ALL IN THE FAMILY

The great-granddaughter of wartime prime minister John Curtin graduates

WELLNESS

TOURISM

The push to promote it 'down under'

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLBOX

The future for higher learning
Cite (sight) v. To put forward thought-provoking arguments; to offer insightful discussion and new perspectives on topics of social, political, economic or environmental relevance; to report on new thinking. Sight (sight) n. A feature or object in a particular place considered especially worth seeing. v. To frame or scrutinise community, research and business initiatives; to present points of view on current issues. Site (site) n. The location of a building or an organisation, esp. as to its environment. v. To place or position in a physical and social context.

cite_contributors

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Cover
Rebecca Curtin – Curtin graduate and great-granddaughter of John Curtin, former Australian prime minister (1941–1945) and namesake of the University.

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Web technology is a game-changer for teaching and learning at universities, and Curtin is setting the pace to provide a better experience for students.

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With greater promotion, Australia could be a highly sought after wellness tourism destination, and in Western Australia, Margaret River is the prime location identified.

Photo essay
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CURTIN University strives to honour the values of vision, leadership and community service demonstrated by its namesake, former prime minister John Curtin (1941–1945), and it is with great pride that the University has fostered a close relationship with several generations of the Curtin family.

From the establishment of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library in 1994 and the John Curtin Leadership Academy, to the annual John Curtin Medal Ceremony, members of the Curtin family have been involved with key activities of the University, representing the wartime leader over the years.

More recently, I was delighted that Rebecca Curtin – the great-granddaughter of former prime minister John Curtin – graduated from the University. Rebecca (who features on the cover of this issue of Cite) graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Mass Communication), following in the footsteps of her great-grandfather’s early career as a journalist. She was among 600 graduating students from the Faculty of Humanities in February this year, and joins the ranks of Curtin alumni who span the globe.

I am always delighted to profile the achievements of our alumni in Cite, and in this issue we feature a Walkley award-winning journalist, an Olympic athlete, a fashion designer and the chief executive officer of a high-profile sporting organisation. I trust you will enjoy reading about their respective successes as much as I did.

As Curtin works to develop graduates who will make a difference in the community, the University continually evaluates the quality of our teaching and learning practices to deliver an enhanced experience for all students. I am excited by the ideas and projects underway at Curtin to renovate the way students are taught in the digital era, which you can read about in ‘The future face of learning’ (page 10).

Research that results in outcomes which benefit the broader community is core to our University. The Tourism Research Cluster, within the Curtin Business School, is involved in collaborative work that aims to bring economic growth to Western Australia’s south-west region; in particular, Margaret River, with a focus on developing and promoting the area as a premier wellness tourism destination. ‘Healthy, wealthy and wise’ elaborates more on this research, on page 6.

These and other stories in Cite highlight the University’s commitment to excellence and innovation, as well as the vibrant culture that exists within the Curtin community.

Professor Jeanette Hacket
### Family ties

In February, Curtin University was proud to present a bachelor degree to the great-granddaughter of John Curtin, former Australian prime minister and namesake of the University. Rebecca Curtin graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Mass Communication), one of almost 600 graduating students from Curtin’s Faculty of Humanities who were celebrated at a ceremony held on 11 February.

“It’s a wonderful feeling to have graduated from Curtin. I know how proud my great-grandfather would be to know his legacy lives on through the University,” she says.

Rebecca Curtin’s study in media echoes her great-grandfather’s beginnings: John Curtin began his career as a journalist, writing under the name Jack Curtin.

“I think I’ve always known writing and media would be a part of my career,” she says.

“My great-grandfather had a thirst for education and furthering one’s knowledge, and that’s what I find in myself every time I write a story or interview someone new.”

She was also heavily involved with the John Curtin Leadership Academy (JCLA), the University’s premier undergraduate student leadership program that aims to develop future leaders with community values and entrepreneurial spirit.

“I can’t speak highly enough of JCLA and the values it teaches Curtin students,” she says.

### Curtin staff honoured

Three Curtin University staff were among those recognised in the 2012 Australia Day Honours List, which provides national and formal recognition for Australians who have contributed significantly to their communities.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Jeanette Hacket, Faculty of Health Sciences Associate Professor Rosemary Coates, and Emeritus Professor John Penrose, founding director of the Centre for Marine Science and Technology, were each honoured on the prestigious list.

Hacket and Penrose were each named a Member of the Order of Australia. Hacket was recognised for her service to tertiary education administration at Curtin University, including fostering links with overseas institutions and promoting equitable educational services for regional communities. Penrose was recognised for his service to the community through the Volunteer Task Force of Western Australia, and for his contribution to marine science and physics education.

Coates was named an Officer of the Order of Australia for her distinguished service to the community in reproductive and sexual health through executive roles with national and international health organisations, and for her contribution to medical education and research.

Hacket says she was deeply honoured by the recognition. “It has been a privilege to help shape the future direction of higher education here and internationally over the past 30 years and, in particular, during my time at Curtin,” she says.

### Federal parliamentarians visit

Several federal politicians visited Curtin in January to discuss issues of current importance.

Comprising federal members of the Liberal Party, including Senators Chris Black and Alan Eggleston, the group attended a lunch with Vice-Chancellor Jeanette Hacket, the University’s executive managers and researchers.

