



**JOHN CURTIN PRIME  
MINISTERIAL LIBRARY**

## The Politics of Conscience

Taking to heart John Curtin's values of vision, leadership and social equity, Senator Natasha Stott Despoja spoke eloquently on the importance of progressive politics in an era of profound social, economic and technological change for the third annual JCPML Anniversary Lecture commemorating the 55th anniversary of John Curtin's death.

The JCPML Anniversary Lecture takes pride of place in the JCPML annual calendar of events and a capacity

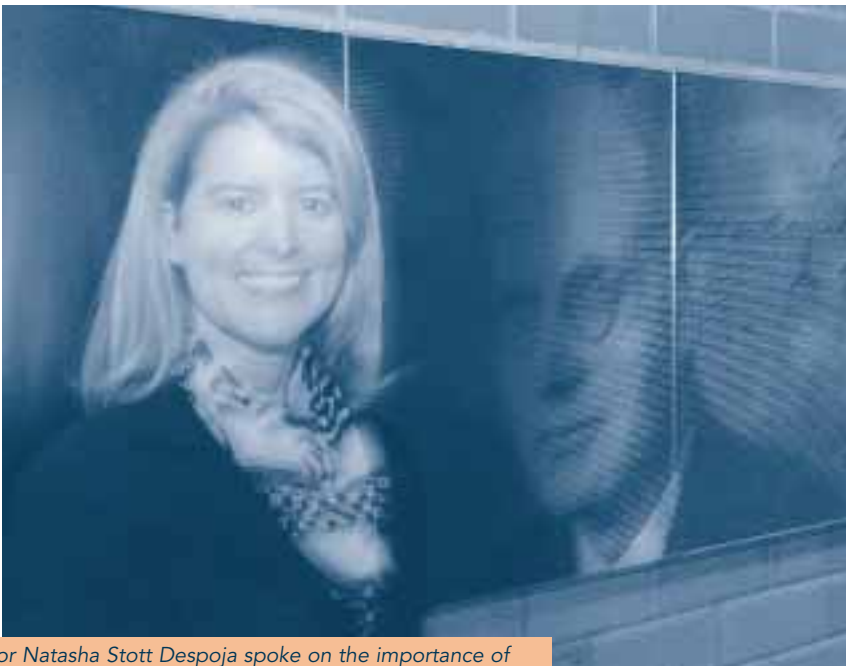
that were thought provoking and stimulated debate and scholarship.'

Under the title *The Politics of Conscience*, Senator Stott Despoja paid tribute to Curtin's leadership of Australia, based on his strong ideals and an equally strong desire to lead the country in a new direction, and contrasted his leadership with the politics of today, saying: 'This style of leadership holds lessons for today's politics, as Australia negotiates profound challenges and changes in a climate of declining trust in political institutions. The politics of conscience offers a means of restoring faith in the political process, and of reassuring people through times of change.'

The Senator criticised the way current politics had replaced Curtin's vision with short-term narrowly focused policy-making and the way in which economic efficiency had become more important than equity. 'In a political and social climate of

rapid change, we must develop the new institutions and approaches that can respond to human needs as readily as to new economic and technological developments,' she said. 'The divide between haves and have-nots continues to grow, with policies which entrench privilege and advantage being enacted and measures to address poverty and increase access to opportunities cut...There is a need for the vision, meaning, and conscience espoused by John Curtin.'

A transcript of the Senator's speech is available on the JCPML website under 'What's On'.



Senator Natasha Stott Despoja spoke on the importance of progressive politics at the third JCPML Anniversary Lecture

crowd of 250 people attended to hear Senator Stott Despoja speak. Previous lectures were given by distinguished speakers Mrs Hazel Hawke and the Hon. Gough Whitlam.

'When the JCPML first conceived the idea of an annual Anniversary Lecture, we had a vision that over time it would become JCPML's premier event,' said JCPML Director, Dr Vicki Williamson. 'We wanted the Anniversary Lecture to take on a high profile in order to appeal to a wide cross section of the community and to attract speakers who would present lectures



It's hard to believe we are more than half way through the year already. 2000 has been a very busy year for the JCPML with the development of a major new exhibition underway, planning for our successful third anniversary lecture in July, a continuing program of digital scanning at remote sites, and the launch of a new publication and a new education program. During July, our current JCPML Visiting Scholar, Dr John Edwards, paid us an extended visit during which we were able to assist with him with research for a forthcoming publication and public lecture next year. In addition, staff from the JCPML have been working in partnership with the John Curtin Gallery to develop an exciting exhibition focusing on Hazel Hawke and art in the 1980s.

