

VOYAGER/MELBOURNE 50 YEARS ON

"The truth must be found out and it must be told. Otherwise the people of Australia will repudiate this parliament forever."

—John Jess, 1967

HMAS *Melbourne* and HMAS *Voyager* collided off Jervis Bay with great loss of life on the evening of 10 February, 1964. The subsequent Voyager Royal Commission perpetrated an appalling injustice, protecting those responsible and persecuting those who were not. Federal Parliamentarian John Jess was one of the few willing to speak up at the time, putting his career on the line and establishing himself as an honest, uncompromising 'seeker of truth'.

Jess described the first book ever written about *Voyager* by Admiral Hickling as "clearly piercing the darkness." *John Jess, Seeker of Justice* goes a step further. This book is not an interpretation of history. It is history being allowed to speak for itself. In his own words, which Liberal parliamentarian Edward St John termed "the voice of Truth which can never be still or silenced" John Jess sheds even more light upon the devastating collision.

A re-examination of the first royal commission, particularly the prohibited publication pages of transcript, sheds light on the collision and the conclusion proposes a reason for the incident that has never previously been advanced. No book comes closer to solving the mystery of this tragedy that cost eighty-two lives. No book has word-for-word the conversations that went on behind closed doors between politicians and prime ministers and the pressures and influences that existed between the powers that be.

If a film were to be made about *Voyager*, this book would be essential reading, as nothing has been glossed over, it has real conversations, real quotes; the true story has finally been told.

"Elizabeth McCarthy is indeed the true daughter of John Jess, the Member of Parliament who displayed heroic fortitude. Rigorously and dispassionately detailed in its exposé of the sordid cover-up, and yet this is an immensely readable and valuable window into an event which still colours the way the RAN operates. Her portrayal vividly reignites the sense of that time in Australian politics, 1964 to 1968. John Jess, and his colleague, Edward St. John, were the conscience of Parliament"

— Gregory Copley, AM, historian, author, and President of the International Strategic Studies Association, Washington, DC.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

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Cover photo of HMAS
Melbourne is courtesy of
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JOHN JESS