Over lunch, Curtin staff raised topical issues with the parliamentarians, such as the impacts caused by changes to immigration visas, increasing skills shortages in Australia, and the new indexing arrangements for higher education.

The group then attended sessions with a number of Curtin researchers on topics including Australia’s future in radio astronomy, and innovations in health education to develop the nation’s future health workforce.

Hacket says the federal politicians’ visit to Curtin was of mutual benefit.

“The visit provided a valuable opportunity to speak with government on topics relevant to the University and the higher education sector,” she says.

“Through these interactions with government, Curtin continues to contribute to discussions on issues of national importance.”
An increasing global demand for food and having the sustainable means to meet the demand have seen food security become a key focus of the Western Australian Government, with the Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Hon. Terry Redman MLA, recently attending a Curtin workshop to discuss the particular challenges facing the state.

Hosted by Curtin’s newly established International Institute of Agri-Food Security (IIAFS), the workshop brought together government, industry and social organisations for a discussion about the accessibility and sustainability of healthy food in WA.

The Director of IIAFS, Professor Janet Bornman, says the idea that Australia is “food secure” is a bold statement because of the complex and interacting components that make up the global food chain.

“For example, apart from remote areas, the reliance Australia has on imported foodstuffs for greater diversity poses a potential food security risk due to market and trade fluctuations, climate, and food safety considerations,” she says.

Bornman says the workshop was vital in allowing individuals from different areas of the public and private sector to realise the importance of collaborative and integrated initiatives to address the complexities of food security.

“The discussions brought a new awareness to the meaning of food security and the inherent problems that can only be addressed by a group comprising diverse skills and insights,” she says.
Staff from Curtin’s Corporate Relations and Development portfolio attended a St John Ambulance First Aid Course at the Bentley Campus, highlighting the integral role staff can play in contributing to the University being a safe place to work, study or visit. Through the course, they learned skills including resuscitation techniques and how to identify and treat respiratory complications such as choking or asthma. The initiative demonstrates Curtin’s commitment to health and safety in the workplace, and the University’s ongoing review of policies and procedures to reflect current and potential changes in health and safety legislation.
HEALTHY, WEALTHY AND WISE

STORY ANDREA LEWIS
PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA BLOWFIELD
From 500-year-old mineral spring retreats nestled in the mountains of Europe to modern-day spa resorts dotting the coastline of Thailand, wellness tourism has both a rich history and elegant modern-day iterations. Australia doesn’t feature in this story, but, states a recent report, it could begin to – writing its own chapter that sets wellness tourism in a unique ‘down under’ context.

A 2010 scoping study – compiled by the then Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) – looked at both the current and future potential of Australia on the domestic and international stage of wellness tourism. While the report found that Australia is a new player to the wellness tourism market, it also determined that current offerings are fairly extensive. The industry could pack a real punch, but it isn’t yet taken seriously on a state or national scale.

“Australia is well positioned to build its wellness tourism industry,” says Dr Cornelia Voigt, adjunct research fellow at Curtin Business School (CBS) and lead author of the STCRC report. “Seventy-five per cent of wellness operators in Australia are located in rural or remote areas. This makes sense because Australia has the natural beauty and the pristine environment, the open spaces and the good weather that are such a fundamental part of this industry.

“Culturally, we have the outdoors lifestyle, and Australians are considered friendly and relaxed. All these attributes can be used to better sell the existing product.”

Wellness tourism is closely aligned with nature-based tourism: it uses water, forests and climate to attract travellers in pursuit of vitality. In Australia, Victoria’s self-proclaimed Spa Country – encompassing the Daylesford and Hepburn Springs region – leads the nation as the wellness capital. Queensland’s Gold Coast and the New South Wales mid-north coast follow, with the primary emphasis in these flagship regions being on beauty spas, lifestyle resorts and spiritual retreats.

“While some areas have done well, there is an overall lack of awareness and education around wellness tourism among both the industry and the public,” Voigt says. “Many people don’t know what it is, or they don’t trust it.

“Overcoming these perceptions is the key challenge to the growth of this industry in Australia. National and local marketing is needed, including support from peak bodies such as Tourism Australia. Tourism Victoria is an example of a tourism body that has supported this industry – with impressive results.”

Voigt is a member of Curtin’s Tourism Research Cluster (TRC) at CBS – an ensemble of about 30 researchers across the Bentley Campus who are working in a number of tourism areas, of which one is wellness tourism.

The group is trying to lift the profile of wellness tourism, and is engaged in several initiatives to achieve this. The TRC has the support of the University because tourism research at Curtin links two of the University’s four core research areas: sustainable development and health.

In February this year, CBS held an international symposium at Curtin – The Business of Health Tourism – a follow-up activity to the STCRC report. Key industry representatives and the three main researchers of the STCRC scoping study attended. One of their questions: Where does Western Australia stand in this fledgling industry? Both the scoping study and follow-up work have revealed that within WA the region best placed to take advantage of developing a wellness tourism industry is Margaret River.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CHRISTOF PFORR, head of the tourism program in CBS’s School of Management, says that some TRC members have applied for an Australian Research Council Linkage grant to work with the local tourism industry in Margaret River in efforts that will map how to develop the area as a wellness destination. Like Voigt, Pforr believes that in the Margaret River context, the product already exists and that marketing is now the key issue in building the sector.

“There are already a number of organisations providing some kind of wellness service, so the potential is there,” notes Pforr. “We have established a partnership with Wellness Margaret River – a marketing platform for about 25 local organisations – to see if we can forge better connections between operators in the area, to strengthen current efforts and promote them.”

