Indigenous Significance

Canoe Trees – Hervey Bay

These places are of high cultural significance to Badtjala (Butchulla) people because they are an important focal point for people's maintenance of living cultural connections to one another on country, particularly between the mainland and K'gari (Fraser Island), for fishing and as a material source for bark canoe-making.

Understanding Country

Place

The scarring upon the living tree, caused by the removal of bark, has aesthetic qualities and is evidence of Indigenous men's canoe-making skills and eco-conservation principles in action.

Badtjala people see these areas as special places, which support Indigenous men's canoe-making skills and the transfer of expertise to younger men.

These places are recognised as important areas for collecting bark for canoes and engaging in men's business activities. The Canoe Trees proudly wear their living scars as if they have participated in an initiation process. The external modification of the tree is shaped with one single defining cut and distinct to this area.

These living trees are the keepers of men's business stories. They are the stories and conversation of Indigenous men who went about their daily business, as men do. It is, also, an example of local Indigenous men working with one another to support each other, their families and the community.

As the trees live on today, it shows us the enduring contribution Indigenous men make when fulfilling their role on country.

Living Connections

These trees stand tall and silent, sheltered within remnant pockets of native coastal bushland on country.

They are limited in number and are part of Badtjala people's living Indigenous cultural heritage.

In most cases, Badtjala people's direct representation and challenges to local authorities and state agencies have failed to protect these trees in the face of approved local development.

Today, Badtjala still visit surviving canoe trees for learning and understanding. The trees presence is strongly affirming of their right to exist in situ.

'Old people' spirits continue to watch over the trees as they travel through country on their way about their business.

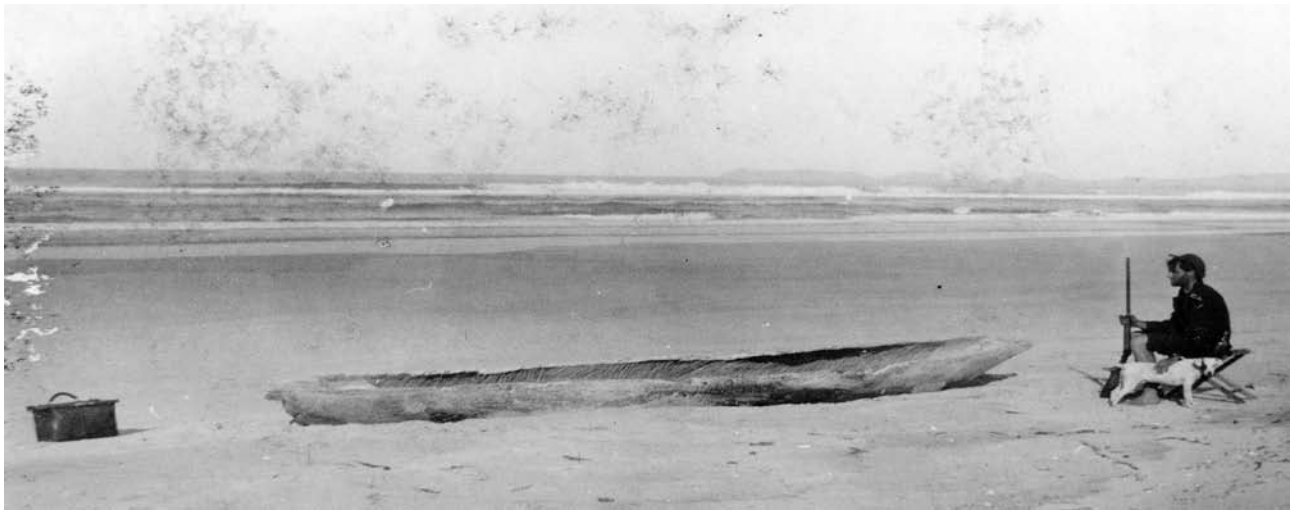
Badtjala and other Indigenous people easily feel the radiant sentinel energy of the trees as they continue to grow and give shelter to native animals on country. They are place-markers for the past, present and future generations of Indigenous people, and a living sign of local Indigenous culture and heritage.



Canoe Tree, Booral

Photo: Shawn Wondunna-Foley

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Dugout canoe washed a shore Inskip Point, 1920's, slq neg. 90600



Bark canoe tree, 2007, Howard



Bark canoe tree, 2007, Urangan (destroyed by city development)



Dugout canoe beyond Inskip Point, slq neg. 90604