



Mudgee has Australia's largest known Rough-Barked Apple, discovered by Derek McIntosh of the National Register of Big Trees.
280214/TREE

Big Tree director finds a giant in Mudgee region

By **SAM PAINE**

Down a narrow dirt road among the wineries of Mudgee, Australia's largest known Rough-Barked Apple grows close to the fenceline of an ordinary paddock.

Derek McIntosh, founder of the National Register of Big Trees, visited Mudgee over the weekend, accompanying his daughter to Bunnamagoo's Polo in the Paddock.

Driving around the region's back roads, he spotted an exceptional example of the *Angophora Floribunda*, or Rough-Barked Apple, growing on Snake's Creek Road.

After measuring the tree's circumference, height and canopy spread, he discovered it was not only the biggest

he had found in New South Wales, but the largest Rough-Barked Apple in his entire national register.

"It's such a beautiful tree, beautifully shaped, and it's the biggest in Australia," he said.

Mr McIntosh was raised in South Africa, and lived for a time in the USA before moving to Australia in the 1980s.

Having been inspired by the big trees of North America, he hoped to open a registry of Australia's big trees.

At first the project seemed too expensive to take on, until the internet made it possible to reach a worldwide audience through his website at www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au.

"It's just been wonderful since

then," he said.

"It's opened up Australia for me - in the four and a half years I've been doing it, I've met some of the most amazing folks."

Mr McIntosh looks for big trees everywhere he goes, and accepts submissions for the register from around the country.

A group of schoolchildren in Grafton even took up the challenge, discovering that in their own schoolyard they had a Jacaranda bigger than any on the register.

The register now includes around 700 trees, and Mr McIntosh tries to find the biggest tree of each variety in every state, as well as the Australian champion tree of each type.