

Preface

Writing a book about the 50 years of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) is not without its challenges. The main one is what to include and what to leave out; what themes to emphasise and what to downplay or even ignore. The readers of this book who know ACFID will no doubt suggest I overplayed or overdramatised some things at the expense of talking about some of the other good work ACFID has done. Sometimes people are too close to the action, and sometimes memory is all too faulty. In the end, this book is ACFID's story as I have experienced it, as an insider through the 1980s, 1990s and 2010s on many of its committees. ACFID's story is also told through the memories of the people involved, to whom I am very grateful, and ACFID's records of the time, now held in the National Library of Australia.

The caveat, of course, is that the inclusions and exclusions are mine alone. The 10 chapters of this book pick up what I regard as the key themes that built ACFID but also challenged it: its relationship with government, global education, its work with emergencies, human rights, the Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct, and gender and development. Some of these themes were a product of their time, such as global education, and were successful for a period; some ACFID probably should not have undertaken, such as disaster work, and others, like gender and development, ACFID has struggled with throughout its life.

This text is taken from *NGOS and Political Change: A History of the Australian Council for International Development*, by Patrick Kilby, published 2015 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.