

An Australian vision

This year's JCPML Anniversary Lecture was delivered in the presence of Hon. Gough Whitlam by Editor-at-large of the *Australian* newspaper, Paul Kelly, and was marked by the Vice-Chancellor's recognition of the JCPML.

Professor Twomey said that since its inception, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library has become a first class institution which is admired and respected for its work, not only within this state but also nationally and internationally, and that the University could be justifiably proud of the JCPML's progress.

Paul Kelly then addressed the audience with his lecture, *An Australian Vision: Foreign Policy Challenges in the 21st Century*.

He said: 'Australia now lives in a time of upheaval in global power, in the nature of threat, and in the rules of the international system. Curtin had to deal with the survival issue in a way that confronted no other Prime Minister. However, the feature of the 21st century is that opportunities have not been as great and nor have the risks been as unpredictably complex.'

Believing that there is a 'vacuum' facing Australians about their purpose in the world, Paul Kelly offered five



From left to right: JCPML Director Imogen Garner, *Australian* Editor-at-large Paul Kelly, Curtin Vice-Chancellor Prof. Lance Twomey, and JCPML Historical Consultant Prof. David Black

benchmarks for Australia's overall strategic environment in the 21st century:

- Australia's core strength lies in the creation of a tolerant unified multicultural and multiracial democracy;
- the need for a clearer economic vision for Australia;
- making a strategic decision about whether Australia becomes a growing or shrinking nation in terms of population;
- permanent engagement with Asia;
- the US alliance must operate as a

positive element for Australia, particularly in South East Asia.

In comparing Australia's current situation with the 1940s, Mr Kelly paid tribute to Prime Minister John Curtin as 'fascinating for who he was, not just for what he did. His story involved a personal transformation from revolutionary agitator to wartime leader in conditions more demanding than those confronting any other Prime Minister.'

A transcript of Mr Kelly's speech is available at the JCPML website <http://john.curtin.edu.au> under 'what's new'.



Using the JCPML Research Collection

The research collection is the integral core resource for the JCPML and is at the heart of its programs. John Curtin's life and times provide a springboard for a range of themes, including postwar reconstruction, foreign policy, social and political history, the role of prime ministerial wives and Australian/US relations.

The research collection is documented to ensure accessibility by researchers and the success of the JCPML is demonstrated by how well known and used the collection is.

In recent months, the collection has been used for a varied range of purposes and by a diverse set of researchers.

Research directly related to John Curtin, includes:

- Research on the development of Curtin's economic thought for a forthcoming book.
- Artists seeking images of John Curtin from all angles (including the back of his head and detail of his shoes and socks!) for a larger-than-life statue to stand outside the Fremantle Town Hall.
- A local military historian interested in Curtin's views about the need for coastal defences in WA, both before and during World War Two.
- National Trust staff researching the history of the Curtin house in Cottesloe.
- A tertiary student investigating the cultural significance of the Curtin home.
- Editor of a work on Australian parliamentary speeches regarding illustrations for the book.
- Curtin staff enquiries regarding: Curtin quotes, including 'the Great University' quote; and images of Curtin for a variety of uses.
- Staff member from Urban Thresholds interested in records linking Curtin in any way to the Fremantle Town Hall.
- A postgraduate from Melbourne University researching Curtin's reprimand of Sydney race goers at a Labor rally in October 1942.
- Constitutional Centre seeking images of Curtin to use on website.
- History Teachers' Association of Victoria re images of Elsie Curtin for the Association's journal.
- Editor of a book on great Australian speeches researching Curtin's speeches.

Other research tapping into broader collection themes and utilising a wide range of records such as those of Tom Fitzgerald, Alex McCallum and Hazel Hawke, includes:

- An entrant in the Paddy Troy Memorial Essay competition researching the life of Joe Swaleses, a contemporary of Curtin who was active in the Victorian Socialist Party.
- A copywriter searching for photos to produce an audio-visual presentation on the history of the WA Labor Party.
- An ANU academic researching key economists in the 1930s Depression years, including Copland, Giblin and Brigden.
- An RMIT lecturer researching the life of former Melbourne *Herald* journalist Joseph Alexander.
- An historian and writer researching the 1919 Fremantle Wharf strike.

As the research collection continues to grow the range and extent of its uses will continue to increase. The JCPML is currently processing over 70 metres of records from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which were accumulated in the course of preparing the 16 volume work *Documents on Australian foreign policy, 1937-1949*.

The research potential of these records is significant, as most are unpublished, and the contents and subjects covered are broad – from war cabinet agenda and minutes to major world events such as Hitler's peace offensive, the fall of France, appeals to Roosevelt, war crimes, refugees, Imperial Defence, League of Nations, postwar planning, and Pacific rim events concerning Japan, New Guinea, Timor and US Pacific interests.

