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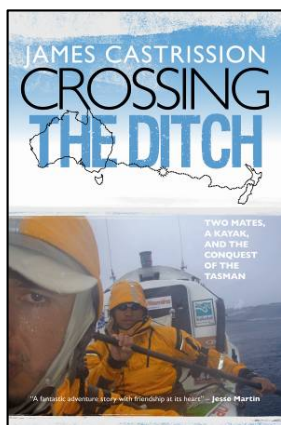
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The story of two mates conquering one of the roughest seas in the world — the Tasman — in a kayak

Crossing the Ditch **James Castrission**



“Our journey across the Tasman was frightening at times. Sharks tearing at our hull, 30-foot waves crashing over our kayak, and the possibility that the stern of the boat might be ripped away; these were all very real fears. Who were we to take on the Tasman Sea? But the little kid inside me screamed, ‘Have a go, ya mug.’” — **James Castrission**

On 13 November 2007, James Castrission, Justin Jones and Lot 41 departed Forster, Australia. Sixty-two days later they arrived in New Plymouth, New Zealand.

With more than two thousand kilometres of treacherous seas and dangerously unpredictable weather and currents, not to mention the ever-present threat of sharks, it was little wonder no-one had ever successfully crossed the Tasman by kayak. Australian adventurer Andrew McAuley had come close just months earlier — tragically, though, not near enough to save his life. But James and Justin reached the sand at New Plymouth — and a place in history — on 13 January 2008, two long months after they’d set off from Forster on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.

In the process, they overcame a litany of difficulties, including dwindling food supplies, a string of technical problems and two close encounters with sharks, as well as one demoralising 14-day period in which — caught in a whirlpool — they found themselves being dragged back to Australia. When they arrived in New Zealand, they were sunburnt, bearded, physically and mentally wasted ... and, most of all, happy to be alive.

James Castrission worked as an accountant for four years before committing himself to a lifetime of adventure. In 2008, James and his best mate Justin Jones became the first kayakers to cross the Tasman Sea. As well as kayaking, James has led mountaineering expeditions to some of the most challenging peaks around the world, run numerous ultra marathons and sailed to remote destinations across the globe. He is now one of Australia’s most sought-after corporate speakers. *Crossing the Ditch* is his first book.

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Crossing the Ditch

by James Castrission

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