The John Curtin Centre is on track

According to The John Curtin Centre's Executive Director David Waddell, construction of the Centre i.e. the John Curtin International Institute, the John Curtin Gallery and the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library is on schedule and proceeding as planned.

"Components of it will be completed in March next year and the segment including the International Institute by September 1997," said Mr Waddell.

The official opening of Australia's first Prime Ministerial Library, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, will be in 1998.

"The buildings are funded by the Federal and State governments, the corporate sector and the University," said Mr Waddell.

"This is an excellent example of cooperation between government, business and academe. The building and total project has also generated significant interest from the wider community and staff of the University, who know how important the Centre is in enabling the University to make a substantial contribution to the region."

Mr Waddell said the current fundraising project aimed to identify five million dollars over the next five years to provide a permanent infrastructure for the International Institute.

"We are on target with the fundraising and are indebted to major companies like Motorola, Digital, other companies and individuals," he said.

Building work continues on The John Curtin Centre

From the Vice-Chancellor

The John Curtin Centre is an innovative development of Curtin University of Technology which we believe has much to offer businesses, corporations and governments throughout the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

The Centre aims to bring together future business and political leaders from throughout the region to study and research issues of mutual interest which will help enhance development, stability and prosperity both at an individual and a collective level.

A core component of the Centre's activities is scenario planning - a unique tool for preparing organisations to meet the challenges of the future.

In the increasingly global environment in which we operate, it is not enough just to know what our local colleagues and competitors are doing. We need to be aware of the larger forces at work in the region - the social, economic, political and religious issues which shape the changing environment.

Scenario planning helps organisations to look outward and to prepare for change, so that they may better predict business and technology trends and make wiser investment decisions.

This newsletter will give you a better understanding of what scenario planning is about, and what it can achieve. It also will help to familiarise you with the aims and objectives of The John Curtin Centre, and its place in regional affairs.

We are confident that it is a Centre you will be hearing more and more about in the near future.

John Maloney
Vice-Chancellor
Curtin University of Technology

Scenario planning gives vital edge

Scenario planning is vital in preparing organisations to meet future situations according to Motorola Vice President and Director of External Technology Planning Dr Terry Heng.

He said scenario planning was used regularly by multinationals to make investment decisions and predict technology and business trends.

Dr Heng spent a week at Curtin University, Perth last year as the John Curtin International Institute's first visiting executive-in-residence.

With Dr Heng's assistance, the Institute has established a new Scenario Planning and Research Unit (SPARU) at the University.

SPARU is supported by Motorola, Digital and CyberResearch as well as a number of less technology-focused companies to promote understanding of the cultural and political issues in the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

Dr Heng said SPARU was ideally placed to study certain issues and share them with the international business community.

"A much more diverse group of people can be brought together than a company could by itself," said Dr Heng. "Such a body of expertise allows executives to get a good idea of how the Asia Pacific area works.

"Globally, Perth is not isolated since it sits geographically at the boundary between the Asia Pacific region and the Pan American states. It represents both Western and new Asian Pacific culture and values."

The John Curtin International Institute's orientation to the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions allows organisations to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, environmental, political and technological issues of their target markets and to factor them into the decision-making process.

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The John Curtin Centre aims to enhance international relationships

The Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions are the focus of The John Curtin Centre, an international centre of learning and co-operation in Perth, Western Australia.

"The Centre's charter is to enhance Australia's relationship with the countries of the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions and facilitate collaboration within the regions," said The John Curtin Centre's Executive Director, David Waddell.

"Located at Curtin University of Technology, the Centre's activities will reflect the practical, 'hands-on' approach that has become a hallmark of the University.

"The Centre provides a forum for the region's economic, social and political leaders - of today and tomorrow - to discuss issues of shared concern and interest," said Mr Waddell.

The Centre is building on regional links already established by the University through joint-venture campuses in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

As a patron of The John Curtin Centre, the Prime Minister, Mr John Howard, has continued to support the project and has agreed to perform the Foundation Stone laying early in 1997.

The Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Kim Beazley, said The John Curtin Centre's enmeshment in the Asian and Indian Ocean region was important to Australia's future survival.

"Corporations wanting to tap into the potential of the region would find the John Curtin International Institute a particularly useful resource because it is the only such Institute of its kind which also has an Indian Ocean focus," he said.

The John Curtin Centre comprises the John Curtin International Institute, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library and the John Curtin Gallery.

The John Curtin International Institute is the educational heart of the Centre, focusing on Pacific, Indian Ocean and Asian affairs.

The Prime Ministerial Library is Australia's first prime ministerial library.

It will help preserve the cultural heritage of Australia from a period that was both critical and formative to the future development of the nation.

A comprehensive collection of information and memorabilia associated with the life and times of John Curtin is being assembled, and the library will be a permanent home for a major exhibition on John Curtin. The library will have sophisticated research facilities including electronic access to other information sources.

The John Curtin Gallery will contribute to an enhanced cultural understanding of the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions within the University and the wider community through exhibitions, the collection of new works and artist-in-residence programs. It will also provide space for Curtin University's own comprehensive art collection.

