

INTRODUCTION

This volume of *Aboriginal History* is devoted to studies of the south-eastern corner of the Australian continent. In the past some volumes have concentrated on a single theme, edited by members of the Editorial Board with a particular interest in that topic. In 1981, for example, James Urry edited volume 5 with its theme of Aboriginal-Asian contact.

The prehistory and recent past of the south-east all suggest that this area was one of intense cultural development in the later stages of its prehistory, especially the centuries immediately preceding the European colonisation of Australia Felix and the foundation of the colony of Victoria. These developments invite research by archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnohistorians, historians and linguists. Yet particularly they invite inter- or cross-disciplinary research. The papers in this issue arose from a series of meetings which I convened with Professor R.W. Dixon in 1981. They involved scholars from the disciplines listed, all concerned with the south-east. As an informal group we gave ourselves the name South-East Australia Study Group. We each discussed common issues from the perspectives of our own discipline; yet from the experience of seeing the issues assessed from differing vantage points came new insights and new interpretations. These meetings were exciting inter-disciplinary experiences, which we hope to share with readers through the papers presented in this volume and later issues.

A series of unavoidable difficulties in production has delayed this volume, dated 1984. The winter of 1985 will be well advanced when it appears. However, there is some timely recompense in the delay. The volume appears in the year Victoria remembers the establishment of pastoral settlement in the environs of Melbourne and can join the body of research and publication marking that event and examining its impact on the Aboriginal societies of the region.

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