



## ***Media Backgrounder***

The Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) is a member of the Araucariaceae family which is thought to have existed 200 million years ago at the time of the dinosaurs. It is one of the world's oldest and rarest trees and its discovery in 1994 in Sydney's Blue Mountains is considered to be a major botanical find in human history - akin to finding a dinosaur alive today. Previously, the Wollemi Pine was thought to be extinct with only fossil records remaining.

The Royal Botanical Gardens and Domain Trust, through its commitment to the Wollemi Pine Recovery Plan with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has licensed Wollemi Australia (comprising the Queensland Government Department of Primary Industries Forestry and Birkdale Nursery) to propagate and market the Wollemi Pine. When they are released in 2005/6, royalties from the sale of Wollemi Pines will be invested in the conservation of the Pines in the wild as well as other rare and threatened species. Having Wollemi Pines in homes, gardens and parks worldwide will safeguard against the species becoming extinct and minimise the threat of unauthorised visits to the wild population.

The Wollemi Pine is a majestic conifer that grows up to 40 metres high in the wild with a trunk diameter of over one metre. Many of the Pines have multiple trunks. The unusual pendulous foliage has light apple green new tips in spring and early summer which contrasts against the older dark green foliage. Another unique feature is its pattern of branching with the mature foliage having two ranks of leaves along the branches. Its bark is also distinct even from related species, looking very much like bubbling chocolate.

The Wollemi Pine is a hardy plant that can withstand a variety of temperatures from -5 to 45 °Celsius. As the Pines thrive in low light conditions, they will be ideal for indoor decoration as well as featuring in parks and gardens. A Wollemi Pine will also be the perfect unique gift for special occasions as well as make an ideal Christmas tree.

As the 2005/6 public release of the Wollemi Pine in Australia and internationally is expected to generate widespread demand, all potential buyers are encouraged to register their interest by subscribing to the Wollemi Pine Conservation Club at [www.wollemipine.com](http://www.wollemipine.com). Subscribers will receive quarterly email news updates on the latest product information and research findings as well as details on how to purchase a Wollemi Pine closer to the release date.

In the meantime, Wollemi Pines can be viewed across Australia at the Royal Botanic Gardens (Sydney, NSW), Mount Annan Botanic Gardens (south west Sydney, NSW), Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens (Blue Mountains, NSW), Taronga Park Zoo (Sydney, NSW), Adelaide Botanic Gardens North Terrace (Adelaide, SA), Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens (Crafers, SA), Australian National Botanic Gardens (Canberra, ACT), Kings Park and Botanic Gardens (Perth, WA), and Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens (Hobart, TAS).

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### **Further information:**

Please visit [www.wollemipine.com](http://www.wollemipine.com) or contact:

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