

Artwork by Thomas Day

# Gunditj Mirring Partnership Project

## Cultural Features of the Budj Bim Landscape Smoking Trees

The Budj Bim Landscape extends from Mount Eccles National Park East of Heywood and along the associated lava flows to the coast. This is Gunditjmara country, the traditional lands of the Gunditjmara Nation. Cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge is very important throughout the region.

The Gunditjmara people have maintained their connection to country since European settlement. A native title claim was granted in 2007. Gunditjmara people manage ten properties in the Budj Bim area and have an integral role in managing the landscape.

The Gunditj Mirring Partnership Project has compiled examples of cultural heritage and indigenous ecological knowledge into fact sheets to share with the Gunditjmara community and the broader community. A Field Guide to Cultural Features of the Budj Bim Landscape is also available from Gunditj Mirring offices in Heywood and Glenelg Hopkins CMA offices in Hamilton.

Smoking trees are hollowed out trees that were used to smoke eels and fish. Smoking eels and fish preserved the meat to be stored for when food was scarce, or to be traded to other areas.

Existing hollows at the base of a tree were expanded and burnt out forming a chimney. Eels and fish were hung inside the chimney and smoke from the small fire lit inside the base of the tree would start the smoking process. In some cases stones were used as heat retainers.

After some time the meat was cured allowing it to be consumed at a later time without causing illness. Using this method did not kill the trees, most smoking trees are still alive today.

Smoking Trees were often established in Manna Gum and Red Gum trees. They were used all year round and can be associated with scar trees. The smoking trees are mostly found near the sites of fishing areas and stone hut villages.



#### Contact for more Information

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File: "GMPP 13 Fact Sheet - Smoking Trees"  
Version: 1.0 - April 2013

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