Preface

We are pleased to present Volume 35 of *Aboriginal History*.

Since becoming editors last year, Shino Konishi and I have had reason to reflect on the history of the journal and its relationship to the broader field of Indigenous history in Australia. Earlier this year, my thoughts on this were further fuelled when I attended a conference here at the Australian National University (ANU) marking 30 years of Subaltern Studies, a field that in many ways parallels the development of Australian Aboriginal History. Indeed, both began to develop around the same time and in the same place. In his paper for the conference, which traced interconnections between Subaltern Studies and Aboriginal History, Bain Attwood noted that the names 'Aboriginal History' and 'Subaltern Studies' had initially referred to publications more so than schools. The journal *Aboriginal History* and the series *Subaltern Studies*, both of which are still in press, were established within a few years of each other. *Aboriginal History* published its first volume in 1977; the first volume of *Subaltern Studies* appeared in 1982. Both were based at ANU, and in particular closely associated with its Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (now the College of Asia and the Pacific). In each case, these publishing ventures were foundational to the development of the fields that go by these names. A generation on, *Aboriginal History* and *Subaltern Studies* can publish only a small sample of the large and ever-expanding body of scholarship produced in their respective fields. Importantly, though, each publishes work that not only reflects elements of the original, and to some extent shared, visions for these fields, but which also continues to stretch interpretive possibilities, subjects and themes, and methodological approaches. In their different ways, as Attwood noted, the fields of Aboriginal History and Subaltern Studies expanded the horizons of historical scholarship and writing to represent the perspectives and experiences of people hitherto excluded from conventional, national histories. In both instances, this involved adopting a multidisciplinary approach, as well as drawing on a wide range of sources, including oral testimony, visual images, and vernacular writings. This volume of *Aboriginal History*, now in its 35th year, demonstrates the ways in which this vision for an expanded horizon of history continues to furnish new insights into and interpretations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experiences, while sometimes also continuing to push the limits of history-writing.

In her article, Grace Karskens extends her cross-cultural research on early colonial New South Wales by focusing on the uses of European clothing by Aboriginal men. Using methods drawn from visual analysis, material culture studies, and ethnographic history, she teases out possible meanings that Aboriginal men ascribed to clothes, especially military coats. In the process, her study reveals a dense and complex social world of relations shaped by exchange and trade, diplomacy and hierarchy.

In their contributions, Leah Lui-Chivizhe and Noah Riseman use oral testimony to tell important new histories. Lui-Chivizhe describes the participation of Torres Strait Islander men in railway construction work in Western Australia. Riseman focuses on the life of one man to explore intersections between the experience of institutionalisation as a member of the Stolen Generations and later as a member of the Australian armed forces. Both articles are distinguished by their critical reflections on the nature of personal and collective remembrance, the ethics of using oral testimony in writing Indigenous history, and the relationship between oral and archival evidence.

Ian D Clark's article reminds us of the importance of meticulous and careful archival research, especially when it comes to histories of frontier violence. In an article that answers Michael Connor's refutation of the 'Convincing Ground' massacre, Clark not only exposes flaws in Connor's own reading of the archival evidence but also has something to say about his methods as a massacre denier. At the same time, Clark further contextualises and explains the evidence upon which his own interpretations and conclusions about the Convincing Ground massacre are based.

In this 35th volume, we mark yet another milestone in the history of the journal. Early on in the journal's life, Isabel McBryde, who remains an active member of the Aboriginal History Board, suggested that 'occasionally the journal might produce issues devoted to a particular theme'. James Urry responded to the suggestion by proposing a volume devoted to Aboriginal-Asian contact history, which was published as Volume 5 in 1981. Thirty years later, Christine Choo and Peta Stephenson, leaders in the field of research into Aboriginal-Asian relations, have edited a special section on the same theme. The four papers included revisit old topics and address new ones.

Campbell Macknight published a piece in the 1981 volume on his research into contact between Macassans and Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land; in this volume in 2011 he reflects with insight on the development of his own scholarship and on research in this area more generally. What he offers, then, is a double-layered history. Anna Shnukal did not contribute a piece to the 1981 volume, but in 1985 (Volume 9) she published her first piece in *Aboriginal History*, which was on Torres Strait Islander creole. Her contribution this time focuses on Filipinos in the outer Torres Strait islands and the families they established with Indigenous women. Marriage is also the theme in Julia Martínez' article. She explores marriages between Indonesian men and Indigenous Australian women, which provides new perspectives not only on the history of Indonesians in Australia but also the White Australia policy and its effects. Victoria Haskins provides a fascinating story drawn from the colonial archives that documents one Chinese family's efforts to be allowed to employ Aboriginal workers. She uses this case to explore 'how local politics of race played out on the frontiers of white Australia in the early twentieth century'. As Stephenson and Choo note in their introduction to the special section, the four papers together 'retrieve pre-colonial and colonial

relationships that place white settler narratives of Australia's social development in a wider perspective. In the process they challenge the ideological foreclosures and sometimes methodological timidity of mainstream nationalist histories'.

In commending this volume of *Aboriginal History* to you, we wish to express our gratitude to the many people who assist with its production. We especially thank Geoff Hunt, copyeditor, Tikka Wilson, production manager, and Luise Hercus, reviews editor, as well as the entire Aboriginal History Board. We also wish to thank Shannyn Palmer and Julia Torpey who provided much needed editorial assistance. Finally, we would like to acknowledge Professor Angela Woollacott, Head of the School of History in the College of Arts and Social Sciences at ANU, where the journal is currently based, for her continuing support.

Maria Nugent