Wellness Margaret River was established by Karen Siddall in 2007 to highlight the abundance of qualified wellness practitioners in the region. The initiative began as a website listing wellness operators. It now publishes and widely distributes a brochure promoting wellness businesses. Siddall talks to practitioners and tourist groups, trying to educate both.

Her efforts are independent and voluntary. But after almost 20 years in the tourism industry in Margaret River, she’s got more than a solid understanding of the area – both in terms of the demands of visitors and the supply of services. She sees a desperate need for the two key players – holistic operators and tourism bodies – to come together.

“A lot of holistic practitioners don’t have profitable business as their priority, and the tourism industry doesn’t understand the wellness industry,” Siddall says. “But the two could easily support each other. If you rent out a beach house or run a bed and breakfast, for example, you could link up with an operator offering guided walks or canoe trips, and you’ve got a wellness package.

“Marketed correctly through various tourism channels and using the Margaret River brand, this could be very good for your business. And it’s not hard to do. Besides things like the clean air and the organic food, Margaret River has the culture of wellness. And we have a top-end product that is highly marketable.”

What would such additional marketing efforts result in? Would they instil big change on the area?

“We are not talking mass tourism here,” explains Pforr. “It’s a niche tourism product. We’re talking about building the network that engages a number of different players and connects with other sectors like food and wine. Links to the natural environment – such as forests and beaches – would be an essential element.”

This approach would further diversify existing products. But it would blend in, enhancing the existing spiritual, nature-based and natural-foods experiences, including Australia’s rich Indigenous bush food resource.

“Quality control is another area that must be addressed,” Pforr says. “Research shows current perceptions are that the industry in Australia is untrustworthy, with unqualified massage therapists and new-age practitioners who charge a lot of money.

“Things like models of best practice, accreditation to industry standards, adequate remuneration for staff, links to health insurance rebate schemes, and codes of ethics are all ways in which the industry can be monitored – as it is with most other service industries.”

THERE is no question that across Western societies, a yearning for wellness has emerged, sparking a wave of interest in alternative and holistic therapies. At the same time, people are more willing to spend money in pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. As a result, demand has grown substantially, despite – and perhaps because of – the global financial crisis, which has seen people choosing to travel closer to home.

Will Australia take this opportunity and tap into what other countries have realised to be a multi-billion-dollar industry?

“In its simplest form, wellness tourism is an additional tool for regional economic development,” Pforr says. “But it’s also much bigger than that because there is long-term and broad potential in this segment of the tourism market. It’s something that perhaps we shouldn’t dismiss too easily.”
AS HE toiled away at the Cockatoo and Koolan islands iron ore mines off the northern Kimberley coast in Western Australia in 1975, Keith Moor’s mind was fixated on one thing – earning enough money to be able to study journalism at university.

Having left school at 16, the young brickie’s labourer hadn’t either the qualifications or means to study in his native UK, but had dreamed of working in the media industry.

With a few dollars in his pocket in Australia, the then 23-year-old decided to give it another go. Aware of a shortage of male librarians, Moor talked his way into the library studies course at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin) and embarked on a journalism career “through the back door”.

“I immediately started doing journalism units and never looked back,” he says.

Today Moor, now based in Melbourne, is one of Australia’s top investigative reporters and editor of the Insight section at the Herald Sun.

After embarking on a cadetship with Perth’s Daily News in 1979, he earned his stripes working between the Newcastle Journal in the UK and The Herald in Melbourne over the next nine years.

In 1986 he scored his first Walkley Award for his coverage of the kidnap of two Victorian aid workers in Pakistan after travelling into war-torn Afghanistan to find them – the first major highlight of his career.

His first book on the life and crimes of Calabrian Mafia boss Robert Trimbole, Crims in Grass Castles, was published in 1987. Moor returned to Australia to rejoin The Herald as an investigative reporter and chief of staff the following year.

When the Herald Sun was formed in 1990, Moor was made chief of staff and rose through the ranks to become news editor and managing editor, before being appointed head of the paper’s investigative unit in 1996.

TO DATE, Moor has bagged a swathe of awards and commendations for his work, including two Quill Awards, and News Limited’s Newbreaker of the Year (2004) and Specialist Writer of the Year (2007) awards. He has written and co-authored two other true-crime books, Mugshots and Mugshots 2.

Asked to choose another highlight from many years in the industry, Moor doesn’t hesitate: “Getting a byline on the London Sun’s famous ‘page three’,” he says.

Not long after arriving in the UK for two months at The Sun, after winning the 2004 award, he was thrown five photographs of a toned, new mum, supermodel Heidi Klum, and given 20 minutes to file a story.

“My first paragraph was “Glam new mum Heidi Klum has no turn” – and they gave me a byline, which I cherish,” he says.

IF STAYING power is an important quality for an Olympic athlete, Hockeyroo Ashleigh Nelson is a strong contender for selection for Australia’s 2012 Olympic team.

The 25-year-old striker has not only proved a fearsome goal scorer for the national hockey team since joining in 2007, but also has managed to combine the gruelling training regime of an elite athlete with studying full-time at Curtin towards an occupational therapy degree.

Nelson, who completed her qualification in 2010, typically trained six days a week throughout the course of her degree; training generally started at 5.30 am, and she would often go straight from these demanding sessions to attend her classes. She also managed to play in more than 50 international matches during this time.