Seeker of Justice

ELIZABETH
MCCARTHY

JOHN JESS

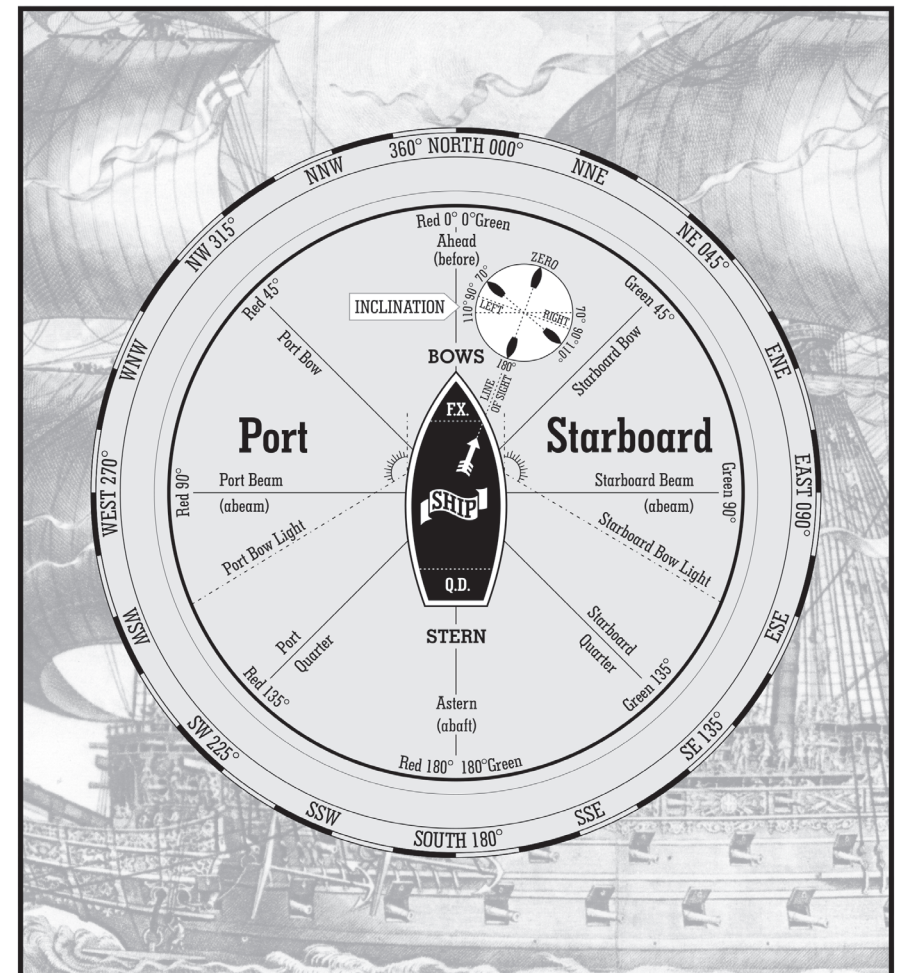
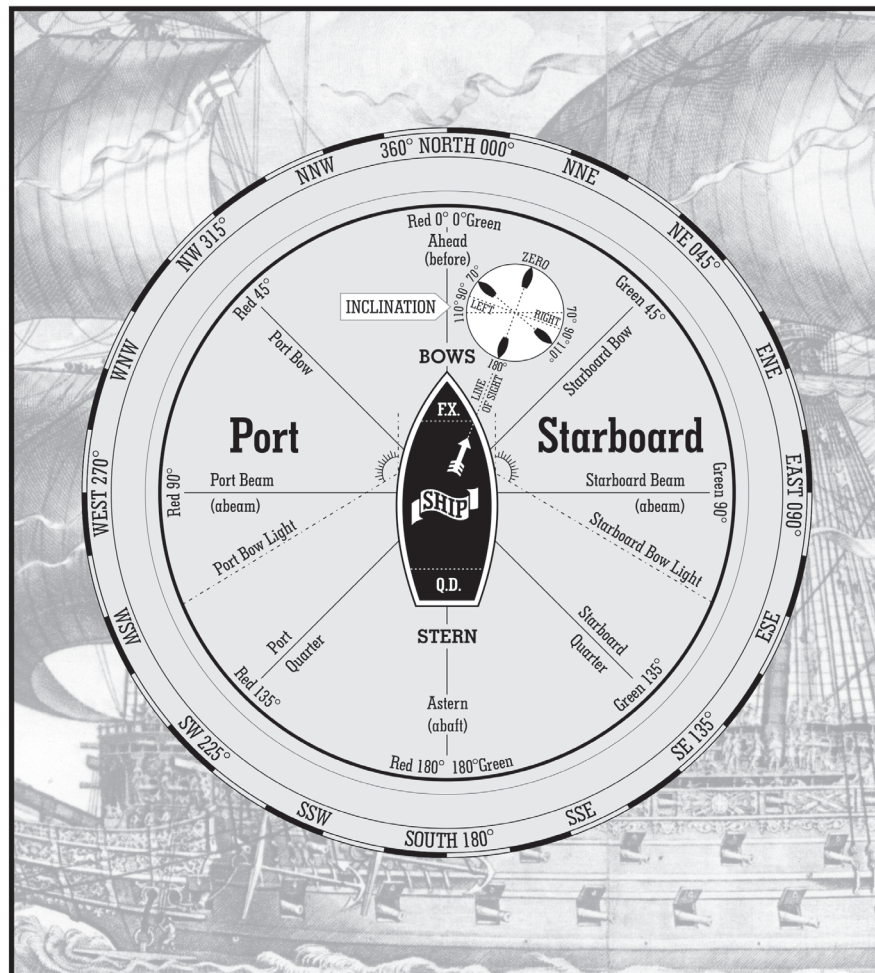
Seeker of Justice



The Role of the Parliament in the HMAS *Voyager* Tragedy



ELIZABETH MCCARTHY



Marine compass image courtesy of A.E.Wade in *One Minute of time* by
Admiral Harold Hickling published 1965 by A.W Reed New Zealand.
Reinterpreted by Frank Jones, Geelong.

