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BY MARGARET SOMERVILLE

THE STORY OF A WARTIME EXODUS FROM CROKER ISLAND TO SYDNEY

They Crossed a Continent

A BOOK THAT TELLS THE WONDERFULLY HUMAN STORY OF WHAT THE WAR IN NORTH AUSTRALIA MEANT FOR 95 CHILDREN AND THREE WOMEN

In April and May 1942, Margaret Somerville was one of three women who helped take 95 part-Aboriginal children from their improvised home on war-threatened Croker Island 5,000 km across Australia to safety in the south.

Then, in 1946, Margaret helped bring the children back to their beloved island where the cottage homes continued until December 1968.

In 1970 Margaret's story of the exodus and return was published as 'They Crossed a Continent.' This new 128 page hard cover edition of that book contains vivid and evocative photographs, many not previously published.

This new edition includes an extensive Introduction and Postscript by noted Darwin historians Peter and Sheila Forrest.



The story tells of their exodus over sea and land, by canoe, dinghy and coastal lugger, then on foot and on trucks, trains and military convoys – from Croker Island across the continent to Sydney. Even today, few Australians know that events such as these ever happened on their soil.

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Margaret Somerville made a noble contribution to Australia's history in 1942. Almost seventy years later, she renews that contribution through the pages of this book and by her continuing association with the people she guided to safety.

This book shows that war isn't only about soldiers. It is also about what happens to civilian women and children when their lives are caught up in the maelstrom of conflict.

Their eventual victory was a triumph of the human spirit.

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