“I knew it was going to be difficult, and my tiredness was certainly an issue at times, but the School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work was incredibly supportive,” Nelson says.

“I had to take a year off to compete in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, so it took me just over five years to complete the four-year course, which I was pretty pleased with.”

AS an Elite Athlete Friendly University, Curtin makes a range of allowances for elite athletes, including negotiating on the student’s behalf with University tutors for deadline extensions on assignments, rescheduling and relocating exams, and allowing for missed classes. Nelson reciprocated this academic generosity by carefully charting each semester’s work against her hockey commitments, planning how she would catch up on missed work and giving tutors lots of notice of her absences.

She says the level of organisation and time-management required was one of the greatest challenges.

“There was lots of bag-packing each evening for hockey and uni,” she says. “It was great when Curtin made lectures available online because I could catch up while I was away and not get so behind. I also made sure I chose smart friends with good handwriting so that I could borrow their notes on my return!”

Nelson’s energies are currently focused on her hockey ambitions: she is training full-time, thanks to an Australian Institute of Sport fellowship, and will be heading to London on the Olympic team in July.

She is looking forward to practising again as an occupational therapist, following a stint last year at Osborne Park Hospital, in Perth, working with aged-care patients and stroke victims.

“There are so many aspects to occupational therapy, and it offers great flexibility and scope for travel. I think I’ve chosen the right career to combine with my love of hockey,” she says.
The future face of learning

If the traditional ‘expert at the podium’ image of universities has been fading in recent years, the increased use of social media, online publishing and collaboration software tools – such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr and Pinterest, to name a few – is set to challenge this stereotype even more.

STORY CLAIRE BRADSHAW PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA BLOWFIELD
FOR THOSE using the latest web technology to assist their everyday activities – booking an airline ticket, tracking consumer responses to a product they are thinking of buying, keeping up with friends through social media – there is no disputing the convenience of the internet.

Universities are also keen to promote the flexibility that the latest internet technology offers: allowing students to study online from virtually anywhere in the world, download recorded lectures they couldn’t attend, or engage in tutorials from the comfort of their own home through an online virtual classroom.

But is the convenience factor overshadowing the game-changing educational potential of these new technologies?

Curtin’s Professor of Internet Studies, Matthew Allen, has been exploring the learning opportunities offered by the Web 2.0 networked environment and believes that collaborative, open publishing and creative digital media tools are set to shift the learning landscape.

“We’ve reached a technological tipping point in terms of internet speed and availability and multiple access points – computers, phones, iPads – which makes broad use of networking tools very viable,” explains Allen.

“We’ve also reached a social tipping point in terms of how much people are using them in their everyday lives.

“The good news for universities is that they don’t need to invest heavily in new technologies or systems to keep pace with this; what’s required is an understanding of how students are using the tools that are already out there and how this is changing them as learners.”

Allen says while the early incarnation of the internet greatly advanced the distribution of knowledge – making information much quicker and easier to produce, circulate and respond to – the new social web, especially when accessed via mobile technologies, allows us to work easily ‘within’ knowledge; individuals can interact with information to influence the way it is received, whether that is as simple as an online restaurant review or as complex as a scientific response to the latest genetic engineering research.

So, how might this more interactive environment change university learning?

At a practical level, says Allen, the digital networked environment enhances the important group work that has always gone on in universities, by removing many of the old time, distance and location constraints. More importantly, though, the collaborative tools on offer encourage students to be different kinds of learners: those who comment on others’ work as well as reading it; those who question the authority of a single voice, and those who regard knowledge as changeable rather than fixed.

“Since the late 1970s there have been criticisms about didactic models of teaching, and most educators are well aware of its limitations,” Allen says. “Interactive learning is much more engaging and effective, but more expensive – at least in the traditional sense of time and accommodation costs, where it relies on on-campus engagement between lecturers and small groups of students. This is why the one-way lecture has survived: it’s a cost-effective way of getting information to large groups.

“Network technologies offer enormous scope for less resource-hungry interactive learning; there are many simple, low-cost ways that you can incorporate them into teaching practices, and many students already use the technologies every day [see Allen’s website: knowledge.network.learning.net]. However, there’s no single approach that can be rolled out across a university; it’s up to each discipline to work out what works best for them. I predict that academic staff who ‘get’ that the internet is a knowledge tool will be in increasing demand.”

RON HEWITT is a project director within Curtin’s properties area and says the University is already planning how its learning spaces will need to change to accommodate this learning shift.

“The ideal is large, flat-floored spaces that enable small groups of students to sit together at a table to work, supported by good technology and multiple audio-visual outlets that display their work around the room – the opposite of the tiered lecture theatre,” Hewitt says.

“We’ll be using these collaborative learning spaces as the model for new facilities at Curtin, as well as for upgrades of existing buildings.

“Technology might be making it increasingly possible to study off-campus, but the University also recognises that having your peers around you enhances learning and provides that important social aspect. We want these facilities to encourage students to stay on campus.”

Cite. Winter 2012
Imagine being legally blind and without support. New research at Curtin is showing that this is the reality for more than 50 per cent of the blind population in Western Australia.

_**A CLEARER PICTURE**_

UNTIL recently, little has been known about the prevalence of blindness in Western Australia. The Association for the Blind of WA holds the largest database of legally blind people in the state, and additional records are based on referrals from GPs, ophthalmologists and optometrists. However, these registers are voluntary and often incomplete: no one knows who might be ‘falling through the cracks’.

