

A grand old tree named Gandalf

One of the oldest trees in Logan, Queensland, has been officially dated and named in celebration of National Tree Day last month.

The blue gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) on a North Maclean property is estimated by an expert arborist to be 378 years old.

Its trunk is 2.38 m thick and is estimated to be 34 m high although the top has been snapped off, probably in a storm.

Landowner John Howes said he was surprised to learn the tree's age when tested under a program funded by Logan City Council.

"I'm just a boy compared to the age of this tree," said the 74-year-old retired blacksmith and boilermaker.

"We knew it was old just by looking at it but thought at best it might date back to around the time Captain Cook discovered Australia (1770)."

Testing by the arborist, which confirmed the tree dates to the 1640s, involved using an extremely thin drill probe which measures the resistance



John Howes wants his ashes to be scattered beneath the 378 year old blue gum growing on his Logan property.

as it goes through the hard and soft wood of each year.

The data identifies a yearly growth pattern which enables the age of the tree to be estimated.

Arborist, Adam Tom, suggested giving the tree a name

and chose Gandalf after the aged wizard in Lord of the Rings.

"We thought it was an appropriate name as the tree has a lot of character."

The tree is located on the bank of a picturesque upper reach of the Logan River.

Like many old eucalypts, Gandalf contains a number of hollows that provide shelter and habitat for native animals including possums, gliders, owls, parrots, ducks, rosellas, kingfishers, frogs and native bees.

Beginning the conversation*

With the recent amplification in the media of issues around the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and the continued impacts of changing water availability, it is more important than ever that the voices of local government continue to be heard.

Changing water availability comes in many forms. Drought. The Basin Plan. Climate variation. Market trends. Population and productivity demands. And with great change comes great challenges and opportunities.

The solution to meet these challenges and harness the opportunities rests not only with government but also with communities working together to build resilience. Through education and collaboration, our communities can adapt and not only survive, but thrive.

The Murray Darling Association (MDA), Australia's peak body for local governments in the Basin, is investing heavily in the development and delivery of leadership programs across Basin communities, providing tools and pathways for communities to lead from within. The leadership program begins in November, and expressions of interest are encouraged.

The MDA's Connecting Catchments and Communities (CCC) workshops across the Basin also enhance water literacy and exchange information

between councils, communities and agencies across the Basin.

Following a recent CCC event in Euston, Chief Executive Officer, Emma Bradbury, said, "This was one of the most technically wide ranging, thought provoking, possibly even confronting events we have facilitated."

National President, Councillor David Thurley, added, "This must be the beginning of a conversation in which we are able to bring together our leaders in water management and in industry, to address the twin challenges of sustainable growth and regenerating a healthy working Basin".

This year's MDA National Conference will hear updates from industry leaders exploring issues around intensifying agriculture productivity sustainably, and the opportunities for local government, with updates from those responsible for Australia's ever-dynamic Murray Darling Basin Plan.

For more information, email admin@mda.asn.au

*Copy supplied by Murray Darling Association

Inaugural Agsafe Stewardship awards

The inaugural Agsafe Stewardship Conference and Awards held in Brisbane was dubbed a great success with over 40 national finalists across six categories.

The Outstanding drumMUSTER Regional Council Award: Council Collection Facility of the Year, was won by the Mackay Regional Council for its local drumMUSTER service.

Other finalists in the category were the City of

Greater Bendigo, Victoria, and Fleurieu Regional Waste Authority, South Australia.

Since the first collection in February 2000 Mackay Regional Council had collected over 204,000 containers.

A major factor in their success was their vast network of sites and the ability for growers and chemical users to deliver drums without fuss. The success of the program stemmed from 2013 when the set day receipt system was changed and greater flexibility proved to be the catalyst for improved results. Drum numbers and program users doubled when the new approach was implemented.

Each year since, over 17,000 drums have been recycled.

The judges acknowledged Mackay Regional Council's proactive support of local growers, ensuring the program's success across a significant geographical footprint.

Council's support for the program adds to their aim of

having a region that embodies the target of Healthy Rivers to Reef systems.



Mackay Regional Council staff Jason Grandcourt and Peter Westwood are pictured accepting the award with Regional Consultant, Colin Hoey.

**Rinse them out
Round them up
Run them in**

drummuster provides Australian agricultural and veterinary chemical users with a recycling pathway for eligible empty agvet chemical containers.

There are **350 councils** across Australia conducting collections.

Visit the **drumMUSTER** website to find out how your council can get involved.

drummuster.org.au

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info@drummuster.org.au
1800 008 707

Murray Darling Association 75th National Conference and Annual General Meeting

**Toowoomba
22nd – 24th October 2019
The Annex – Toowoomba Qld**

Regeneration
What is local government's relationship to regional growth and water security?

Australian agriculture's plan for a \$100 Billion industry, changing climate, land management and increasing energy demands all present exciting opportunities and real challenges for councils and the communities of the Murray Darling Basin.

Amid leaders in local government, business and industry hear updates from those responsible for Australia's ever-dynamic Murray Darling Basin Plan as we strive for regeneration.

2 free registrations valued at \$1580 for any council taking out membership to the MDA before September 30 2019.

www.mda.asn.au/events/2019-toowoomba

ANNIVERSARY

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Hosted by Toowoomba Regional Council