Curtin Centre program is up and running

The last few months have been a busy time for The John Curtin Centre, with activities ranging from a national political history exhibition in Canberra to teacher training courses in Brunei.

At the John Curtin International Institute, the cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary charter is reflected in the diversity of its activities.

Motorola International vice-president, Dr Terrence Heng, became our first executive-in-residence when he arrived to help develop the framework for the Institute's scenario planning unit.

The scenario planning unit will provide international organisations with long-range forecasts for countries in the dynamic Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

Later in the year, world leaders in the field of spatial computing will gather in Perth for a conference co-hosted by the Institute and Curtin University's School of Computing.

Meanwhile, the Institute was involved in a series of three short courses for science teachers, including a week-long program in Brunei. The courses attracted teachers from Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Brunei and America.

The Curtin Briefing series continued in Sydney in July when the Deputy Prime Minister, Kim Beazley, briefed business leaders on regional economic development opportunities. The John Curtin Centre would play an important role in helping the Australian economy

"mesh" into the neighbouring regions, Mr Beazley told his audience.

Also in July, The John Curtin Centre - and particularly the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library - played a key role in a national exhibition on our war-time Prime Minister, John Curtin.

The Centre provided funding for the exhibition, which was developed by the Australian Archives with assistance from the Prime Ministerial Library. The exhibition is currently on a national tour and will go on permanent display in the Prime Ministerial Library in 1997.

On the Gallery front, the curator of the John Curtin Gallery, John Barrett-Lennard is holding discussions with interstate galleries about collaborative projects and opportunities for the John Curtin Gallery to host travelling exhibitions.

John is also about to embark on the mammoth task of reviewing and appraising the university's art collection, which amounts to around 2000 pieces.

Patrons and Supporters of The John Curtin Centre

The Hon. Paul Keating, MP
Prime Minister of Australia

The Hon. John Howard
Leader of the Australian Federal Opposition

The Hon. George Bush
Former President of the United States of America, 1988-1992

Sir Charles Court, AK, KCMG, OBE Former
Premier of Western Australia

Sir Laurence Brodie-Hall, AO, CMG

Mr. Warren Christopher
The Secretary of State, the United States of America

Mr Raymond Johnson AO
Chairman of the United States Committee

Deputy Prime Minister, Kim Beazley, with George Nicholls, Director General of the Australian Archives and Vicki Williamson of the Prime Ministerial Library, looking at the exhibition on John Curtin.
CURTIN INSTITUTE THINK-TANK LOOKS AT ASIA-PACIFIC TRENDS

The John Curtin International Institute's scenario planning unit hosted its first executive-in-residence in August. Motorola Vice President and Director of External Technology Planning, Dr Terry Heng, spent a week in residence at the Institute helping to formulate the basic structure for the new strategic planning unit.

The Institute established the unit to provide a think tank and strategic planning resource which will look at economic, political, and social trends in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

The John Curtin International Institute's Dean of Programs, Dr Joanna Barker, said the strategic planning unit is business-oriented and would seek corporate and government views on how it should be structured.

"It isn't just an academic exercise. The strategic planning unit will have a sharp business focus because our operations have to be self-funding," said Dr Barker.

"A corporation that is considering a Malaysian joint venture, for example, might want to examine questions such as who will replace the present Prime Minister when he leaves office and whether the transition is likely to result in social and policy changes."

"Multi-national corporations need that sort of information and so do government organisations, whether they're from Australia, America or the countries of the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions," said Dr Barker.

Managers from large corporations or government organisations will be able to use the John Curtin International Institute as a base to work with Australian and Asian business leaders, academics and government representatives on specific projects.

SPATIAL COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY

An international conference in Perth in December will bring together specialists from fields as diverse as health service planning, mineral exploration and waste recycling.

Their common ground at the conference - hosted by the John Curtin International Institute and the Curtin University School of Computing - will be the use of "spatial computing" technology.

Spatial computing applications range from systems that use computer and video technology to sort bottles for recycling, to mapping systems that can display the distribution of particular illnesses in a community and compare the trends to the availability of health services.

"One of the unusual aspects of this conference is that it will be an interdisciplinary event," said the head of the Department of Computer Science, Professor Terry Caelli.

"We expect quite a range of people to attend, from artificial intelligence specialists and computer scientists to geographers, health workers, and exploration geologists."

"These groups don't usually get many chances to get together so it will be a rare opportunity for them to share ideas and different ways of applying these technologies," Professor Caelli said.

Papers will be delivered by spatial computing specialists from Michigan State University, the University of Berne in Switzerland, Rutgers University in New Jersey, the University of Alberta in Canada, Australian National University, the CSIRO and Curtin University.

PORTRAIT OF A PRIME MINISTER

He may look a little young for the role but this is a portrait of an Australian Prime Minister.

This portrait of John Curtin at the tender age of two was in a selection of family photographs recently presented to the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library by Mr Curtin's daughter, Mrs Elsie MacLeod. Mrs MacLeod has also contributed her unique perspective on John Curtin's life and political career, through an oral history recording for the library.

"Mrs MacLeod and the Curtin family have been very supportive and are providing us with memorabilia and insights into the character of John Curtin," said Prime Ministerial Library project manager Vicki Williamson.

