

June 2007

Information Update

2007 John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Anniversary Lecture Thursday 5 July

Shaping a nation: Visionary leadership in a time of fear and uncertainty

One of Australia's most highly regarded indigenous rights advocates, Professor Larissa Behrendt, is this year's speaker for the JCPML Anniversary Lecture. Her lecture entitled 'Shaping a nation: Visionary leadership in a time of fear and uncertainty' promises to be both thought provoking and engaging.

Professor Behrendt is currently Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. She is a Judicial Member of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, Equal Opportunity Division and is the Alternate Chair of the Serious Offenders Review Board.

Professor Behrendt has a doctorate from Harvard Law School and has worked as a practising lawyer in the areas of family law and Aboriginal land claims, as well as teaching at the Australian National University and University of New South Wales Law Schools.

She has published widely on property law, indigenous rights, dispute resolution and Aboriginal women's issues and her book *Achieving social justice: Indigenous rights and Australia's future* was published by The Federation Press in 2003.

Her first novel *Home*, published in 2004, won the David Unaipon Award and a 2005 Commonwealth Writer's Prize. *Home* tells the story of the effect that government removal policies had on three generations of one indigenous



Professor Larissa Behrendt

family, following the struggles of the stolen children to find their place in a white world.

See enclosed invitation for RSVP details for this exciting event.

Backyard Frontline exhibition 'brings back memories'

Over 650 people visited the Australian War Memorial travelling exhibition *Backyard Frontline* on display at the JCPML during March and April. The exhibition appealed to school students, seniors and members of the University alike as shown by the many positive comments made by visitors:

'You have shared a priceless piece of Australian history'

'A wonderful display'

'An excellent exhibition of Australia's darkest hour'

'Interesting and emotional'

And from one visitor who was bombed in Onslow in September 1943 and also March 1944 when he was serving in the RAAF

'A nostalgic walk down memory lane'

News from the JCPML collection with David Wylie

Archives are records of events from the past. The records can be paper documents such as personal or official correspondence, photographs, sound recordings, film or video and even real objects - often called realia.

The evidential value of an individual record lies within the context of the item. Who wrote the letter? Why was that photograph taken and where was it taken? How does the document relate to other records in the collection (or other collections)? This context helps turn individual scraps of information into solid proof in the same way as a Queen's Counsel builds a case in court. One tiny bit of evidence may not convict, but a cascade of many pieces may eventually convince the jury. It is the work of an archivist to make these contextual connections evident to the user.

To illustrate this we can look at John Curtin's visit to Geneva in 1924. Questions that may be asked include: What was his purpose in going to Switzerland? Did he *actually* go? Was it a holiday? What did he do during his visit? When exactly did he go, and when did he come back to Australia? Did he go to any other countries on the journey to and from Geneva?

So, what clues or proof can be found in the JCPML collection? A search of the Electronic Research Archive for 'Geneva' reveals a number of items that relate to the 1924 visit. Amongst them are:

- John Curtin's Australian passport, issued in 1924, which bears the observation 'Attending International Labour Conference, Geneva';



- a gold pocket watch engraved with the words 'Presented to John Curtin by Labour Friends on the eve of his departure as Australia's Labour Representative to the Geneva Conference 1924';

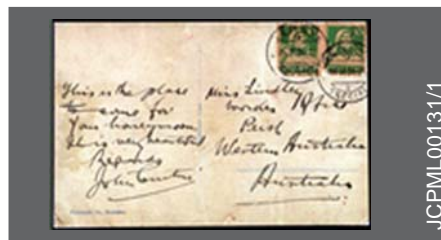


- an account of his farewell party in the *Westralian Worker* (JCPML00984/125);

- a letter to his wife Elsie from the Grand Hotel de la Paix in Geneva in which he bemoans the fact that after going ashore at Colombo, Aden and Port Said and the trip from Marseilles to Geneva, he was left with only 8 pounds 10 shillings out of the 20 pounds he had taken with him;



- a postcard to Miss Lindley at the *Westralian Worker* office recommending Geneva as a honeymoon destination;



- a photograph of John Curtin with other delegates to the Conference (JCPML00376/1).

Case closed!

David Wylie is the JCPML Archives Technician

Curtin University Library News

The Geoff Gallop Collection

In 2006, former Premier of Western Australia Geoff Gallop donated a collection of material relating to his political life to Curtin University. The collection includes electoral office papers, speeches and speech notes, and papers on a wide variety of themes.

As one of the initiatives of the 2007-2010 Library Plan, Curtin University Library has used the expertise of JCPML staff to make many of these items freely available online: <http://john.curtin.edu.au/gallop/>

You can look at images and read documents, or download audio and video clips, including Geoff Gallop's speech 'A Case for Politics' which he gave at Curtin University in November last year.



Curtin University Library
& John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Curtin University of Technology
Kent St, Bentley WA, 6102
GPO Box U1987 Perth WA 6845

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Tel: 08 9266 4205 Fax: 08 9266 4185
Email: jcpml@curtin.edu.au
Web: john.curtin.edu.au