

They grow 'em big out at Bello

By **GRAEME SINGLETON**

THE reputation of the Bellinger Valley as a great place to grow, flourish and branch out isn't just confined to humans.

Some of the valley's natural giants have just been shortlisted on a national register as possibly the biggest of their species in Australia.

The National Register of Big Trees uses a formula based on height, girth and crown spread to identify specimens which are head and shoulders over their peers.

It was set up in May last year by Sydney-based retired South African quantity surveyor Derek McIntosh.

"I've always had a great interest in trees and I thought the register would be a good way to get people to think more about them," Mr McIntosh said.

"I've actually listed 90 per cent of the 450 trees which are on the register but increasingly people are finding the site and submitting their own nominations."

Mr McIntosh said in the past month he had added four trees from Bellinger and a fifth from Dorrigo to the register.

A red ash found at Sweedmans Lane near Bellinger is 16 metres tall and has a crown of 20 metres.

A Moreton Bay fig in a paddock west of Bellinger measures 48 metres in both height and crown spread.

Both those are dwarfed however by a tallowwood 'Jack Feeney' unearthed in bush off the Coramba Road 20 kilometres east of Dorrigo.

It reaches 58 metres into the sky, has a girth of 10.22 metres and a crown spread of 28 metres.



The massive Moreton Bay Fig in a paddock west of Bellinger reaches almost 50 metres into the sky.



Derek McIntosh among the buttress roots of the huge fig.

MORE INFO

To check out the trees and find out how to identify and list your own, go to www.nationalregisterofbigtrees.com.au