Already operations are underway in the Centre through the Institute's research and academic program, its growing collection of John Curtin archival materials and memorabilia and its acquisition program for the Gallery's first-class exhibition space.

Margaret Thatcher said in 1969: "No woman in my time will be Prime Minister."

Obviously, the organisation that allows for the unpredictable as well as the predictable has a substantial edge should the unpredictable occur.

Curtin University's Dean of Programs Professor Jo Barker, said the Scenario Planning and Research Unit was not just an academic exercise.

"SPARU has in train a large portfolio of specialist services such as scenario planning workshops, leadership development retreats and multinational and bisectional exchanges," said Professor Barker.

"SPARU will also hold graduate programs including seminars and specialist courses to encourage future promotion, will produce publications for general or proprietary readership and will act as the focus for a high level regional networking system.

"Multinational corporations need that sort of information and so do government organisations."

Professor Barker said the John Curtin International Institute also concentrated on short courses and seminars.

"This is in recognition of the limited time countries in the Asia Pacific region can spare their personnel," she said.

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Scenario planning

Continued from page 1

Dr Heng said with scenario planning it was possible to foresee a number of possible outcomes.

Events like the falling of the Berlin Wall - seen as highly unlikely by most strategic planners - could be considered well in advance by scenario planners.

A scenario planning exercise typically goes like this.

A diverse group of experts, researchers and executives spend two days putting forward all known information on a given subject or objective.

This includes even the most remote or unlikely probabilities.

Sub-teams then refine and expand the scenarios using up-to-date research, the implications are discussed and strategic options developed.

Options are customised, screened and prioritised before being communicated to relevant management for refinement and implementation.

The process can take up to 16 weeks from planning to development of strategic options.

Dr Heng said although scenario planning was effective as a tool for future planning, it could not forecast the future.

"It encourages senior executives to consider various options and plan strategies according to the gradual emergence of information or events in the future, moving in three or four directions," he said.

Scenario planning is an important tool for any major company, institution or government with a strong commitment to strategic planning and risk assessment.

Traditional strategic planning uses predictions based on linear models like historical data and justifiable trends.

Dr Heng said while this may be the safe road and the most likely scenario, it was not necessarily the only scenario.

"What if other scenarios eventuate?" he said.

"Companies and countries can miss opportunities to make money or forge strategic alliances."

He cited numerous historical examples where the best-placed people got it wrong.

Thomas Watson, founder and chairman of IBM said in 1943: "I think there is a world market for about five computers."
New archivist joins the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

Ms Kandy-Jane Henderson has recently been appointed to the position of Archivist within the University's Library and Information Service.

In this position Ms Henderson will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library.

A former Team Leader (Recordkeeping Services) at the Library and Information Service Of Western Australia, Ms Henderson holds dual qualifications in archives and librarianship.

In 1996 Ms Henderson was awarded the honour of Laureate of the Australian Society of Archivists for her outstanding achievement in archives work.

Her professional activities focus on the promotion of our cultural heritage through the archival medium as well as continuing education and guidance to professionals within the archives and record management fields.

Ms Henderson has been actively involved with a range of professional committees and is a member of the National Council Rules Review Committee of the Australian Society of Archivists.

CyberResearch provides a customised research service

CyberResearch is a high-technology company specialising in information brokering and development of knowledge tools.

All three partners in this newly developed company are Curtin graduates.

The company also provides a customised research service for the John Curtin International Institute's newly formed scenario planning unit and some $50,000 of in-kind support.

CyberResearch first became involved with the John Curtin International Institute when the Institute's Dean of Programs Professor Jo Barker saw their potential and offered them a broking job earlier this year.

"Digital commerce is shifting people's perceptions from a local to an international perspective," said CyberResearch managing director, Mr Ivan Gustavino.

"Our involvement stemmed from the John Curtin International Institute's scenario planning unit wanting to be at the forefront of the new technology.

"Scenario planning involves finding, filtering, interpreting, and organising a huge amount of information. It is an information-intensive task relying heavily on fast and efficient methods for locating and processing information."

To employ the latest technology in information retrieval and processing, CyberResearch has focused most of its research activities on the Internet, although they also research related literature and journals.

"We also have access to private databases and a large network of information brokers who assist us in our work," said Mr Gustavino.

"Processing the located information into a form that is easily assimilated by our clients is as crucial as locating the information," he said.

CyberResearch's technical director Kheong Chee based the company's research methodology on expertise he gained when completing his PhD.

More information about CyberResearch can be obtained from its Web site at the following URL: http://www.cyberres.com

Singapore researcher is first scholar-in-residence

Singapore researcher Dr Elena Lui became the John Curtin International Institute's first scholar-in-residence when she spent five weeks at Curtin University in April/May 1996.

Her residency was part of a four-city study of Singapore professionals in foreign postings.

Dr Lui, a senior lecturer in psychological studies at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, made Curtin her major stop on a study tour that included Perth, London, Hong Kong and her home base of Singapore.

