

Local Heritage Register: The Leichhardt Tree



The Leichhardt Tree, 1918, State Library of Qld

Building Name:	The Leichhardt Tree
Street Address:	10A River Street
Property Description:	Part of Lot 4 on RP711390
Land Area:	N/A

Description

The Leichhardt Tree on River Street has been a prominent feature of the river bank and wharf precinct since the first ships were tied beside it in the mid-1800s.

Located just east of what was previously Croker's Wharf and is today the Blue Water Quay, is the '*Nauclea Orientalis*'. The tree is commonly known as a Cheesewood Tree, bearing white flowers and is often found along water courses.

The Leichhardt Tree has aesthetic qualities which have contributed to the townscape of Mackay since European settlement. It is prominent in

historical photographs and is a well-known landmark in the town.

History

While not associated with early explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, the tree dates back to the establishment of Mackay, and was used by early settlers to tie their boats. Wharves and warehouses were constructed around it. The tree precedes the development of the town and was mentioned as early as 1862.

The local historical value placed on the tree was demonstrated by the original dog-leg design in the levee wall to avoid disturbing it.

A disastrous cyclone hit the coast of Queensland in January

1918 and one of the hardest hit areas was Mackay, which was inundated by a consequential tidal wave on the 20th and 21st of that month. For some period after the eye passed through Mackay the outside world had no real idea of the devastation, as all communications had been cut: telegraph lines were down and dangerous seas prevented any navigation to the Port of Mackay.

The cyclone and the accompanying deluge (about 266mm was registered) wreaked havoc in the town of Mackay and particularly on the waterfront. Buildings were partially destroyed, unroofed, and overturned; Croker's stores on the riverfront were flattened.

Local Heritage Register: The Leichhardt Tree

The ship 'Tay' although in reasonable condition, and the barge 'Apa' were aground on the north bank, and the Sydney Street Bridge no longer spanned the river!

Right: The Leichhardt Tree, 1984, after construction of the levee, Copyright Mackay Regional Council Library image 05368



Statement of Historical Significance

Criteria	Significance
A: Historical significance	The Leichhardt Tree, located on the Pioneer River bank near the intersection of River and Brisbane Streets is a familiar landmark. While not associated with early explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, the tree dates back to the establishment of Mackay, and was used by early settlers to tie their boats to, and wharves and warehouses were constructed around it. The historical importance of the tree is also demonstrated by the dog-leg designed in the levee wall to avoid disturbing it.
B: All aspects of heritage significance	Does not meet this criterion.
C: Scientific significance	Does not meet this criterion.
D: Architectural significance	Does not meet this criterion.
E: Aesthetic / architectural significance	The tree meets this criterion through aesthetic qualities which have contributed to the townscape since European settlement. It is prominent in historical photographs and is a well-known landmark in the town
F: Aesthetic or other significance	Does not meet this criterion.
G: Social significance	Does not meet this criterion.
H: Historical significance	Does not meet this criterion.

References:

- James Cook University website: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/discover-nature-at-jcu/plants/plants-by-common-name2/nauclea-orientalis>
- Butler, G. & Associates, 1994, 'Mackay Region Heritage Pilot Study', pg.165, Mackay City Council
- Queensland State Library online: <http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>

For more
information phone
strategic planning
on 1300 MACKAY
(1300 622 529)