

Basic Detail Report

ANMS1025[018]

Title

Letter to Justin and James from Sharna a student at the Finley Public School

Date

2007-2008

Primary Maker

Rob Feloy

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 297 x 210 mm

Name

Letter

History

On 13 November 2007 Sydney-based James Castrission and Justin Jones left Forster, on the mid-north coast of Australia, to become the first successful kayak expedition to cross the Tasman Sea. Sixty-two days later on 13 January 2008, after paddling 3318km, they arrived in New Zealand, landing at Nganotu Beach near New Plymouth on the North Island. Naming their expedition 'Crossing the Ditch' after the colloquial expression used to refer to travel between Australia and New Zealand, the pair had achieved both the 'world first' of successfully kayaking across the Tasman Sea, and attained the world record for 'the longest trans-oceanic kayaking expedition undertaken by two expeditioners'. Their remarkable voyage, which was tracked in real time through their website, is the subject of a documentary and book, both of which were published and released in 2009. Castrission and Jones' achievement is further contextualised by the ill-fated attempt by Australian adventurer Andrew McAuley to become the first solo kayaker to cross the Tasman Sea in early 2007. After paddling for over a month from Tasmania's east coast, McAuley was lost at sea within sight of the South Island of New Zealand. His kayak and its remaining contents, retrieved two days after his disappearance, were donated to the ANMM by his widow Vicki McAuley and friend Paul Hewitson in December 2007. Castrission and Jones chose a more northerly route across the Tasman than McAuley, selecting their departure and arrival points on their topographical reputations as safe and protected harbours. The double kayakers were acutely aware that the most dangerous parts of their voyage were the landfalls, in particular, the final coming ashore in New Zealand. In 2009/10, Castrission and Jones, as successful ocean-going adventurers, were engaged as motivational advisors to 16 year-old Australian girl Jessica Watson as she prepared for her attempt to become the youngest person to sail solo non-stop and unassisted around the world.