Photo: Contributed