All this activity is part of the phased approach that the JCPML has taken to the development of its research resource base and its outreach program, and we continue to go from strength to strength. Our statistics for this year attest to this growth. In this first six months of the year, staff have retrieved over 3,300 items for researchers, an increase of 636% over last year's average; answered 22% more enquiries than last year, hosted 57% more students, and digitized nearly 28,000 items for the Electronic Research Archive, an increase of 3954% from last year. Over all, a very busy year so far! The success of our achievements is now beginning to be reflected in the reputation we are establishing within the professional community and with our supporters. We certainly extend a warm welcome to the community to come and visit – either in person or virtually - and see what we are achieving for yourselves.

Dr Vicki Williamson  
JCPML Director

## John Curtin's railway carriage

Called the *Prince of Wales* or *Special Services Car 1*, the railway carriage that transported John Curtin between Canberra and Perth during the war torn years of his prime ministership, is currently undergoing restoration at the Midland Railway Yards by the Great Southern Railway, owners of the Indian Pacific, under the supervision of Philippa Rogers.

The carriage has had a long and interesting history. It was named the *Prince of Wales* because shortly after it was built in 1920 it was used to carry the visiting Prince of Wales and his entourage from Melbourne to Perth. During the trip the carriage was derailed though nobody was hurt, and John Curtin, in his capacity as editor of the *Westralian Worker*, wrote on 9 July 1920: '[A]s last Monday's railway accident exposed the Prince of Wales...to serious danger involving nothing short of life itself, we feel it demanded of us to publicly attest our deep satisfaction that



The interior of the Prince of Wales carriage showing the restored dining room and photo showing room as John Curtin used it

the derailment of the Prince's carriage was unattended by physical injury of any kind to either himself or his companions on the train...'



During World War Two the carriage was also used to carry gold bullion away from WA. It is approximately 75 feet (25 metres) long and contains a dining area, kitchen, a bedroom suite, which Curtin would have occupied, a bathroom and several 'bedrooms' or sleeping compartments.

A second carriage, *Special services Car 2*, is also undergoing mechanical restoration and refurbishment. This carriage was built as a lounge car in 1917.

Philippa has been involved with the restoration project since its inception and is writing a book about the history of the carriages which will be completed later this year. Each carriage takes about 6 months to restore and the work is due for completion at the end of 2000.

## Digital Partnership Yields More Curtin Records

Between June and August, the JCPML, in partnership with the National Archives of Australia (NAA), have been involved in a project to digitize a collection of official and private correspondence compiled by the Prime Minister's Office during John Curtin's term in office (1941-1945). These records, Commonwealth Record Series 1416, are held by the NAA in their Canberra repository and have been temporarily transferred to their Western Australian office to allow the JCPML to undertake the remote site scanning.

The collection comprises 96 folders containing official and private correspondence on a range of events, subjects, people and issues, including birthday and Christmas greetings. The official correspondence covers routine administrative concerns such as traveling expenses and communications, as well as correspondence with State Premiers on a variety of Commonwealth-State issues.

The private correspondence provides great insight into the everyday concerns of ordinary Australians during World War Two, ranging from the ban on the Communist Party to pensions for de facto widows of servicemen, uniform taxation to industrial



National Archives staff Jen Ford (left) and Acting Regional Director Alan Ralph watch Anne-Marie Musca from JCPML working at the remote digital scanning site.

disputes and the reduction of the basic wage. There is also a large and colourful collection of Christmas cards from friends, the general public and overseas service personnel.

JCPML staff are working to include the documents in the JCPML Electronic Research Archive, but in the meantime, to gain a flavour of the correspondence, check out our digital project, *John Curtin: A Prime Minister and his People*, under 'Online Resource Materials' on the website.

## What's new on the website!

Check under 'Online Resources' for a couple of new additions to the JCPML website. *What's on this month in John Curtin's Life* lets you know more about our wartime PM's activities and lifestyle, while *Commemorating Australian Prime Ministers* lists all the known memorials to our former prime ministers - including buildings, monuments, schools, organisations and events. If you know of any that we've overlooked, contact us with the details and we'll be happy to list the information and add photographs or links.

