

Curtin

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

As Australia's first prime ministerial library, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML) contributes to Curtin University of Technology's prestige locally, nationally and internationally.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

In August an independent review of the JCPML was undertaken as part of Curtin's quality improvement cycle to evaluate the JCPML's performance against its plans and consider its directions for the future.

George Nichols, former Director General of the National Archives of Australia, undertook the brief to consider what the JCPML set out to do, what has been achieved to date, and what strategies might be appropriate for the future. The review also considered the role of the JCPML in relation to its professional, educational and general communities at the institutional, State, national and international levels and made recommendations to the University Librarian.

Mr Nichols spent several weeks interviewing appropriate people who either had a direct stake in or had been directly associated with the JCPML to date. The JCPML provided extensive background information and access to all its corporate documents. The review concluded that the major investment made by Curtin University of Technology in terms of resources and its own reputation in creating the JCPML has been repaid by the establishment of a first class institution which has also earned the professional respect of the major cultural and collecting institutions with whom it collaborates. According to the review, the JCPML 'is a small treasure of which the University can be proud.'

All of the recommendations in the review have been accepted.

UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATION

As a rich and diverse university resource, the JCPML continued to contribute to the university community during 2003. In its interpretation and promotion of John Curtin and his achievements within the context of the university, the JCPML effectively markets the 'Curtin' name and promotes greater awareness of the university.

The JCPML's major exhibition and research collection provide an educational gateway for the university and general communities and a focus for staff and students to learn about our wartime prime minister, while the public program of lectures and seminars on campus enrich academic life.

The papers and publications produced through the Visiting Scholars program contribute to the university's scholarly profile and public face.

The JCPML's contribution to academics and students includes reference and referral services for archives on any subject in Australia, as well as overseas expertise. The staff's specialist knowledge in archives, schools education programs, promotion within a cultural environment, and expertise in electronic digital object management continues to be available to the university community.

Amongst the collaborative projects undertaken in 2003 was an ARC Linkage Grant which came to fruition this year to fund a WA Cultural Heritage Web Portal to which the Australia Research Institute and JCPML will be active participants.



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The JCPML cooperates extensively with external organizations, forming collaborative alliances of benefit to both parties. During the year the JCPML:

- worked with Ex Libris to develop Digitool, a new digital assets management system;
- contributed to the National Library of Australia's PictureAustralia database;
- continued its association with the History Teachers Association of WA through the National History Challenge;
- jointly hosted a public lecture with the Centre for Research for Women; and
- brought to production the award-winning play, *Shadow Of The Eagle*, together with the Perth Theatre Company.

EDUCATION EVALUATION

The JCPML education programs provide opportunities for children to experience social history in an enjoyable, stimulating and 'hands-on' environment and help teachers promote students' engagement with history. During 2003 a statistical analysis of evaluative surveys showed overwhelmingly that teachers and students enjoyed their visits to the JCPML and found them to be informative and interesting, with 82% of teachers indicating the JCPML program was good or excellent at tying in with the Curriculum Framework and 97% of teachers being satisfied with the way the program correlated with what they were teaching at school. The quality of presentation of the programs was thought to be excellent by 82% and 88% thought the resource materials provided were good to excellent. Overall 96% of teachers felt the programs met or exceeded their expectations.

The JCPML has therefore concluded that the education programs that have been developed respond to the needs of teachers. The next stage of evaluation is to determine what students learn from their visit to the JCPML and results from this evaluation will be analysed and presented in 2004.

RESEARCH COLLECTION

John Curtin's life and times provide a springboard for a range of themes supported by the JCPML research collection, some of which are very contemporary. The collection areas cover postwar reconstruction, Australian/US relations, foreign policy, refugees and immigration, international trade and tariffs, the role of prime ministerial wives and how government and the public service conducts itself. The JCPML provides an exemplary reference service to users which not only assists researchers but also serves as a means of identifying records which further extend the research collection. The specialist collection and services provided by JCPML present valuable benefits to the academic community in its effort to attract postgraduate students.

The JCPML actively implements new technologies for the capture, description and preservation of archives and to enhance access to these records. The JCPML's expertise in digital collections has been a benchmark for other archival institutions and the implementation of Digitool and the revamped Electronic Research Archive has been a major undertaking for 2003.

COMMEMORATING 5 JULY

The annual commemoration of the death of John Curtin was marked in 2003 by the world premiere of a new play developed by the Perth Theatre Company in association with the JCPML. *Shadow Of The Eagle* was nominated for several awards in the WA Equity Guild/International Foundation for the Arts and Culture Awards for 2003, winning best new play and best actor categories. The JCPML was awarded a 2002/2003 Partnership Endorsement for its role in supporting culture and the arts in Western Australia at the 10th annual West Australian State Arts Sponsorship Awards. *Shadow Of The Eagle* will tour nationally in 2004.

Statistics for 2003

Visitors to JCPML exhibition	10,274*
Visitors to JCPML Reading Room	418
Participation in education program	899
Research Enquiries	1,586
Website hits	202,569
ERA usage	1,184**

*Gallery closed January and for 10 days following every 6 week exhibition period.

**Statistics only available January-July 2003.

Events for 2003

- March 25 *From Curtin to Coombs: war and peace in Australia* Seminar featuring Dr Tim Rouse, Dr Nonja Peters and Ms Michal Bosworth
- May 24-31 World premiere of *Shadow Of The Eagle* and Perth season
- June 4-5 Kalgoorlie season
- July 6-9 Sir Charles Court Young Leaders Program in conjunction with the Division of Humanities and HTAWA
- October 9 *John Curtin: Internationalist* public lecture by 2003 JCPML Visiting Scholar Professor Marilyn Lake
- October 11 WA presentation of the National History Challenge winners in conjunction with HTAWA

2003 JCPML Publications

Without Classification: Hazel Hawke
Author: Margaret Moore
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/hazelhawke/index.html>

Investigating John Curtin: the research papers of Tom Fitzgerald
Authors: Denis Fitzgerald and Lesley Wallace
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/fitzgerald/>



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