

Basic Detail Report

00015869

Title

Murray River Indigenous Bark Canoe

Date

1991

Primary Maker

Paul Kropinyeri

Medium

River red gum (eucalyptus camaldulensis)

Dimensions

Overall: 3645 mm, 17.1 kg Display dimensions: 3400 x 445 x 65 mm Vessel Dimensions: 3.4 m x 0.46 m (11.16 ft x 1.51 ft)

Name

Canoe

History

Paul Kropinyeri grew up in the fringe camps along the Murray in the 1950s, learning woodcarving from Ngarrindjeri elders. He cut the shape of this canoe into a Red River Gum, slowly prised it off, and then weighted and cured the bark for over a month. Ngarrindjeri are the descendants of the many clan groups that lived throughout the lower Murray basin. They maintain a vital cultural identity. As in the past, life revolves around the river. It is a symbol of their cultural survival and potential for the future. The Murray-Darling Basin is Australia's largest river system, food bowl and inland water-transport corridor. Its waterways have been contested for generations - from colonial frontier wars to colour bars at local pools, and between farming and the environment itself. Threatened by salination and erosion, infested by carp and algae and depleted by dams and weirs, the rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin now flow wearily. Today the descendants of many alienated Indigenous clans, such as the Ngarrindjeri from the Murray river land and Kamilaroi from Moree watercourse country, maintain shared histories and knowledge about people, place and the life of the waterways.