



**Boobera Lagoon**

*I took them in March last year, just before sunset, the pictures don't really reflect the true feeling of the place, you sit on the banks and imagine and listen to all our ancestors talking up, fishing, eating and doing Mirri stuff. But I was out of there before sunset as after sundown that's when the Kurrea (serpent) comes out looking.*

**Brad Moggridge**

# Garriya

Long ago, the Garriya terrorised the local people around Boobera Lagoon. Garriya had travelled down to the Boobera Lagoon from up near Yetman, his tracks making the watercourses past Toomelah. Garriya prevented the people from hunting and gathering food. No-one could paddle a canoe, or even fish from the bank, because Garriya had developed a taste for human flesh.

The people asked Dhulala to attempt to kill Garriya so that they could live and hunt in peace. Dhulala was a headman of Noona on the Barwon and was known as a great warrior. Dhulala went to the lagoon early one morning and stood on the bank, peering through the mists for Garriya. After some time he saw a ripple on the water, then Garriya's dark shape emerged from a hole, his fiery eyes glaring.

Dhulala hurled his spear but it only glanced off Garriya's skin. He threw several spears and clubs with all his force, but they had no effect on Garriya. He took up another, then another and kept throwing spears till he had no more. Garriya charged Dhulala, mouth open and fangs flashing. Dhulala fled across the plain with Garriya sliding after him. Garriya gave chase, the earth piling up against his chest, like the bow-wave before a canoe, winding about like a huge snake and travelling at a great pace.

In the distance Dhulala caught sight of a Bambul tree—the mother-in-law of Garriya and the only living thing that Garriya feared. Reaching the tree with Garriya still hard on his heels, Dhulala threw himself at it and clung to its trunk. When Garriya saw that Dhulala had reached the Bambul tree, he skidded to a halt and returned to the Lagoon along the channels he had made. The channels which he had carved in the land in pursuit of Dhulala remained, empty in the dry times and filling up with water when it rained.

Today the Garriya is still in Boobera Lagoon. Local Aboriginal people still keep the law that no-one should go into the Lagoon or stay close to the banks after sundown.