She decided to base herself at Curtin after attending a John Curtin Centre meeting staged in Singapore.

Dr Lui is researching the success, problems, issues and lifestyle of Singapore professionals who venture overseas.

She said professionals who trained in one city and then moved to another frequently had to establish and re-establish themselves.

"You can't avoid this and it can have a profound effect on professional, family, social and recreational life," she said.

"This is an interesting part of the study."

Emanating from this research, Dr Lui will be delivering two conference papers on education research in Singapore in November 1996, and one paper on community education in Taipei in December.
Mrs Shea rekindles old memories

As Australia's first Prime Minister library, the new John Curtin Prime Minister Library (JCPML) will help preserve Australia's cultural heritage.

The period of John Curtin's prime ministership from 1941-1945 was both critical and formative to the future development of this nation.

"The memories and memorabilia of people who lived through World War II – some of whom knew Prime Minister John Curtin personally – will help develop the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library," said JCPML Director Ms Vicki Williamson.

One of these people is 86-year-old Frances Shea.

Mrs Shea worked for John Curtin as a typist for several years on the Westralian Worker newspaper while he was editor.

She has fond memories of the man who went on to lead Australia through the darkest days of the war, and said it was ironic that a man of peace should be elected prime minister at such a time.

"John Curtin represented all Australians while he was Prime Minister, regardless of their political beliefs," said Mrs Shea.

"He was a simple man who never forgot the little things and had no airs and graces."

Although in Canberra at the time of Mrs Shea's wedding, John Curtin remembered to send a hand-written letter with ten pounds sterling for Mrs Shea to buy a gift.

Ms Williamson said John Curtin's electorate of Fremantle was a rich source of material for the library collection.

The new library is being established at Curtin University of Technology as part of The John Curtin Centre along with

Mrs Shea examines a photograph of former staff members of the Westralian Worker with John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Director Vicki Williamson.

the John Curtin International Institute and the John Curtin Gallery.

"There are plenty of older people out there who knew John Curtin," said Ms Williamson.

"Mrs Shea was discovered after her grandson recognised her face in a Westralian Worker staff photograph published in a JCPML pamphlet."

The pamphlet appealed to residents to come forward with their memories or memorabilia of John Curtin.

The John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library is scheduled to open to the public next year.

The oral history given to the JCPML by Mrs Shea is now an important part of the growing JCPML collection.

Patrons and supporters

The John Curtin Centre has received the formal endorsement of Australian Prime Minister The Hon. John Howard MP, Leader of the Australian Federal Opposition The Hon. Kim Beazley MP, US Secretary of State The Hon. Warren Christopher, former US President The Hon. George Bush, former Premier of Western Australia The Hon. Charles Court, AK, KCMG, OBE, Chairman of the International Committee Sir Laurence Brodie-Hall, AO, CMG, and Chairman of the United States Committee Mr. Raymond Johnson AO.

Food and fibre opportunities

Scenario planning is being used as part of a joint project on food and fibre opportunities for the export of Australian products to Indonesia and from Indonesia to Australia.

The study has been commissioned for the International Agribusiness Marketing Association's (IAM), international conference to be held in Jakarta in 1997.

It involves the John Curtin International Institute, the Muresk Institute of Agriculture and the Institute for Research into International Competitiveness.

The project aims to provide Australian food and fibre exporting organisations with a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic and political issues of the Indonesian market.

Professor Jo Barker of the John Curtin International Institute's Scenario Planning and Research Unit (SPARU) and the Director of the Muresk Institute of Agriculture, Professor Murray McGregor, are using staff and management expertise from a wide range of disciplines and organisations.

Professor McGregor was formerly responsible for the management of a number of large, externally funded projects in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Indonesian trade, social and economic data will be identified through an Internet search routine developed as part of a recently completed Curtin University PhD study. The data will be assembled for analysis at a two-day workshop under scenario planning conditions with all possible options laid out.

The final stage will involve sub-teams refining and expanding the scenarios, discussing implications and developing strategic options.

Nations must rise to the challenge

Professor Carelli of the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland, believes the world is entering a new era of international competitiveness and must confront the challenge head-on.

Professor Carelli was guest lecturer at a combined Commission for Economic Development of Australia and John Curtin International Institute breakfast in July.

"The current world competitiveness environment is defined by specific trends which have a major impact on company strategy, and which also affect the ability of companies to develop competitive structures," said Professor Carelli.

"Trends such as the opening up of world markets, the dawn of electronically networked business and a change in the way businesses are managed, means there are more business opportunities today, but also more competitors," he said.

Professor Carelli was the director of the recently released World Competitiveness Report which ranked countries on their competitiveness using 225 separate measures. According to that report, Australia slipped from being the 14th most competitive nation in 1995 to 21st but Professor Carelli said the country could come back.

He said Australia had everything – the best products, resources, people and plenty of land – as well as a high level of energy. But, he said, it must rise to the challenge of being part of one of the most dynamic and fastest growing areas in the world, and this would mean a redefinition of markets, businesses and even work attitudes.