## Beginnings exhibition returns home

The *Beginnings* photographic exhibition which was on display at the JCPML in October last year and which travelled to Canberra to be exhibited at the Australian War Memorial between April and July 2000, is now being transported back to its home at the MacArthur Foundation in Norfolk Virginia. The exhibition, which remembers the occupation of Japan in the aftermath of World War Two, was visited by nearly 9000 people while it was in Perth.

## Award Winning Publication

On 17 August, Ms Kandy-Jane Henderson, JCPML Archivist, accepted a High Commendation award for a JCPML educational resource, *John Curtin and International Relations during World War II*, for a 'publication making the greatest contribution to archives or a related field in Australia written by or on behalf of a corporate body.' The Mander Jones Awards are sponsored by the Australian Society of Archivists.

The book brings together a large number of photographs, oral histories and documents, including private and official correspondence, speeches and media reports from the JCPML collection and represents an important addition to the stock of resource materials for secondary school students studying history and society and environment. It can be purchased from the JCPML for \$38.50 (including GST) plus postage and handling (\$3.00) – Phone (08) 9266 2414 to place your order.

## Welcome Mat for Visitors

The JCPML welcomes all visitors, especially those traveling from interstate or overseas, to our facilities. Our friendly staff are happy to give you a tour of the building and exhibition.

## New Exhibition Progress

*Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia*, a new exhibition partially funded by a grant from the Centenary of Federation Community Projects Program, is currently being developed by the JCPML to be officially opened at the celebration for John Curtin day, 6 October this year.

When Australia became a nation in January 1901, John Curtin was just 16 years old - both were filled with youthful enthusiasm and hope for the future, and yet both also carried traces of social, political and economic inequality stemming from the 1890s depression. What then were the dreams and fears of young Australia, and a young man who would one day be our prime minister? How was that joint youthful enthusiasm tempered and shaped by experience?

According to exhibition curators Drs Andrea Witcomb and Bobbie Oliver, "In following the development of John Curtin's political thinking and career, this exhibition traces the development of Australia into full adulthood - the moment when it had to stand apart from Britain and defend its own soil. This exhibition is an exploration, through the eyes of John Curtin, of what it means to be a nation."

The exhibition has been timed to coincide with the celebrations for marking Australia's centenary of its Federation next year and is an exploration, through the eyes of one of Australia's most prominent early citizens, of what it means to be a nation. The exhibition will be open to the public and will also be a major part of the JCPML's school education program.

## John Curtin radio biography goes to air

Early in July, ABC Radio National broadcast a Hindsight radio biography on John Curtin. Bill Bunbury of the ABC Social History Unit worked in collaboration with the JCPML to prepare the documentary, making use of oral histories from the JCPML collection and including interviews with JCPML Visiting Scholars Drs David Day and John Edwards. The biography traces Curtin's life from his birth in rural Victoria to his death in office on the eve of Allied victory. The JCPML will use a shortened version of the broadcast in its new exhibition, *Shaping the Nation: John Curtin and Australia*.



Bill Bunbury of the ABC Social History Unit puts the John Curtin biography to air.

## Hazel Hawke Scholarship

The inaugural winner of this year's Hazel Hawke Undergraduate Scholarship was Jennifer Sterry, a mother of five from Edgewater. Jenny will enrol as a mature age student in the Bachelor of Education, majoring in Asian Studies. The scholarship is a collaborative project between the Curtin University of Technology, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library and Mrs Hazel Hawke. The Scholarship will cover Jenny's full-time HECS fees as well as an annual grant of \$4,000 for up to three years to help with other study expenses.

Major sponsors of the Scholarship are the ALP National Secretariat, the ACTU, BankWest and Curtin University of Technology.

## Contributions and Support since April 2000

Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
 Australian Labor Party (WA Branch)  
 J S Battye Library of WA History  
 David Black  
 George Blazevic  
 Jackie Garland  
 Robin Glenie  
 Hazel Hawke  
 Betty Keene  
 National Archives of Australia  
 Tom Stannage  
 Natasha Stott Despoja

## Visitors to the JCPML Challenge Bank Reading Room

Ann Archer  
 Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee members  
 Jan Bishop  
 Geoffrey Bolton  
 Toby Burrows  
 Ann Curthoys  
 Toby Davidson  
 Alysia Debowski  
 Karpane Desai  
 John Edwards  
 Jenny Gregory  
 John Halden  
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 Steve O'Connor  
 Jared Reed  
 Joan Ritchie  
 John Ritchie  
 Natasha Stott Despoja  
 Kees Van den Styar  
 Margaret Vincent  
 Ossie Williamson  
 Peter Williamson

## John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

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