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0521616816 - Dancing with Strangers: Europeans and Australians at First Contact

Inga Clendinnen

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## Dancing with Strangers

In January 1788 the First Fleet arrived in New South Wales and a thousand British men and women encountered the people who would be their new neighbors. *Dancing with Strangers* tells the story of what happened between the first British settlers of Australia and the people they found living there. Inga Clendinnen offers a fresh reading of the earliest written sources, the reports, letters, and journals of the first British settlers in Australia. It reconstructs the difficult path to friendship and conciliation pursued by Arthur Phillip and the local leader 'Bennelong' (Baneelon); and then it traces the painful destruction of that hard-won friendship as profound cultural differences asserted themselves.

A distinguished and award-winning historian of the Spanish encounters with Aztec and Maya Indians of sixteenth-century America, Clendinnen's analysis of the early cultural interactions in Australia touches broader themes of recent historical debate: the perception of others, the meanings of culture, and the nature of colonialism and imperialism.

Inga Clendinnen is Emeritus Scholar in History at La Trobe University. She is also the author of *Aztecs* (Cambridge, 1991), *Reading the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1999), and *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in the Yucatan, 1517–1570* (2nd. Ed, Cambridge, 2003).

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*Europeans and Australians at First Contact*

INGA CLENDINNEN

*La Trobe University, Australia*



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*For  
Anastasia  
and for  
Gilchrist*

### *Acknowledgments*

I thank the staff at the Borchardt Library, La Trobe University, and at Townsville Regional Library, whose kindness went well beyond duty.

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And I thank Miss Cantwell, third-grade teacher at Newtown and Chilwell State School sixty years ago, who finally managed to teach me to read.

Man proceeds in a fog. But when he looks back to judge people of the past, he sees no fog on their path. From his present, which was their far-away future, their path looks perfectly clear to him, good visibility all the way. Looking back he sees the path, he sees the people proceeding, he sees their mistakes, but not the fog.

*Milan Kundera*

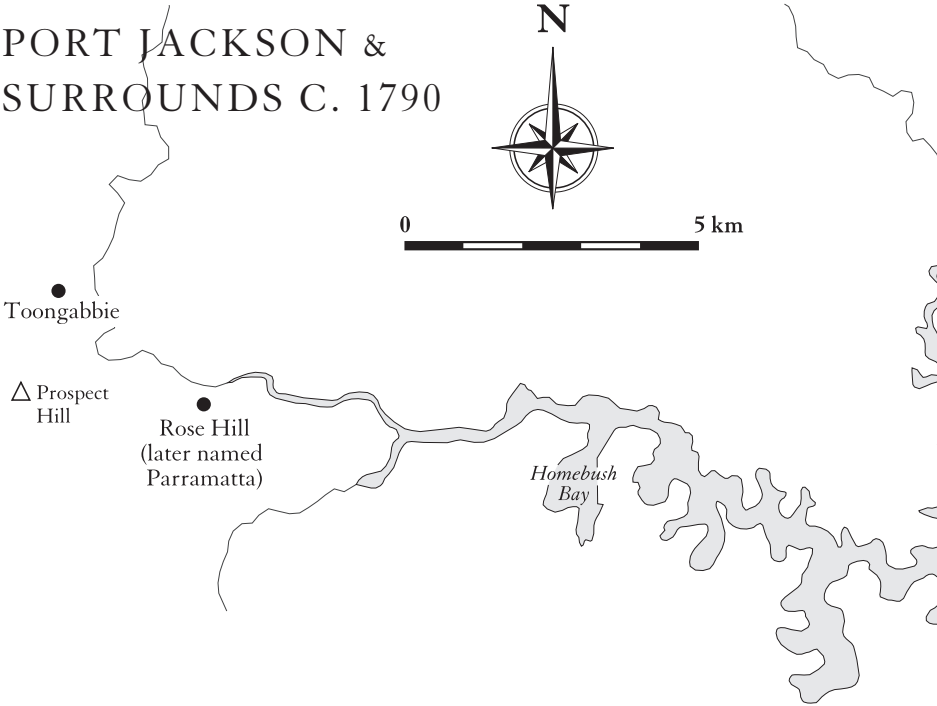
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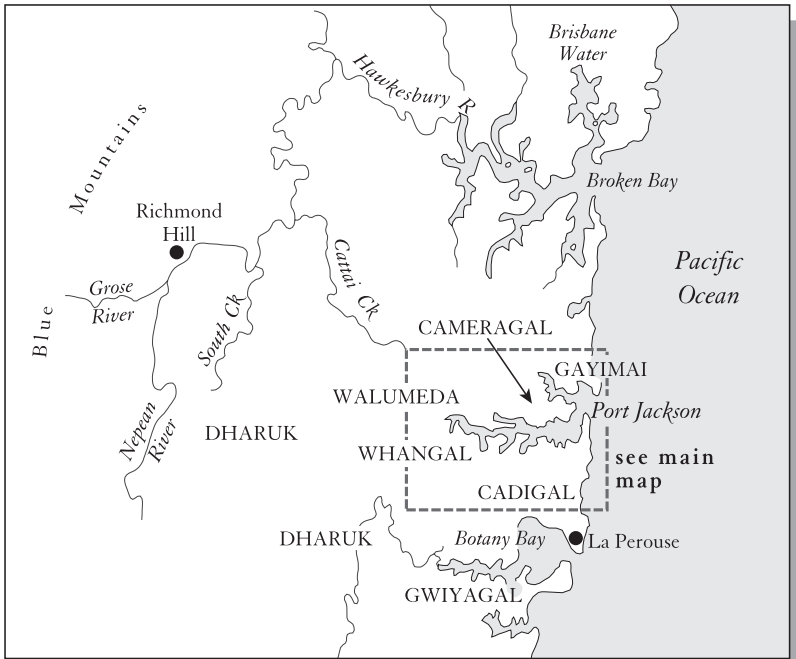
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# PORT JACKSON & SURROUNDS C. 1790



Inset shows the probable distribution of the Australian tribes in the Sydney region 1788–1800



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