

Megan Shuttleworth



Megan Shuttleworth

Some of the Things We Have Always Known

This submitted artwork, titled "Some of the Things We Have Always Known", reflects how First Nations Peoples sustainably cared for and maintained our landscapes and waterways for thousands of years. This painting is an aerial view of the Tweed River, a special place to me, my family home for generations and where I grew up swimming in its waters, fishing from its banks, crabbing, collecting shells, pippies and yabbies. The islands shown are spread throughout the river, thick with mangroves providing a rich hunting area with small campgrounds scattered throughout, used only sparingly at a time to allow the river to recover from season to season. The beaches show shells, pippies and yabbies along their banks and the waters are rich with sea life ebbing and flowing with the currents out to sea. The outskirts of the painting show the dunes leading to the bushy rainforest and scrub surrounding the river. This river was rich in natural resources and full of animals such as turtles, stingray, sharks, and fish that were hunted for food, with ancient fish traps still to be seen in the river to this day. The Traditional owners always carefully managed the landscape and river ensuring it was never overexploited. This level of care for all waterways in our country has declined over time and this painting reflects the importance of caring for our land and waterways as was previously done by our ancestors who understood the significance of allowing the land to recuperate and heal. Our land and waterways are sacred. Taking only what is needed, traditional land management, sustainable practices to ensure that our rivers, lakes, creeks, and billabongs, will be there for future generations to come are things that we have always practiced. The understanding that our land, water, air, plants, and animals are all interconnected, for 65,000 years, are just some of the things we have always known.