VC unveils John Curtin statues

On 5 July as part of the commemoration of the anniversary of John Curtin's death, a set of three statues of the prime minister, commissioned by the JCPML, were unveiled by Professor Lance Twomey, Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University of Technology.

A special afternoon tea was arranged with members of Curtin's family and special guests Anniversary lecturer Paul Kelly and former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and his wife Margaret present at the unveiling.

The three poses depict John Curtin as an impassioned orator; show him reflecting on his speech notes; and reveal him in a casual pose.

During 2003 the sculptor, Canberra-based Peter Latona, worked extensively from photographs and film footage supplied by the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library to make the 30cm high bronze sculptures as lifelike as possible.



Admiring the newly commissioned statues are (from left to right) Paul Kelly with family members John Curtin, Beverley Lane and Barbara Davidson.

The bronzes will be a feature of the JCPML's new exhibition which will open in February next year.

Between July 6-18 the statues were on display in David Jones' Perth store as part of the Treasures @ your library

campaign where they were visited by more than 1,000 people. For the rest of 2004, the statues will be on display in the JCPML Reading Room between 10am and 4pm week days and visitors are welcome to view the work.

JCPML wins Museums Organisational Award for 2004

In May the JCPML was awarded the Museums Australia (WA) Organisational Award for 2004. It was presented for achievement in innovative partnership development for the theatre production *Shadow Of The Eagle*.

The play was the result of a partnership between the JCPML and the Perth Theatre Company and provided an innovative way to broaden the library's outreach program. In focusing on the wartime meeting of Prime Minister John Curtin and American General Douglas MacArthur, the play enabled audiences of all ages and backgrounds to examine past events and to consider parallels in contemporary Australia. During 2004 the production toured nationally, enabling the JCPML to reach even wider audiences.

The Museums Awards were presented by the Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Sheila McHale.



From left to right: Kandy-Jane Henderson, Lesley Wallace and Lesley Carman-Brown from the JCPML with Hon. Sheila McHale.

Schools Evaluation – a good report for JCPML

The JCPML education programs target school groups to:

- provide opportunities for children to experience social history in an enjoyable, stimulating and 'hands-on' environment; and
- help teachers promote students' engagement with history.

The on site schools program represents a significant investment for the JCPML in terms of staff time and physical resources. All the programs which are presented to schools have been developed from scratch and are closely linked with the JCPML research collection, exhibitions and website activities. The programs are offered to students from year 5 to 12.

Since the on site program was first presented in 1999 the JCPML has conducted surveys to evaluate the presentation and appeal of the programs to both teachers and students.

At the end of 2002 the surveys were collated and the statistics were analysed, revealing that teachers and students enjoy their visits to the JCPML and believe the educational activities tied in with work they were doing at school. A majority of students thought they had learned a lot about John Curtin.

Students from Collier Primary School participate in one of the JCPML's on site education programs.



While these results were informative, they did not reveal in depth what the students learnt from their visit so in 2003, with advice from Prof. Leonie Rennie from Research & Development, JCPML staff undertook a new evaluation to discover what the students learnt from, and how much information they retained after, their visit.

155 secondary and primary school students who had participated in the JCPML on site education program were selected for the follow up evaluation. The conclusions from the evaluation showed that school visits to the JCPML have a significant impact on student learning. Even after a considerable length of time has elapsed between the visit and the evaluation the students still retained a significant amount of worthwhile information.

Overall, the evaluation of the JCPML on site education programs and their content has been extremely satisfactory. With 100% of surveyed teachers indicating they were happy to recommend the program to other teachers, this is high praise indeed for the program and a reflection of the hard work and creativity of the JCPML Education Officer Ros Marshall and support staff. A number of recommendations were made to improve both the on site programs and the evaluation questionnaires.

One of the aims of the JCPML's Outreach Program is to provide services and activities which raise awareness of Prime Minister John Curtin and the concept of the JCPML within both the Curtin campus and the outside community. Clearly the evaluation of the schools education program shows that this is happening within the schools community.

Contributions
and Support since
April 2004

James Curran
John Francis Curtin
Kathy Deubert
John Keefe Howard
Paul Kelly
Denis Meagher
Bruce Miller

JCPML Challenge
Bank Reading Room
Visitors

Clare-Frances Craig
Robert Edwards
Astrid Fackelmann
Karen Green
Norma Jeffrey
Paul Kelly
Joy Lefroy
Wayne Murphy
Joska Reicheldt
Kelly Rippengale
Neville Stevens
Sally Walker
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