The Epidemiology of Blinding Eye Disease (EBED) Study is providing the first comprehensive picture of people affected by blindness in WA, and how they are using the healthcare system. The study is being conducted by researchers from Curtin’s Health Innovation Research Institute (CHIRI), consultant ophthalmologists and the Association for the Blind of WA, with funding provided by the Eye Surgery Foundation.

Julie Crewe, Research Fellow at CHIRI’s Centre for Population Health Research, used a technique – ‘capture and recapture’ - first developed to estimate the number of birds in a flock, to determine the number of legally blind people in WA. Crewe’s methodology relied on comparing at least three lists of people, compiled from different sources. The most extensive list was supplied by the Association for the Blind of WA, with others compiled from hospital outpatient eye clinics and ophthalmologists’ clinical appointments. These lists were compared to determine the amount of overlap of individuals between lists (recapture), and statistical analysis was then used to assess the degree of undercounting and estimate the size of the entire population.

“There were 1,771 legally blind individuals identified through our validated lists,” explains Crewe, “but our statistical analysis has estimated that there are almost 3,400 legally blind people in WA.

“Only 2,244 people receive the blind pension, and the Association for the Blind of WA currently have 1,586 people registered for support. Despite the well-known benefits of rehabilitation, the results clearly indicate that more than half of the legally blind population are not accessing services.

“Surprisingly, this figure is higher than uptake rates reported nationally. But this apparent mismatch between the need and uptake of services is clearly unacceptable for those living with blindness.”

DR MARGARET CROWLEY, Chief Executive Officer of the Association for the Blind of WA, is enthusiastic about the study as a whole. “The research helped us understand who is accessing our services, and has highlighted the need to look at our referral pathways. Outcomes are already changing our practice and methods of service provision,” she says.

“It is an additional problem that many people are only referred to us once they become legally blind. We need to get them into the system earlier so they can access information and services, develop skills with assistive technologies, improve their social connectivity and maintain their mobility, while best using their remaining vision.”

The EBED Study is now investigating the rates and duration of hospitalisation within the blind community. It paints a picture of a relatively invisible group who nonetheless rely much more heavily on acute-care medical services than sighted people, and further highlights the need for early intervention and rehabilitation.

Crewe sums it up: “Just knowing how many people are out there, and where the holes are, will assist in guiding the allocation of resources to help those living with blindness in our community.”
A special event was held to celebrate new plaques at Curtin’s Bentley Campus acknowledging the University’s previous leaders.

Hosted by current Chancellor Dr Jim Gill and Vice-Chancellor Professor Jeanette Hacket, the event involved a special unveiling of plaques to honour recent chancellors and vice-chancellors; namely, Emeritus Professor Lance Twomey (vice-chancellor), and chancellors Dr Richard Tastula, Dr Eric Tan and Dr Gordon Martin.
Among Professor Lance Twomey’s many achievements as vice-chancellor was the establishment of Curtin’s first major international presence in Sarawak, Malaysia, in 1999, followed by the opening of a dedicated campus there in 2002. He also oversaw an expansion of Curtin’s regional presence.

Formerly in mining, Dr Richard Tastula applied his senior executive experience in the resources industry to Curtin’s Western Australian School of Mines and the Kalgoorlie Campus during his time as acting chancellor.

A surgeon, businessman, entrepreneur and internationally recognised humanitarian, Dr Eric Tan presided over a period of significant growth at Curtin, with soaring domestic and international student numbers experienced during his term as chancellor.

As chancellor, Dr Gordon Martin was involved in key infrastructure developments, including the opening of Curtin Singapore and completion of the Curtin Resources and Chemistry Precinct at the Bentley Campus. He was also instrumental in establishing the University’s philanthropic arm, the Curtin University Foundation.
Guests at the event, which was held in the Chancellory, included members of Curtin’s Council and senior executive staff, as well as the wives of departed chancellors and vice-chancellors [see captions].
Safe as houses

Already vulnerable and frail, an estimated 10 per cent of elderly residents in Western Australia’s aged-care facilities have an additional burden to bear – feeling as if they must hide who they are on account of their sexuality and/or gender identity.

IN 2010 Jude Comfort – a Western Australian Centre for Health Promotion Research lecturer in Curtin’s School of Public Health and chairperson of GRAI (the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Retirement Association Incorporated) – led groundbreaking research at Curtin to draw attention to the overlooked concerns of aged-care residents on account of their sexual orientation.

With funding from Lotterywest, the two organisations partnered to study the attitudes and practices of service providers towards gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) clients. This involved a statewide survey of facilities as well as qualitative research, in a bid to develop new practice guidelines.

“The whole area was crying out for better evidence – people within the gay community had anecdotal stories, but we knew that we needed to show evidence to access funding for service provision,” Comfort says.

“Most of the GLBTI research had come out of the US. We wanted to get the Australian picture ... and it does show the same story.”

Comfort says the research was necessary because many elderly GLBTI residents in aged care were fearful of being ‘outed’, after growing up in times when homosexuality was seen as criminal or shameful, or even a mental illness.

Many had spent a lifetime hiding their identity, fearing discrimination and abuse. That meant staff were often unaware of their orientation and risked demonstrating a lack of sensitivity by making or ignoring negative, homophobic remarks.

