

Curtin University of Technology 'Look ever forward'

The great University should find its heroes in the present; its hope in the future; it should look ever forward; for it the past should be but a preparation for the greater days to be.

John Curtin, 'The Views of Labour', West Australian, 16 April 1932. JCPML00610/12

The Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) opened in 1967, becoming Curtin University of Technology in 1987. The University was named after John Curtin, in recognition of his contribution to Australia as war time leader, his special significance to WA as the only Australian Prime Minister to represent a WA seat, and his strong commitment to education and the pursuit of knowledge.

Today Curtin University of Technology is WA's largest university and is recognised internationally for the practical and applied nature of its research and courses. Research focuses on solving real world problems and courses equip graduates with essential skills and exposure to industry and business.

Contained within the shape of the shield which is an integral part of the Curtin logo, the displays in this part of the exhibition showcase some of the innovative and applied research taking place across the University's five areas of research strength.

- Resources and Energy
- ICT and Emerging Technologies
- Health, Ageing and Well-being
- Communities and Changing Environments
- Growth and Prosperity

Visitors can listen to the distinctive sounds of marine life, play with a simulation program to see how digital ecosystems react to different stimuli, learn about the factors influencing the spread of the SARS virus, and much more! Each featured research project is contributing in its own way to the sustainable social, environmental, and economic development of the State and the broader national and international community.



Exhibition Team

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Library

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Acknowledgments

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Curtin
University of Technology

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML)

The JCPML is part of the Library at Curtin. It recognises the contribution to Australian society of wartime prime minister and international statesman, John Curtin, 1885-1945. Prime Minister Curtin's inspirational leadership and political courage unified Australia during the grim years of World War Two.

The JCPML aims to advance knowledge and enrich culture by providing a focus for research and educational outreach programs which engage the Curtin and wider communities. It provides electronic access to its own collections, as well as to John Curtin related material held in other institutions world wide, via its Electronic Research Archive, ERA.

With Thanks To

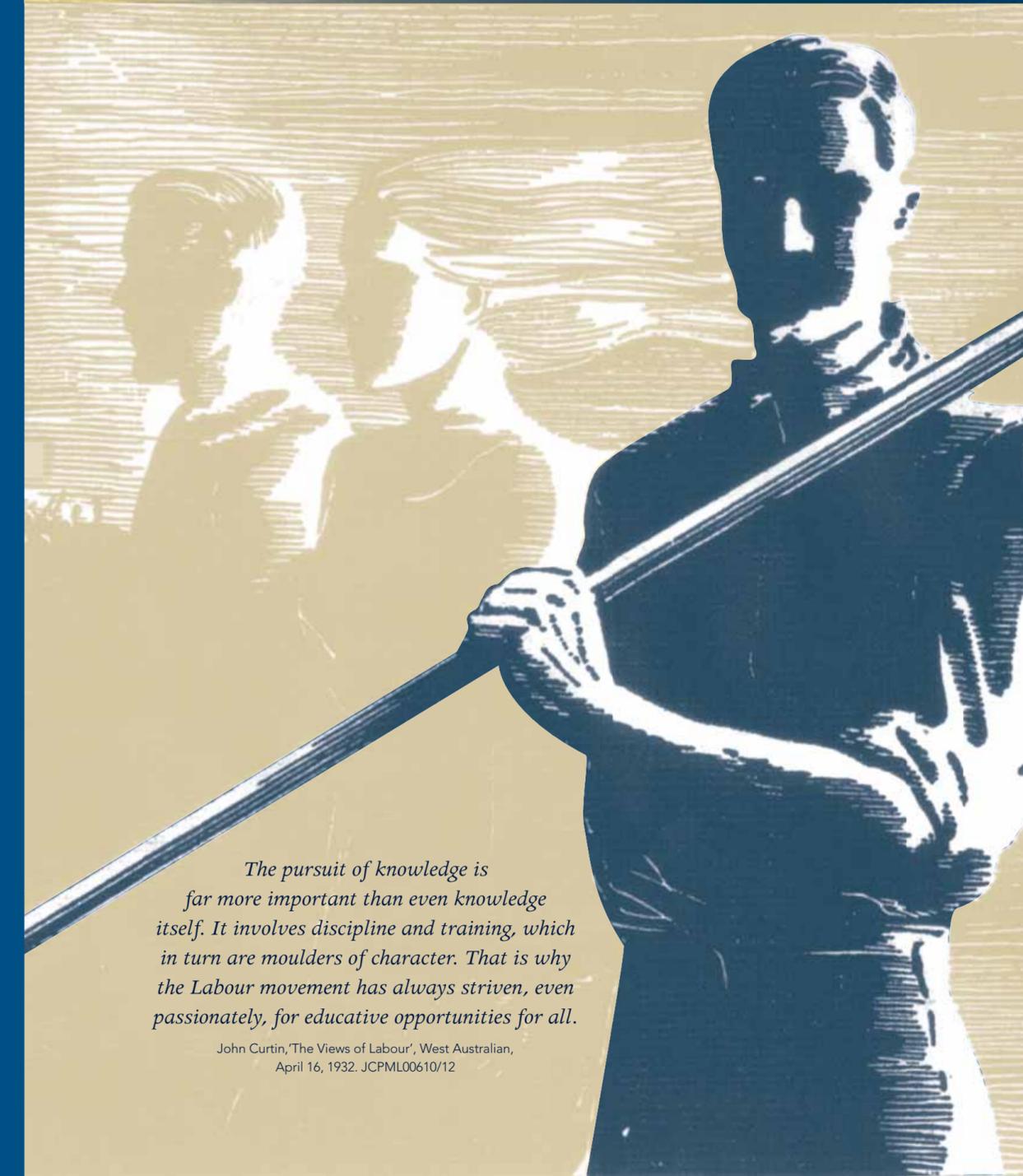
Aquinas College
Australian Labor Party
Australian National University
Australian War Memorial
Australiana Fund
Rick Barrett
BHP Billiton
Blessed Sacrament Congregation & St Francis' Church
Paul Bridges
Peter Dent
Joanne Castelli
CSIRO
John Curtin Family
Curtin University of Technology
Corporate Communications
Digital Media Unit
Office of Research & Development
Records & Archives Office
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The Pursuit of Knowledge: CURTIN, LOOKING EVER FORWARD



