



Media release

Special eBook release

Anniversary edition of Julietta Jameson's Christmas Island, Indian Ocean marks 20 years since the Tampa crisis

How a tiny island and a boat full of refugees changed Australia forever

eBook available July 15, 2021 through select major digital bookstores and participating libraries

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"At last, a book that tells us all about Christmas Island: a place we have previously heard about as an entry point for people seeking asylum in Australia, but otherwise a blank spot in most Australian minds."

- Julian Burnside AO QC

Melbourne-based author, Julietta Jameson will release a new, edited version of her moving 2003 book, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean, which will be available for the first time in eBook format from July 15, 2021.

This special anniversary edition marks twenty years since the 'Tampa crisis', when a Norwegian freighter rescued hundreds of asylum seekers from a sinking Indonesian fishing boat and attempts to deliver them safely to Christmas Island were thwarted by the Australian government, sparking outrage amongst humanitarians and attracting global media attention for all the wrong reasons.

It is a deeply-affecting account of Jameson's journey to Australia's most isolated territory ... an extraordinary place, at an extraordinary time.

Originally published in paperback form by ABC Books, the eBook version of Christmas Island, Indian Ocean has been revisited by the author, who during the lengthy editing process, found that the questions and issues raised at that time are every bit as relevant and important today as they were then.

Says Jameson, "This book came about when, one morning in the latter stages of 2001, I heard an ABC Radio interview with Captain Don O'Donnell, the harbour master of Christmas Island. He was describing the moving send-off the islanders had given the Tampa when she finally sailed away, her human cargo having been taken off her deck by the SAS and delivered to the Australian war ship, the Manoora, to eventually be taken to Nauru. As a journalist, an avid hobbyist on matters of the human condition and from the point of view of my own confusion about this and many other things in my life, I decided to go to the island and see what was going on for myself.

"As I set off, Australian public debate on the 'Tampa crisis' and the government's ensuing 'Pacific Solution' to 'stopping the boats' was passionate, polarised and front-page news, which almost feels quaint in 2021, given how normalised and widely accepted strong-arm tactics – some might say cruelties – towards asylum seekers have become.

"Editing this book for the twentieth anniversary of the Tampa crisis, as I revisited my reflections of and at the time, it seemed like the questions I'd asked twenty years earlier had barely touched the sides of what was to come. Moreover, the answers I thought I had found had been dashed against the jagged rocks of hardened hearts and minds.

"But I believe it is valuable to look at where we came from, in order to understand how we got here. At the very least, the remarkable humanity the Christmas Islanders showed in the latter part of 2001 might serve as a reminder of the humanity in us all."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julietta Jameson is an Australian author who has lived and written in Los Angeles, London, Sydney and Melbourne as well as more remote places such as Australia's Christmas Island for this book, the New South Wales outback for Tibooburra and the Legend of the Tree of Knowledge, and Italy, Greece and Switzerland, following the travels of the poet Lord Byron for her book, Me, Myself and Lord Byron.

She has also written biographies and her journalistic career has spanned the gamut: hard news, finance, the arts, celebrity and travel. In addition, she writes screenplays for cinema and TV. Julietta is based in Melbourne, Australia.

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CHRISTMAS ISLAND, INDIAN OCEAN

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