It is fitting that a book on the New Order regime and its legacy be dedicated to Harold Crouch. Professor Crouch has been one of the pre-eminent scholars of Indonesian politics during the New Order period, and he wrote the definitive book on that regime’s rise to power. His work did a great deal—perhaps more than that of any other scholar—to allow generations of students and scholars of Indonesian politics to understand the origins of the New Order, and the structures and patterns of political behaviour which sustained it. In the post-Soeharto period, Crouch has continued to be a leading analyst of Indonesian politics, and has recently published a masterful book on the successes and failures of political reform.

Born in Melbourne in 1940, Crouch took an undergraduate degree in political science at the University of Melbourne beginning in 1958 when it was headed by Professor MacMahon Ball, the foremost pioneer of Australia’s relations with the newly independent countries of Asia. In the early 1960s, he went to India to study at the University of Bombay for a Masters degree on Indian trade unions, at a time when few if any other Australians had gone to an Asian university for a higher degree. (This research was subsequently published in 1966.) Crouch then switched his geographical focus to Indonesia, enrolling for his PhD under Australia’s then pre-eminent scholar of Indonesian politics, Herbert Feith at Monash University. In 1968, he took a teaching job in the political science department at the University of Indonesia (which Feith had previously held for a year), and he taught there from 1968 to 1971. During this period he began amassing the vast amount of material on the Indonesian army, and on Indonesian politics more generally, which would later form the basis of his PhD dissertation. His dissertation was completed in 1975 and a revised version was published by Cornell University in 1978 as *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*. At around the same time he also wrote a highly influential article on patrimonialism published in 1979 in *World Politics*. These works became milestones in the study of the New Order, and were widely admired as much for
the evident care and judiciousness which had gone into crafting them, as for the insights they afforded into the foundation, inner workings and bases of the New Order regime.

Over subsequent years, although Crouch never abandoned his interest in and writing on Indonesia, he also broadened his focus to incorporate other countries of Southeast Asia. Following his marriage to the Malaysian historian, Khasnor Johan in 1973, in 1976 he took up a position as Senior Lecturer at the National University of Malaysia, a position which he held, with some side-trips, until 1991, when he took up a Senior Research Fellowship at the Australian National University in Canberra. In the intervening years he wrote *Domestic Political Structures and Regional Economic Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (1984) which though brief still stands out as one of the most successful attempts to write comparatively about the politics of the region. His period in Malaysia also formed the basis of his highly regarded overview of Malaysian politics, *Government and Society in Malaysia* (1996). During the 1990s his interest in Indonesian politics was reignited by the gathering political storms of the late Soeharto period (see for example Crouch 1992 and 1994). After Soeharto resigned, Crouch became the founding director of the International Crisis Group office in Jakarta in 2000–2001, when he started its fine tradition of producing first-class papers on important, topical subjects (see ICG 2000 for an example of such writing). It was in this period that he began to develop a line of inquiry and accumulate material for his recently published book, *Political Reform in Indonesia after Soeharto* (2010).

The preceding sketch illustrates that Harold Crouch’s career has included long periods living and working in the countries he writes about. His deep immersion in the societies of the region has contributed to two trademark features of his own scholarship: first, his painstaking care for factual accuracy, based on the accumulation and careful checking of great amounts of material drawn from written sources, interviews and fieldwork, and, secondly, the great circumspection, even-handedness and fairness with which he presents this material. His deep knowledge of historical context, his often personal intimacy with the political actors who form the main subjects of his work, and his first-hand knowledge of the ideas, interests and calculations which govern their behaviour—as well as an abiding sense of fairness—all provide his work with a rare understanding of and sensitivity to the motivations of Indonesian and other political actors. It also has imparted an aversion to the quick and easy moral judgments which so often mars scholarship on Indonesia. In his address to the conference at which most of the chapters in this book were first presented, Jamie Mackie ascribed Crouch’s reputation to these very characteristics, noting
that ‘the key to Harold’s eminence has been his mixture of scrupulous honesty and accuracy, balance, fairness and real knowledge of Indonesia and of whatever he is talking about to do with it.’

Harold Crouch’s combination of scholarly commitment and personal integrity have made him a role model and guide for a large number of scholars of Indonesian (and Southeast Asian) politics, not least the large number of higher degree research students he supervised. This group included many Australians and Indonesians, but also Americans, Japanese, Malaysians, Germans and others. Among the students of Indonesian politics he supervised whose dissertations have been published in recent years are Donald Porter (2002); Jun Honna (2003); Edward Aspinall (2005); Marcus Mietzner (2008a); and Chris Wilson (2008). In speeches at the conference which began the work of this book, several of his former students praised his generosity of spirit, relaxed character, tolerance for divergent opinions and scholarly rigour, and the care he had shown toward them. One of these former students, noted that what he had valued most from Crouch was not only his intellectual input, as considerable as that was, but that he ‘taught me how to live’, by inculcating in him values of intellectual curiosity, modesty and honesty, rather than ambition for approval or advancement. It was a striking testimony to a man who has long been widely respected as a scholar, a searcher after the truth and also far more than that. It is this spirit that this book is dedicated in his honour, as a modest tribute to Harold Crouch and his influence in the field of Indonesian political studies.