The pursuit of knowledge is far more important than even knowledge itself. It involves discipline and training, which in turn are moulders of character. That is why the Labour movement has always striven, even passionately, for educative opportunities for all.

John Curtin, 'The Views of Labour', West Australian, April 16, 1932. JCPML00610/12



An exhibition from the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

The Pursuit of Knowledge: CURTIN, LOOKING EVER FORWARD

John Curtin believed that education should be available to all and that universities should be firmly focused on the future. These values resonate strongly with the university named after Australia's war time prime minister in its vision to be a leading university in education and research.

This exhibition explores the shared beliefs of Curtin the man and Curtin the university – noting the passionate commitment of each to education and the pursuit of knowledge. Since its early days as the Western Australian Institute of Technology, the University has earned a reputation for applying creative thinking and ingenuity to the solution of real world problems.

From John Curtin's own education and the initiatives of his war time government in furthering tertiary education and research, the exhibition moves to a focus on the University and showcases some of the significant, innovative and exciting research currently being undertaken at Curtin.



Prime Minister Curtin

When John Curtin became prime minister his belief in the importance of education was translated into policies and decisions that promoted education and the advancement of knowledge.

Measures taken by the Curtin and succeeding Chifley Governments included the establishment of the Commonwealth Office of Education and the Universities Commission to deal with Commonwealth initiatives in:

- Funding the tertiary education of ex servicemen through the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme.
- Founding the Australian National University as a university with a focus on post-graduate research.
- Introducing Commonwealth scholarships to provide financial assistance to gifted students who would not otherwise be able to attend university.
- Cooperating with the States to maintain contact with overseas developments and to carry out active research work in Australia.



John Curtin: A Passion For Education

John Curtin's early education at a Christian Brothers' school in Melbourne emphasised learning by rote. By contrast, his later schooling in Charlton encouraged him to 'awaken an independent and enquiring mind' and develop a love of learning. He left school at age 14 and joined the workforce to help support his family.

As a young man John Curtin joined the Victorian Socialist Party which provided its members with a 'self-contained universe of social, educational and propagandist activity'. He thrived in this environment, studying hard and reading voraciously, especially in the area of economics. He became a capable teacher, speaker and writer.

As Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union (1911 to 1915) he wrote in the first issue of the union paper he founded:

...the great requirement is knowledge and organisation. Knowledge by workers of workers and of workers' conditions. We are to teach and learn!

John Curtin, 'Ourselves' Timber Worker, February 1913. JCPML00615/1

Moving to WA as editor of the Labor weekly, the Westralian Worker, John Curtin's driving impulse for educating workers and for self education continued. The motto of the paper's publisher suited him – 'A drop of ink will make millions think'. In his editorials, he stressed the need for more effective educational campaigns, social welfare programs and a policy of economic self-sufficiency for Australia.

As president of the Western Australian district of the Australian Journalists' Association from 1920 to 1925, John Curtin sought to improve its members' education as well as their wages and working conditions.

To associate for education is not less splendid, and is no less profitable, than to associate for wages.

Foreword by John Curtin in booklet outlining the Australian Journalists' Association Course of Study for 1922. JCPML00401/6



The war provided the impetus for research and technological advances to meet the often competing demands of industry and the military. There was a need for more of everything – weapons, ammunition, communications equipment, ships, aircraft, machinery, food, clothing – and a need for Australia to manufacture its own. The Government directed resources towards the war effort while also planning for post war reconstruction. Technical achievements in production were numerous and total production was impressive.

For example, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, later CSIRO) expanded its research into pests and diseases and the preservation of foodstuffs. This was immediately useful to the Australian Defence Forces with the development of a repellent to protect soldiers from mosquitoes carrying malaria and the development of innovative canned and dehydrated food items.

Knowledge is social in its origin, social in its nature, and social in its results. It expresses itself in achievement, and if the achievement is not advantageous to the community, to civilisation in fact, it becomes really an increased armament against society.

John Curtin, 'The Views of Labour', West Australian, 16 April 1932 JCPML00610/12