Preface

This book in many ways represents a somewhat logical extension of many years of research into topics such as policies relating to pollution, electricity planning and the management of risks in global politics which has led over the past couple of decades to the global politics of climate change. As with any work, it reflects the generosity of many people.

Special thanks go to Garth Paltridge and Bernie Lewin. In addition to many informative conversations over the years, Garth read the science sections of this book and provided invaluable quality assurance to ensure that the understanding of a political scientist with a knowledge of first year university physics was not in error. Bernie also read this chapter from the perspective of an historian of science, but also allowed me to read early drafts of his work on the crucial politics surrounding the ‘attribution’ controversy surrounding the drafting of the IPCC Second Assessment Report in 1995–96 which has informed this book.

I am fortunate to have had colleagues who have been not only supportive, but possessed of expertise that has, directly or indirectly, informed this book. In particular, Rob Hall, Marcus Haward and Hannah Murphy-Gregory have assisted my general understanding of international politics and regimes and the emerging field of global policy. Hannah and I have co-authored several papers on forum shopping, which was the theme of a workshop in 2012 where I benefited from the insights of Bob Reinalda, Arild Underdal and Oran Young on this topic.

My understanding of the international politics of climate change has benefited from many now or formerly in public office who have shared intelligence and insights over many years.

Among those in Australia, I am hugely indebted to Howard Bamsey (former Australian Ambassador for the Environment and Special Envoy on Climate Change) for numerous conversations over twenty years in which he shared his insights on climate change negotiations. Similarly, Meg McDonald (former Australian Ambassador for the Environment and lead negotiator at Kyoto) shared her insights into the Kyoto negotiations, and Chris Langman (former Australian Ambassador for the Environment and former Ambassador to the OECD and lead for the 2014 G20 meeting
in Australia) did similarly for more recent processes. Stuart Harris (former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) did much to lure me into research on climate change by inviting me to address a National Academies Forum on the subject in 1997. His co-conspirator in this, the late Ian Castles (former Australian Statistician and once Secretary of the Department of Finance), was also responsible for my appointment to the Joint Academies Committee on Sustainability (from where I was able to observe climate scientists at rather closer quarters). Ian’s polite but persistent criticisms of the misuse of statistics in the IPCC Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (together with David Henderson – former Chief Economist at the OECD) both increased my critical awareness of the IPCC process and set the standard for how disagreements should be aired. John Zillman (former Director of the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and President of the WMO), a thoughtful contributor to meetings over the years, was, I suspect, also responsible for my nomination as an Expert Reviewer in the IPCC process. Michael L’Estrange (then Secretary of DFAT) made some useful comments on my presentation on Kyoto to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties anniversary symposium in 2006.

The book developed alongside a project on the OECD with my colleague Peter Carroll that produced two books and several papers, but also insights into the neglected contribution of the OECD to the development of the climate regime and the value of ‘interactive multilateralism’ – a term suggested to me by Phil Cerny. A sabbatical in 2014 allowed very informative interviews with Griff Thompson (US State Department), Harlan Watson (former US Special Envoy to the UNFCC), Brice Lalonde (former French Ambassador for Climate Change), and Gregory Briner (OECD) that enhanced my understanding of global climate policy, as did a conversation with Thomas Spencer (Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, Sciences Po). All these helped provide US and European perspectives.

The usual caveats apply. While all those who have been of assistance in writing this book would probably agree with some of the points made, I doubt whether many (or perhaps any) would agree with all of it.

Finally, thanks are due to Julie and Maddy for both their support and their toleration of my neglect of them while writing the book.