

Acknowledgements

Dharawal and Dharug lands on the estuary of the Georges River have seen many histories. This book is about a brief period along that estuary – from 1945 to 1980 – when Aboriginal people continued to live along the estuary but were seldom consulted in its events. Instead, the majority of the population for this brief period were Irish and Anglo settlers, with increasing numbers of even more recent immigrants from Asia and the North Africa/West Asia area (also known as the ‘Middle East’).

This book is built on memories – the memories of those recent settlers and immigrants, but also those of the Aboriginal people who continued to live on the river. I have been particularly grateful in all my Georges River work to have had the interest and insights of Aboriginal people who had been involved with the river, including those who have passed away: Jacko Campbell, Gubbu Ted Thomas and most recently Ellen James and her granddaughter Tracey Whetnall. I have continued to draw on those who remain today, like Shayne Williams and Denis Foley, while analysts of colonialism Peter Read and the late Tracey Banivanua Mar have been continuing inspirations.

My own memories of growing up on the river, in an Irish-Scots family in the 1950s, drew me back there, but I have now learnt far more from the many non-Indigenous Georges River people who gave their time, their memories, their interest and their support to the project. I want to thank Carol Jacobsen, Dave Koffel, Laurie Derwent and Alexandra Knight who have each been so patient in answering my many questions and in digging around for photographs and papers.

The book arose initially from a project shared with Denis Byrne and Stephen Wearing, begun in 2004, researching the Georges River National Park, on which we worked with inspired and inspiring researchers Jo Kijas, Allison Cadzow, Hesham Abdo, Stephen Gapps, Joy Suliman, Wafa Zaim,

Alison Phan and Huy Pham. We drew on the advice and continued interest of the Muslim Women Association and Hajeh Maha Abdo. From this work, Allison Cadzow and I published *Rivers and Resilience* (2009, UNSW Press), following the continuing histories of Aboriginal people along the Georges River to the present.

Georges River Blues has since drawn further on the ecological insights and the personal experiences on the river of Neil Saintilan and Jeff Kelleway, while those from further afield, like Alan Reid, Peter Fairweather and Philip Sutton, each contributed to the campaigns in the book and to the project itself. I continue to learn from William Gladstone, who not only has an endless knowledge of marine biology and conservation but is also a brilliant photographer.

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