

## Inquiring into Empire

This is the first history to grapple with the vast project of British imperial investigation in the years between the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and the Great Reform Act. Beginning in 1819, commissions of inquiry were sent to examine law, governance and economy from New South Wales and the Caribbean to Malta and West Africa. They left behind a matchless record of colonial life in the form of papers, reports and more than 200 volumes of testimonies and correspondence. *Inquiring into Empire* taps this under-used archive to develop a new understanding of imperial reform. The authors argue that, far from being a first step in the march towards liberalism, the commissions represented a deeply pragmatic, messy but concerted effort to chart a middle way between reaction and revolution that was constantly buffeted by the politics of colonial encounter.

Lisa Ford is a professor of legal history at George Washington University and the prize-winning author of three monographs, most recently *The King's Peace* (2021).

Kirsten McKenzie is a professor of history at the University of Sydney and director of the Vere Gordon Childe Centre. Her most recent monograph is *Imperial Underworld* (2016).

Naomi Parkinson is a historian of the nineteenth-century British Empire at the University of New South Wales, specialising in colonial law, governance and its reform from 1820 to 1860.

David Andrew Roberts is a professor of history at the University of New England (NSW) and editor (since 2003) of the *Journal of Australian Colonial History*.

# Inquiring into Empire

*Colonial Commissions and British Imperial  
Reform, 1819–1833*

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Lisa Ford

*George Washington University*

Kirsten McKenzie

*University of Sydney*

Naomi Parkinson

*University of New South Wales*

David Andrew Roberts

*University of New England*



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