Acknowledgments

This project is the latest in a series of post-election workshops and books that emerged from the (then) Political Science Department in the Faculty of Arts at The Australian National University (ANU), commencing with the 1996 election workshop. The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia has been a partner in this series since the 1998 election. The previous workshops have all resulted in publications: *The Politics of Retribution: The 1996 federal election* (Clive Bean, Scott Bennett, Marian Simms and John Warhurst [eds], Allen & Unwin, 1997); *Howard’s Agenda: The 1998 Australian election* (Marian Simms and John Warhurst [eds], University of Queensland Press, 2000); *2001: The centenary election* (John Warhurst and Marian Simms [eds], University of Queensland Press, 2002); *Mortgage Nation: The 2004 Australian election* (Marian Simms and John Warhurst [eds], Australian Public Intellectuals Network, 2005); and a two-part special issue of *Australian Cultural History* (Marian Simms [ed.], 2009), *Kevin07: The 2007 Australian election*. The publications have been well reviewed by academics and well received by the general community. Influential writers such as Paul Kelly utilise the books as valuable sources for their interpretative histories of Australia.

The purpose of these projects is to bring together a team of about 22 to 25 comprising academics and practitioners to present and debate their points of view about the national election. The unique value of the Canberra location is that it provides useful synergies between town and gown, and facilitates practitioners providing important data—for example, their own quantitative and qualitative survey research—and receiving feedback from academics about the relevance of party research in terms of intellectual agendas. Equally, academics benefit from learning about the internal decision-making processes of election campaigning, and from accessing some of the internal party research findings, which provide useful insights that are often beyond the scope of more cash-strapped academic research. Normally, workshops have been held six to eight weeks after the national election when memories are still fresh and some data are available from empirical surveys.

The workshop and the book both include academics who are experts on the politics of their States; others who are leading experts on key interest groups and social movements, especially unions, business, migrants and women; writers on political leadership, political culture, campaigning, media—print, electronic and ‘new’; and opinion polls, and the Australian Election Study group. The team includes leading specialists—for example, Marian Sawer (ANU), James Jupp (ANU), Clive Bean (Queensland University of Technology), Ian McAllister (ANU), Murray Goot (Macquarie University), John Wanna (ANU) and
Malcolm Mackerras (Australian Catholic University), as well as emerging scholars such as Peter Chen (University of Sydney). Party directors or their nominees from all parties with parliamentary representation were invited. Their workshop session has previously been reported in the media.

The two-day workshop to discuss the 2010 federal election was held at University House on 9 and 10 October 2010. Much of the lively discussion related to the role of the Labor Party’s new leadership team, Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan, reasons for the failure of the Rudd team to retain its previous popularity, and the remarkable leadership transition of 24 June, which saw Rudd deposed as leader and Prime Minister. The first afternoon session featured presentations by the Labor Party’s Elias Hallaj and by the Australian Greens Campaign Director, Ebony Green, and high-profile candidate (and former Australian Democrats Senator) Andrew Bartlett. Apologies were received from the Liberal Party Director and the Labor Party’s Secretary, Karl Bitar. A paper was received from the Liberals for inclusion in the edited volume.

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This volume is dedicated to our friend and colleague Dr Dennis Woodward who passed away in May 2011 and whose knowledgeable and gentle presence will be sadly missed.

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