“We have heard stories about people’s lifetime partner visiting and pretending they’re a brother. People are almost going back into the closet,” Comfort says.

She adds that while most of society had moved on with their attitudes towards GLBTI people, some in the aged-care sector had failed to keep pace.

“We know that the majority of people involved in aged care work there because they’re committed to providing good care,” Comfort says. “But we found most providers operated from what we describe as a heteronormative paradigm – which is less about animosity towards GLBTI residents than it is ignorance of their issues and their unique experiences of marginalisation.”

The research led to the development of best-practice guidelines, recommending provision of a safe environment for GLBTI clients, open communication, sensitive practices, staff education and training, and inclusive organisational policies and procedures.

Comfort says the team would now seek further funding to help put those recommendations into practice. By 2051 it is estimated that about half a million GLBTI people living in Australia will be aged 65 years and over, making the need for action more urgent.

“What we need to do is get that message out; our next step, we would hope, is to attract some funding for training modules to get agencies to be more culturally competent around GLBTI issues,” Comfort says.
RECENT Curtin graduate Tayler Ainley was one of 12 graduate fashion designers selected to showcase her futuristic aviation-themed men’s collection at the L’Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival earlier this year.

Ainley’s grandfather was an air gunner in World War II – a grandfather, regrettably, she never knew well. In a personal journey to explore what he might have experienced – and to test her own creative potential as a fashion designer – she produced a collection of menswear as part of her studies that has won her national attention.

“With my interest in costume-based fashion, I had to find a way to blend my conceptual ideas with the physical realities of aviation attire and equipment,” she says.

“I wanted to show the evolution from biplanes (two pairs of wings) to supersonic jets, using a futuristic theme by incorporating technology into my designs.”

The resourceful Ainley went to a Curtin Robotics Club meeting to see if she could find a willing collaborator. There, she met enthusiastic third-year computer systems engineering student Alex Tennant.

“Alex helped take my designs to a tangible level by constructing the robotics for the outfits, while I focused on creating the textile patterns,” Ainley explains.

Take one of their quirky creations: a simple belt with four mechanical arms protruding from it – not unlike octopus legs. Tennant worked out how to integrate the spectacular LED lighting and a remote control system to activate the legs from backstage.

“We went back and forth, working out what we wanted,” Ainley says. “First we developed a prototype, and then the final version. There was a lot of playing around with ideas.”

THE depth and originality of her approach across her Alpha/Bravo collection is evident at every level, including in the construction of her pattern pieces from actual model aeroplane plans. Taking authentic shapes and details from different components of aircraft, Ainley stitched them together and then cut her pattern shapes from the assembled piece.

The result means that the painted lines of a wing or the unique form of a propeller show up as an embellished finish on a shirt sleeve or are worked into the pleats of a pair of pants.

“There’s something gutsy about menswear that I’m drawn to,” admits Ainley, the only one of the fashion festival finalists to come from Western Australia. “I don’t want to get into the fashion industry as such. I’d rather do something that has a technical feel, like industrial or shoe design.”

Ainley is now doing what many other graduates are: applying for internships and getting her name out there. All indications are that she’s set to soar.

WHEN Gary Walton was awarded life membership to the East Victoria Park Junior Football Club at the age of 26 it was, he says, one of his proudest moments.

But the world beyond football, including a yearning to travel, was beckoning. That was 25 years ago.

Fifteen years later, he was back in the footy fold, this time taking up the position of chief financial officer at the Fremantle Football Club.

Fast forward another decade to 2012 and Walton is the Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australian Football Commission (WAFC).

“This has all happened because of my interest in mathematics and accounting, and because of the business degree I did at Curtin – or WAIT as it was called back then,” Walton says.

He adds that it was always likely he would do his undergraduate degree at Curtin, having grown up in neighbouring St James and having attended the local Bentley Senior High School.

Walton’s first professional job was with a large chartered accounting firm in Perth. Six years later the world of commerce grabbed his attention. Employment in the biopharmaceutical industry and his corporate consultancy followed.

NEXT came a serendipitous phone call.

“Out of the blue I was asked if I was interested in becoming the chief financial officer for the Fremantle Football Club,” he says.

“Fremantle was in a bit of trouble at the time – on-field and off-field. And I was a West Coast Eagles supporter, so I took a bit of convincing.”

But with the convincing done, and with Walton’s help, the club has been profitable ever since.

Serendipity may have brought Gary Walton his current position – and the fabulous outlook across the turf at Patersons Stadium in Subiaco – but he has always had a passion for football and a fascination with its business side.

“I did a lot of work at the junior level – as a player, coach and office bearer. And I enjoyed all of it,” he says.

His new role includes working with Western Australia’s AFL teams, both of which are owned by the WAFC. He also oversees coordination of the state’s various competitions and the umpiring body, as well as management of the WAFC’s development programs. Management of Patersons Stadium and planning for the new stadium at Burswood are high on his agenda.

“Sport is one of the cornerstones of our culture, and Aussie Rules football is one of the biggest sports in Australia – probably the biggest in terms of its profile,” Walton says.

“This is a great industry to work in, and the people working with me are great people.”
Education to close the gap

The results of a study conducted at Curtin University suggest better recognition, accommodation and respect for Indigenous culture in the Australian education system would help improve Indigenous children’s wellbeing over that experienced by current and previous generations.