Ms Williamson has also been negotiating with bodies like the Australian Archives and National Library to obtain copies of documents, oral histories and other material. For example, a major Australian Archives exhibition on John Curtin, opened recently in Canberra, will be permanently housed in the Prime Ministerial Library.

Copies of material from official sources will be supplemented by more personal contributions from people who knew John Curtin in some way, such as Mrs Frances Shea of Palmyra in Perth who worked with John Curtin when he was editor of The Westralian Worker.

Others who have come forward with photographs and stories include Mr Bill Hall and Mr William Wheeler, both RAAF pilots who escorted Curtin's coffin back to Perth and took part in the funeral procession.
IN HIS OWN WORDS

John Curtin's ideological evolution from radical firebrand to trusted Prime Minister is traced in a forthcoming book by Associate Professor of History and Politics at Curtin University, David Black.

Entitled "In His Own Words - John Curtin's Speeches and Writings", the book will be published later this year by Paradigm Press, the publishing arm of Curtin's School of Social Sciences.

The book includes newspaper columns written by Curtin, who worked as a journalist before going into politics, and extracts from his political speeches, interwoven with biographical details.

"John Curtin's life is a very interesting story and although this book will be of interest to scholars, I hope it will also appeal to people who haven't known much about Curtin until now," said Associate Professor Black.

In researching the book, David Black collected copies of Curtin's speeches and newspaper columns which will be lodged in the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library.

David Black has written extensively on Western Australian politics and was the curatorial adviser on a major exhibition about John Curtin, which was developed by the Australian Archives with assistance from the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library.

CRAFT TRENDS

A sociological examination of women's craft practices in the Asian-Pacific region and their role in local economies is the subject of a new book edited by Curtin University sociologist, Lorna Kaino.

Entitled "The Necessity of Craft: development and women's craft practices in the Asian-Pacific region", the book will contribute to cross-cultural understanding in the region and has been supported by funding from the John Curtin International Institute.

The book will have its international launch in September in Beijing at the United Nations World Conference for Women which is expected to attract 40,000 people.

Writers from the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Australia, Singapore, China and New Zealand have contributed chapters which address sociological issues and trends in women's craft practices.

The John Curtin Centre

Straddling the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions, Australia is located in the world's most dynamic growth zone.

These important regions are the focus of The John Curtin Centre, an international centre of learning and co-operation based in Perth, Western Australia.

The John Curtin Centre provides a forum for the economic, social and political leaders - of today and tomorrow - to discuss issues of shared concern and interest.

The John Curtin Centre has three complementary components:

The John Curtin International Institute

The Centre's educational heart is the John Curtin International Institute, which will co-ordinate and facilitate academic programs, conferences, short courses, fellowships and research projects, with a particular focus on issues affecting the future of the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific regions.

Underpinning all of the Institute's activities is a commitment to a cross-cultural perspective, international relevance, and a multi-disciplinary approach.

The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

The John Curtin Centre includes Australia's first Prime Ministerial Library, which will honour John Curtin. Modelled on American presidential libraries it will provide a unique education facility for scholarship and research through the development of comprehensive archives and memorabilia.

The John Curtin Gallery

The John Curtin Gallery will contribute to an enhanced cultural understanding of the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific regions through the collection of new works and artists-in-residence programs. The Gallery will also manage Curtin University's existing extensive art collection and establish a first-class exhibition space for visiting historical and art exhibitions.

The John Curtin Centre Management team, left to right, Vicki Williamson, Prime Ministerial Library Manager, David Waddell, Executive Director John Curtin Centre, John Barrett-Lennard, Gallery Curator and Professor Joanna Barker, Dean of Programs John Curtin International Institute.
PROGRAMME FOR
INDONESIAN
DOCTORS

A training programme in occupational health and safety, designed specifically for doctors in Indonesia, is being established by the John Curtin International Institute and the Curtin School of Public Health. Dr Soewarta Kosen from the Indonesian Ministry of Health visited the Institute in August to assist with the development of the Post Graduate programme.

The curriculum will address the local needs of doctors in Indonesia and encompass occupational and community health.

It will include training in risk identification, hazard control, health promotion and public health management.

The Institute, with an AusAid grant, will also host a workshop in Serang, an industrial area near Jakarta, in November and will elicit input from Indonesian doctors and local business on specific occupational and community health needs to be addressed by the programme.

SCIENCE TEACHERS
UPGRADE SKILLS

Teachers from Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, America and Australia have been upgrading their teaching techniques through a professional development program conducted by the John Curtin International Institute and the National Key Centre for School Science and Mathematics at Curtin University.

Three short courses for science and maths teachers were offered in Brunei, Canberra and Perth during June and July.

International education is one of the John Curtin International Institute's key areas of interest.

The regional scope and content of the professional development program reflects the institute's focus on the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions and its cross-cultural emphasis.

The Brunei course, which attracted 150 maths and science teachers, was conducted in co-operation with Universiti Brunei Darussalam and covered a range of teaching and learning issues, while the Canberra course focussed on the use of interactive science centres such as Questacon in Canberra and Scitech in Perth.

The third course, held at Curtin University, was delivered by Associate Professor Bill Cobern of Arizona State University.

Dr Cobern's course examined cross-cultural issues and the potential for cultural differences to cause problems in the science classroom.