



# Van Diemen's Women: An Irish History of Transportation to Tasmania

*Joan Kavanagh, Dianne Snowden*

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On 2 September 1845 the convict ship Tasmania left Kingstown Harbour for Van Diemen's Land, with 138 female convicts and their 35 children. On 3 December, the ship arrived in Hobart. While the book looks at the lives of all the women, it focuses on two women in particular; Eliza Davis, who was transported, from Wicklow Gaol, for life for infanticide, having had her sentence commuted from death and Margaret Butler sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing potatoes in Carlow. What emerges is a picture of the reality of transportation, together with the legacy left by these women in Tasmania, and asks the question about whether this Draconian punishment was, for some, a life-saving measure.

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