Colonization and the Origins
of Humanitarian Governance

How did those responsible for creating Britain’s nineteenth-century settler empire render colonization compatible with humanitarianism? Avoiding a cynical or celebratory response, this book takes seriously the humane disposition of colonial officials, examining the relationship between humanitarian governance and empire. The story of 'humane' colonial governance connects projects of emancipation, amelioration, conciliation, protection and development in sites ranging from British Honduras through Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales, New Zealand and Canada, to India. It is seen in the lives of governors like George Arthur and George Grey, whose careers saw the violent and destructive colonization of indigenous peoples at the hands of British emigrants. The story challenges the exclusion of officials’ humanitarian sensibilities from colonial history and places the settler colonies within the larger historical context of Western humanitarianism.

ALAN LESTER is Professor of Historical Geography at the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex

FAE DUSSART is Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Sussex.
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Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance

Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire

Alan Lester and Fae Dussart
For Jo, Daisy, Evan and Alfred; Brian and Patricia, Gary, Tracy, Jessica, Sarah and Thomas; Fred and Pam

For Luka, Alia and Mischa; Molly and Georges; Mana and Mike; and in memory of Alastair
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