

May 2008

# Information Update

## JCPML Anniversary Lecture by Malcolm Fraser

Thursday 12 June 2008



The Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser AC CH was Prime Minister of Australia from November 1975 until March 1983.

Mr Fraser continues to play an active role in Australia's public life and international relations. Notably, he was Co-Chairman of the Commonwealth Committee of Eminent Persons which encouraged a process of dialogue and reform in South Africa in 1985-86 and in 1989 he was appointed Chairman of the United Nations Committee on African Commodity Problems.

As a strong supporter of the aid agency CARE he served as Chairman of CARE Australia and as President and Vice-President of CARE International.

Mr Fraser was awarded Australia's Human Rights Medal in 2000 for his contribution to the advancement of human rights in Australia and internationally.

In 2002 he published his book *Common Ground – Issues that should bind and not divide us*.

### John Curtin - a tribute: strengthening the rule of law and Australian democracy

Mr Fraser's speech will focus on recent events which have involved significant departures from the rule of law and due process and how these seriously undermine the rights of all Australians. He will suggest ways of strengthening the rule of law and Parliamentary processes and point to a need for a much more independent and effective foreign policy.

See enclosed invitation for RSVP details for this not-to-be missed event.

### Portrait of Hazel Hawke on display in 'Mrs Prime Minister' exhibition



JCPML00558/1

The JCPML holds the records of Hazel Hawke from her time at the Prime Minister's Lodge (1983-91) and within the collection is a portrait of Mrs Hawke by artist Sally Robinson. The painting is currently on display as part of the travelling exhibition *Mrs Prime Minister – Public Image, Private Lives*, which focuses on the roles played by the 25 women who have been wives to past Prime Ministers from 1901 to 2007. The exhibition can be viewed at Old Parliament House, Canberra, until 29 June 2008.

Find out more about the travelling exhibition at <http://www.oph.gov.au/mrspm/>

## News from the JCPML collection with David Wylie

### A tale of three cut-throat razors

Among the more unusual items in the JCPML collection is a set of three cut-throat razors which belonged to John Curtin. (JCPML00287/5 & 6)

In his oral history interview, Curtin's son describes his father's razors as

anniversary. Do you know I commenced the day by shaving with the razor my father used. And this kind of sentimentality will, I hope, appeal to you. It does to me.' (JCPML00027/2)



being 'bloody sharp' and remembers him using pieces of paper torn from old telephone books to wipe the lather off the blades. (JCPML00855/1)

Curtin's daughter also mentions the cut-throat razors, relating that when her father 'was near to death someone asked him to nominate a few of the highlights of his career. After thinking for a moment he named one: "Shaving myself with a cut-throat razor high in the sky at the point of no return, midway across the Atlantic in 1944." Flight conditions in wartime were not the smooth, deluxe affairs of today. Curtin had shaved hundreds of times on trains throughout Australia, but obviously regarded this particular shave as a small achievement.' (JCPML00964/202)

Correspondence from 1939 tells us more about the razors. Sir Walter James, a prominent Perth lawyer who was Premier of WA from 1902-04 and Chancellor of the University of WA from 1930-36, sent a telegram to Curtin with good wishes for his 54<sup>th</sup> birthday. In his reply Curtin wrote: 'That you should have been able to think of me at present adds greatly to the pleasure of this

A 1943 letter from Sir Walter's children to the Prime Minister held in papers at the National Archives of Australia, thanks John Curtin for his 'kind message of sympathy' on the death of their father. 'Altho' on the other side of the political fence Dad had a great admiration for you...He spoke of you always with great regard and great confidence. It was his hope, and it is ours, that you will continue to guide us on to victory.' (M1415, 228 or JCPML00809/228)

On the political front, relations between John Curtin and Sir Walter James were not always so cordial. As editor of the *Westralian Worker* Curtin wrote articles in 1921 and 1923 critical of Sir Walter's stance on child welfare and his opposition to Labor's immigration policies. Sir Walter in his turn is quoted as referring to 'the venomous atmosphere which surrounds the executive bodies of the Labor Movement in Australia'. (JCPML00302/220 & 336)

A not so cut-throat relationship?

**David Wylie is the JCPML Archives Technician**

## Curtin University Library News Green Library

The Library is going green! For example, the Robertson Library on Curtin's Bentley campus is saving energy by remotely switching off all 300 public computers when the building closes, removing light globes to reduce lighting where it's not needed, buying energy-efficient equipment, shading windows and simply encouraging people to turn off lights after leaving rooms.

Last year, the Library used about 5 million pages of paper through printing and photocopying. In 2008 we've introduced double-sided printing for students and staff as the default to drastically cut this figure. As well recycled paper is now used across the Library to reduce our environmental footprint.

See the Green Library website for more details and to share ideas <http://library.curtin.edu.au/greenlibrary/>

Until mid-June, the Robertson Library is hosting two exhibitions which will appeal to history buffs and book lovers alike.

*The Art of the Possible* focuses on Australia's foreign policy between 1935 and 1950. Colourful, informative panels form a backdrop for three bronze figurines of John Curtin.

To celebrate Library Week (19-25 May) an exhibition of 16 paintings by Capel-based artist Lesley Jackes will be on display in the Library. The artworks interpret popular literary fiction. The featured books are held in Robertson Library's collection.

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