The study, undertaken by Associate Professor Mike Dockery and Dr Simon Colquhoun, from Curtin’s Centre for Labour Market Research, was based on responses by Indigenous parents in the first wave of the federal government’s longitudinal Footprints in Time survey.

The survey is part of the response to federal government policy aimed at closing the gap in life circumstances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

“Our interpretation of the data suggests that Indigenous parents view mainstream education, employment and career opportunities for their children as important contributors to their wellbeing,” Dockery says.

They also consider that success in these areas depends upon the sense of pride and resilience to be gained from learning about Indigenous cultural traditions, heritage and family connections.

Dockery says Indigenous parents appear to sense difficulties for their children as they negotiate between these two oppositional areas of knowledge. The education system could help in overcoming those difficulties by ensuring all Australian children learn about Indigenous culture, and by making bi-cultural education available in Indigenous communities.

Watching humpbacks and blues

Research by Curtin’s Centre for Marine Science and Technology (CMST) highlights the importance of Geographe Bay as a resting point for humpback and blue whales on their southern migration route.

The centre is involved in a collaborative marine science project called SouWEST, adding its expertise in marine mammal ecology and underwater acoustics to long-term observation data collected by community group Dunsborough Coast and Land Care (D-CALC) and researchers from Western Whale Research.

CMST Deputy Director Dr Chandra Salgado Kent says good information about how many whales are using Geographe Bay, and how long they rest there, is being collected.

One finding is the large number of calves among the migrating groups and individual whales using the area.

“The information collected by Western Whale Research and D-CALC over many years, and which they continue collecting, is hugely important to the project,” Salgado Kent says.

Observations, including tracking whales with a theodolite (a precision surveying instrument) supplied by Curtin, will continue this year.

CMST’s acoustic loggers are enabling the commencement of the process of matching whale vocalisations with specific behaviours.

The aim of SouWEST is to provide the knowledge needed to protect the marine environment for the whales, the significance of which is already recognised by the community and the Western Australian Government.

AN AGEING FUTURE

Ageing world populations are putting pressure on healthcare and welfare systems, and have the potential to create social and cultural instability.

These concerns are aired by Curtin Research Fellow Dr Amanda Davies in her recently published book Geographies of Ageing: Social processes and the spatial unevenness of population ageing.

Davies cites low infant mortality and longer life expectancy as major factors informing population ageing, emphasising the rapid uptake of modern medicine and women’s education in developing nations.

“In westernised countries, it took 200 to 300 years of industrial revolution for these changes to happen,” Davies says. “In developing countries, which are among the most populous, it has taken a few decades.”

This rapid ageing trend will have global economic consequences as commerce and trade respond to ageing workforces, and as ageing workforces attempt to produce and distribute enough food and water for a growing world population.

Davies says Australia is less affected than most societies because of our generally healthy population, and because government policies have encouraged superannuation and investment for many years.

However, the Australian assumption that we will finish work at about age 65 and then live a long time in retirement is one of our biggest fiscal challenges.
Curtin Business School’s (CBS) Farm Business Resilience (FBR) Program last year completed a highly successful pilot program that is helping farmers plan strategically for environmental, financial and social challenges.

The FBR Program’s Farm Planning pilot was jointly funded by the Western Australian government and Curtin University in collaboration with the federal government.

The pilot focused on helping farmers manage the impacts of climate change. Its facilitated learning approach allowed participants from 400 farm businesses to identify and resolve a range of challenges affecting their individual farm operations.

“Instead of telling people what to do, we listened to their stories and provided them with methods and tools to work out what was best for their situation,” says John Noonan, from CBS’s School of Management, who coordinated the pilot.

Specialists provided specific information that could be incorporated into individual farm plans.

The success of the FBR Program saw it win Science Communication Initiative of the year at the 2011 Western Australian Science Awards.

Following on from its success, CBS will launch the Rural Growth Program in late 2012. It will include an MBA-style course for farm managers and other rural and remote business managers that builds on their existing skills.

Noonan says there is considerable interest in running similar programs in other Australian states and in New Zealand. In WA, the Department of Agriculture and Food is rolling out a modified version of the program.

Moon rocks ancient past

Zircon in moon rocks is the subject of internationally recognised research conducted by The Institute of Geoscience Research (TIGeR) at Curtin.

The most recent achievement of the Curtin team is to have identified and characterised changes in ancient lunar zircon – described as microscopic ‘crumple zones’ – caused by meteorite impacts.

“When a meteorite impacts, it is travelling at high velocity, and the resultant shock waves cause distinctive damage in minerals,” says Dr Nick Timms, from TIGeR.

The characterisation of this damage has important implications.

“There are no ancient impact craters preserved on Earth because of destruction by subsequent processes of erosion and plate tectonic activity. However, impact damage preserved in ancient lunar zircon grains on Earth may provide a valuable record of Earth’s early impact history,” Timms says.

“We now have an opportunity to study the early impact history of the Earth.”

Such studies have the potential to cause a significant change to our understanding of past meteorite activity on Earth and the Moon – and therefore within the inner solar system – currently a hotly debated, fundamental scientific problem in the Earth and planetary sciences.

Helping WA’s farmers

Talking pictures: For video of co-curator Paul Thomas discussing the upcoming exhibition The World is Everything That is the Case go to johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au/exhibitions/current.cfm

up_coming events

JOHN CURTIN GALLERY
The World is Everything That is the Case
31 May – 3 August 2012
Developed for the ISEA2011 exhibition Uncontained, this exhibition identifies the traditional suitcase as a paradoxical transmigratory symbol that embodies the transformation of cultural practice under contemporary aesthetic conditions.

