

Press release

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Facing Fear: First woman to sail solo around Antarctica releases debut book

In partnership with Australian Geographic, world record-holding sailor and climate activist Lisa Blair will release her first book 'Facing Fear' on 1 November, 2020. This must-read book recounts the inspiring and gripping true story of her solo voyage around Antarctica; a tale Lisa almost didn't live to tell.

A riveting read for people of all ages who are interested in the triumph of the human spirit, Lisa recounts the highlights of her extraordinary voyage. And along the way, she shows readers that positive thinking and perseverance can make a difference.

72 days into her 183-day journey and 1,000 nautical miles from land, Lisa's mast came crashing down due to rigging failure. She battled in freezing conditions for four hours to save her yacht and her life. The book's title, 'Facing Fear', centres around the lasting effect of trauma from the serious accident and Lisa's brave determination to overcome this in order to complete her trip.

Sir Richard Branson describes the book as, "An incredible story of adventure and endurance that shows what the human spirit can achieve when pushed to its limits."

Lisa explores themes of loneliness, fatigue and hypothermia. She shares everything from the extreme pain endured in freezing temperatures, to the "temper tantrums" that transpired after only allowing herself to sleep for 20 minutes at a time. She emphasises the clear link between her physical experience and her mental health, highlighting the valiance and tenacity required to succeed.

According to Australian sailing icon Kay Cottee AO, "Lisa is a great example of how to achieve your dreams with planning, preparation and dedication."

Lisa recalls mulling over worst case scenarios for three-and-a-half years prior to setting sail in order to mentally prepare herself, motivated by the belief that one should never go on such a voyage expecting to be rescued. However, she admits it is impossible to ever truly prepare for a grueling expedition like hers.

"While I felt I could handle it, I couldn't predict what challenges I was going to face."

The adventurer's insights on and approach to handling isolation and loneliness, albeit under extreme conditions, will be of interest to many Australians facing these issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reflecting on advice she received from fellow sailing legend, Jessica Watson, Lisa advises people to stop and appreciate the unique journey they are on, remember that the current situation is temporary and try to see the extra down time as an opportunity for self-development. She reminisces about the moments of contentment amidst the chaos.

"It was a moment in time that I'll never forget. Amid this unforgiving and raw seascape, here I was, in a tiny yacht, surviving."

Lisa hopes her book will inspire women to follow their dreams in the way that she was inspired by great female adventurers and trailblazers who came before her. She was motivated by their success as a result of their perseverance and hopes that her commitment and determination shine through to influence others in a similar way.

As denoted by the name of her boat 'Climate Action Now', Lisa is also a passionate environmental activist and wants to educate people on the positive effects of individual action against climate change. Lisa started the Climate Action Now campaign after witnessing the devastating impact of human consumption on oceans and wildlife.

She recalls sailing through "soups" of plastic, floating in stretches of ocean thousands of kilometres from land. The hull of Lisa's boat is covered in post-it notes received from members of the public that detail positive actions individuals are taking towards a sustainable future as a result of her campaign. The same post-it note print can be found inside the cover of 'Facing Fear'.

An ideal Christmas gift, 'Facing Fear' will be available 1 November, 2020 online at Australiangeographic.com.au and in QBD book stores and all good book stores nationally.

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