Acknowledgements

My story starts towards the end of this book. In 2013, I needed a job. Working in hospitality as an introvert is a genuine nightmare, and I was looking for something, anything, so I didn't have to pull beers and talk to people. A meeting with Simon Ville at the University of Wollongong changed my professional trajectory. I was brought on board to ease some of the administrative burden associated with the final stages of the *Cambridge Economic History of Australia*, providing feedback, compiling the index and liaising between the authors, editors, copyeditors and publishers. In the process, I read every word.

When it came time to choose a topic for my PhD, my interest in professional communities and knowledge was combined with Simon's work in Australian economic history. I set out to map (quite literally) the various networks among members of the field in the postwar decades, and the impact of these connections on knowledge. As I wrote this book, I was increasingly interested in the labour of academic work and professional networks: the structural matters that determine who is employed, what groups they work in, and what sort of work they do. There are no networks if no one has a job. It meant taking a step back to examine the production of interdisciplinary knowledge not simply in terms of the scholars involved, but also university policy and government and public priorities. Although this is a substantial departure from the initial work, I hope it is now a more practical account of the field's development and possible futures.

This book is about places and ways of work, and I would be remiss not to mention mine. My laptop and I have been on quite the journey through the course of writing, presenting and refining this book, from accidentally being held at gunpoint in Poland (a misunderstanding) to the coastal vistas on the train from Wollongong to Sydney. Those I interviewed were kind enough to invite me into their homes, and I have fond memories of eating
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Finally, I dedicate this book to my family: Kathy, Paul, Emma, Ben and David. Thank goodness they do not take me very seriously – I’m sure they will refer to me as Claire Bear or C-Biscuit well into my dotage – but I am always assured of their support.