

Acknowledgements

This book, coming at the end of my professional career, has long been in the making. It began when I went to The Australian National University in 1977 to do my doctorate on the social origins of Fiji's Indian indentured migrants. A decade or so later, military coups and the convulsions they caused drew me to the study of Fijian politics. And in the 1990s, I began, with great pleasure, to live at the interface between history and memory, writing about people and places with no written archives and undocumented lives. All these interests are represented in this book. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the generosity and assistance of a whole community of colleagues and friends to write a book like this or to pursue a scholarly career more generally. I have been lucky beyond words in this regard.

Given their vast numbers in virtually every corner of the globe, a deeply felt collective expression of gratitude will sadly have to suffice. My colleagues and students in Hawai'i and Canberra, in particular, know how much they have taught and inspired me with their example and friendship. But some names will have to be mentioned. I benefited greatly from Doug Munro's advice and practical help on this project. He has been my first 'reader' for decades. Carolyn Brewer has done a masterly job of editing the manuscript, and Teresa Prowse designed the cover as well as the book with great care and craftsmanship. I am very grateful to Emily Hazlewood, deputy manager of ANU Press, for her careful reading of the penultimate pre-publication draft of the manuscript to remove unnoticed gaucheries of style from it. It has been a pleasure working with all these people. My greatest debt is to Padma, whose love and support over more than 40 years has made this and everything else I have done in my life possible. Without her by my side, I would have had no journey to undertake. Yogi and Niraj, growing up in Canberra where I was learning the alphabets

of academia, accepted my obsessions and frequent absentmindedness with good humour (most of the time). And our grandchildren, Jayan, Maya, Ash and Ella, give us balance and perspective about the really important things in life. We hope that someday they will read our words to get some sense of our improbable journeys and their own ancestral beginnings. The words of a Malay proverb come to mind: 'One can pay back the loan of gold, but one will forever be in debt to those who have been kind.'

This text is taken from *Levelling Wind: Remembering Fiji*, by Brij V. Lal,
published 2019 by ANU Press, The Australian National University,
Canberra, Australia.