Acknowledgements

Writers and students know that writing is lonely work. Fortunately, I am blessed with a personality that thrives on isolation, and the forced isolation of COVID lockdowns during which much of this book was written was oddly helpful in that respect. Nevertheless, it would be beyond arrogant to assert that academic writing of any use can exist without the significant contributions and advice of others. Such contributions keep the writer from living in an echo chamber of their own voice, and from assuming that every thought is a fully formed pearl for which the world has been eagerly waiting. They also provide an informed critique to test whether an idea is expressed in a way that people from various disciplinary backgrounds can understand it. I am enormously grateful to these voices for their contributions and critiques:

• Professor Michael Belgrave, Professor in History, Massey University, Auckland, for his critique on my initial proposal. He said at the time, “I see you’re trying to write a history of the universe”, and at times it has felt a little like that.
• Professor Emerita In Young Han, Ewha Woman’s University, Seoul, Korea who read the first chapters and provided early insight, direction, and encouragement.
• Professor John Bishop, Professor of Philosophy, University of Auckland, provided an incisive and rigorous critique from the perspective of a philosophy of theology.
• Professor Peter Lineham, MNZM, Professor Emeritus of History, Massey University, for his review of the historical aspects of the manuscript. I make no claims to be a historian, yet much of this work relies on history.
• Andrew Thompson (PhD candidate), University of Auckland, who provided a first-hand account of providing social care and social work in the United Kingdom during the Thatcher era and more general feedback on the professionalisation of social work.
• Valerie Sharpe, RSW, for feedback on the professionalisation of social work and for her ongoing professional support for which I am deeply grateful.
• Professor Tatsuru Akimoto, then-Head of the Asian Research Institute for International Social Work at Shukutoku University, Chiba, and his team for allowing me access to their important work on Buddhist and Islamic social work, and for his courageous and persistent critique of ‘Western’ social work.
• Massey University librarians, the unsung heroes of research, who ensured that the endless stream of resources I requested was delivered to my inbox
or letterbox at home in a timely and efficient way, even in the midst of lockdowns.
• And of course, my partner Jack, and Alex who lived through this with me.

In a more general way, I am grateful to my colleagues on the Board of the International Association of Schools of Social Work: during my time on the Board, they constantly challenged my assumptions about what social work should look like from a global perspective. It was my experiences on the Board and several of its working groups that created the seed that has grown into this book. I also thank my social work students for going along for the ride as we explored ideas together. To all of you, thank you. Errors, omissions, and opinions in the work are of course entirely my responsibility.

I believe strongly in the discipline and global future of social work, although I think that all of us are still trying to figure out what that future looks like. I only hope that this work is a useful contribution to that conversation.