



# Crossing the Ditch

*James Castrission*

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## **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 'Go on mate give it a go.' - James Castrission 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 two young Sydneysiders James Castrission and Justin Jones reached the sand at New Plymouth - and a place in history - on 13 January 2008 62 days 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 underweight physically and mentally wasted ...and most of all happy to be alive.

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