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Sommario/riassunto	“Combining analytic virtuosity and political insight, this brilliant book is nothing short of a provocation. It calls for a response, it incites a conversation, it asks us to think. As such, this book is an opportunity that Australia very much needs today—for a psychic and political honesty as the only way to repair its ‘schism in the soul’.” —Associate Professor Magdalena Zolkos, author of Restitution and the Politics of Repair “Based on 25 years of careful research, this is a vivid and original examination of the psycho-affective history of a nation caught

in the grip of collective trauma and its denial. The implications of this acutely insightful analysis extend far beyond Australia.” —Dr Allison Weir, author of *Decolonizing Freedom* How has it become possible for the Australian state to gain public acquiescence to develop one of world's most punitive systems of processing asylum-seekers; one that not only contravenes Australia's international humanitarian commitments, but that, in the words of activists, medical professionals, and the detainees themselves amounts to torture? In this highly readable account academic, journalist and advocate Dr Julie Macken takes a psychoanalytic approach to both the country and its public to uncover why. Dr Macken's investigation begins by outlining how the nation's failure to mourn its colonial past has led to a state of collective melancholia, with the result that denial and psychological splitting have prevented genuine reconciliation with First Nations peoples. The central part of the book offers a compelling account of the development of Australia's current system of privatised immigration detention and the political, economic and media forces that have sustained it that will resonate globally. In conclusion the book posits that political action in these circumstances – however distressing and visceral – should be adopted as a mental health strategy for both the person and the nation. This timely work offers fresh insights for those working and studying in the areas of human rights, media, refugee studies, race theory, politics, mental health and psychosocial studies. Julie Macken is a journalist, political consultant and advocate. Dr Macken completed a PhD at Western Sydney University in 2023 and currently heads a national campaign to change Australia's asylum seeker policy.
