This book is dedicated to our mothers
Gae Southwell, who has been an extremely good mother though she broke a few of the rules of her time, and
Elizabeth Huppatz, who mothered through tough times and often without help but always with love.
Contents

Acknowledgements vii
About the authors ix

1. The good mother in theory and research: an overview 1
   Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppatz
2. Good executive, good mother: contradictory devotions 25
   Colleen Chesterman and Anne Ross-Smith
3. Mother of all constructions: mothers in male-dominated work 51
   Louisa Smith
4. Mothers making class distinctions: the aesthetics of maternity 69
   Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppatz
5. Good mothers go school shopping 89
   Claire Aitchison
6. The good mother and the high school: a view from the 20th century 111
   Helen Proctor
7. Mothers and mutual obligation: policy reforming the good mother 131
   Megan Blaxland
8. Misrepresenting Indigenous mothers: maternity allowances in the media 153
   Leanne Cutcher and Talila Milroy
9. Aboriginal mother yarns 175
   Jane Moore and Lynette Riley
10. Mother impossible: the experiences of lesbian parents  
   *Margot Rawsthorne*  
   195

11. Being a real mother: adoptive mothers’ experiences  
   *Denise Lynch*  
   215

Index  
   233
Acknowledgements

This book began with a conversation around a particularly dreadful depiction of mothers which appeared in the media, reminding us of the ways ideas about good and bad mothers continue to regulate women. The recognition that there were a number of researchers in a range of disciplines whose current work involved the analysis of mothers’ experiences resulted in a workshop around the theme of the good mother and laid the foundations for bringing together this research into a book. We thank all of the authors for their enthusiasm for this project, and for providing such thoughtful, interesting and insightful accounts of the contemporary experience and for adding to our knowledge about motherhood in its diversity.

Many of the chapters draw on interviews conducted with women and on women’s reflections on their experiences. We thank all of those women who have given up their time to participate in these research studies, their contributions are invaluable. We also acknowledge the excellent work undertaken by our feminist foremothers, who not only made motherhood a legitimate subject for scholarly research, but also developed frameworks for thinking and talking about mothers, motherhood and mothering in new ways.

We would also like to thank Susan Murray-Smith, Agata Mrva-Montoya and the team at Sydney University Press for working with us on this book.