

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 927
Asked on Friday, 26 May 2006

MR CHOI asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland's colouring competition—

Will he advise (a) who won the competition, (b) what was the prize and (c) why was that prize so appropriate for that winner?

ANSWER:

During Primary Industries Week in March 2006, a Rural Discovery Day was held at the RNA Showground.

The Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland participated by creating a display which featured the Wollemi Pine. As part of this promotion, the Nursery & Gardening Industry sponsored a colouring competition

The winner of the competition was Sarah Hall, 9 years old, Class 4/5 C from St Luke's Catholic School in Capalaba.

As her prize, Sarah received a Wollemi Pine for her school.

Previously known only through fossil records, the Wollemi Pine was thought to be extinct until modern day explorer, David Noble, found it in the Wollemi National Park (NSW) in 1994.

This prize awarded to Sarah and St Luke's School, was highly appropriate because Queensland is the key State responsible for the pines' propagation. In 1999, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), joined forces with a local company, Birkdale Nursery, to successfully bid for the right to propagate and market the Wollemi Pine internationally.

DPI&F employed a range of scientists on Wollemi research and development, including botanists, entomologists, pathologists, propagators and biometricians.

As seeds from the wild population are difficult and dangerous to collect, and collection poses a threat of damage to the trees in the wild, propagation was carried out vegetatively from young plants grown from the original seeds and cuttings from the wild population.

Each of the individual Wollemi Pine clones are represented and stored in tissue culture, safekeeping the germplasm of the individual wild Wollemi Pine trees, should the fragile wild population be harmed.

Less than 100 trees exist in the wild today but due to the efforts of DPI&F scientists the pine was released for national and international commercial sale on 1 April 2006.