Dennis Del Favero:
Magnesium Light
1 June – 3 August 2012
A two-part video project by experimental new-media artist Dennis Del Favero which investigates the interrelationship between war and identity.

Spinifex: People of the Sun and Shadow
24 August – 12 October 2012
Celebrating the enduring legacy of the Spinifex people, this exhibition contrasts recent work with rarely seen paintings from their pioneering bid for native title – lands that were the site for the controversial British nuclear tests of the 1950s.

Tel: +61 8 9266 4155
johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au

HAYMAN THEATRE
The Way of Us
12–14, 17–21 July 2012
Self-described “teacher of creativity” Ellis Pearson directs this exploration of humanity’s strengths and weaknesses as it follows the lives of a group of refugees who have lost everything and must now travel towards an uncertain future.

Speaker’s Corner, Curtin University
Tel: +61 8 9266 2383 or l.brennan@curtin.edu.au

MITCHELL WHITELAW, LOCAL COLOUR, 2011, CARDBOARD, VINYL
Talking_pictures: For video of co-curator Paul Thomas discussing the upcoming exhibition The World is Everything That is the Case go to johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au/exhibitions/current.cfm

ALANA BLOWFIELD
Helping WA’s farmers

JAMES ROGERS
Moon rocks ancient past

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ALANA BLOWFIELD
Helping WA’s farmers

JAMES ROGERS
Moon rocks ancient past
Curtin was the first university in Western Australia to voluntarily adopt a Disability Services Plan in 1997, and today it continues to lead the way.

**CURTIN** Counselling, Disability and Multi-Faith Services has been aware of the needs of students with a disability since the late 1960s. When the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)* and the *Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)* were passed, there was no mandatory requirement to have a disability services plan. However, Curtin felt it was important to establish a plan using the ‘removing barriers’ model, which identified the barriers for people with a disability, and then identified specific strategies for removing them. We implemented those as our initial approach.

In 2004, after the *Disability Services Act* was amended, making it mandatory for all Western Australian public authorities to have a disability services plan, Curtin lodged its first mandated Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). A five-year plan, it used a proactive model of shared responsibilities and inclusive design, and was developed in consultation with staff and students as well as external stakeholders.

The DAIP contained a series of mandated outcomes: that people with a disability had the same opportunities for employment at Curtin. Now, the Disability Services Commission (DSC) is considering mandating that outcome in the future.

In 2011 an independent external review suggested changes for our new plan for 2012–2017. We made the plan more strategically focused and sought to engage with the DSC’s ‘Count Me In – Disability Future Directions’ strategy. With relevant stakeholders we explored ways of including people with intellectual disabilities, and examined international benchmarking of our access and inclusion practices, which were developed by our experts.

**WE ALSO** seek to provide information to the public about our support services for students and staff with a disability, and will continue to provide opportunities for them to participate in Curtin’s public consultations.

Today we have moved our goal posts a little further to become much broader in our approach to accommodating our students, staff and visitors with disabilities, using the principles of ‘universal design’. Curtin established a universal design reference group in 2007 at the Bentley Campus to promote a universalist approach to our buildings, academic programs, and services and facilities, to ensure their design and processes are accessible for the widest range of users. This way, students and staff with a disability are not an exception, as the environment should automatically accommodate them. For example, when students enrol, they don’t have to request adjustments for their disability or medical condition — they are automatically provided for.

We are also implementing an access audit across the University, so all buildings will be accessible in future.

The progress of the National Disability Insurance Scheme is of keen interest. The federal government has made a commitment to provide people with a significant and permanent disability with care and support. We hope this increased funding will enable more prospective students with a disability to realise their higher education aspirations, and will assist Curtin in providing comprehensive support and services to our staff and students.
Curtin University is Western Australia’s largest and most diverse university. Curtin strives for excellence in teaching, and offers a wide range of courses in business, engineering and science, minerals and energy, sustainable development, health sciences and humanities.

The University is committed to building world-class research capability through partnerships with business, industry, government and community organisations. Curtin has a growing international presence, with an offshore campus in Sarawak, East Malaysia, and with Curtin Singapore, and runs offshore programs in six countries.

The University is named after John Curtin, prime minister of Australia from 1941 to 1945, and strives to honour his values of vision, leadership and community service.

An international leader shaping the future through our graduates and research, and positioned among the top 20 universities in Asia by 2020.

curtin.edu.au
Curtin University enjoys a close partnership with Woodside, with the Australian oil and gas company gifting several significant contributions as part of its long-term support of the University.

In addition to a contribution of $1.25 million for the Chevron-Woodside Chair in Corrosion Engineering at Curtin, Woodside funds two undergraduate scholarships, and, most recently, has gifted $600,000 over four years to support the new Curtin Engineering Pavilion Complex.

Neil Kavanagh, Woodside’s Chief Science and Technology Manager, says partnering with universities is a fantastic way to exercise leadership in industry and economic and technical matters affecting the community.

“We really value being able to engage with students during the course of their study, offering real industry problems as the subject of their learning, and providing them with access to vacation employment,” he says.

HOW YOU CAN HELP
If you have been inspired by any of the stories in this issue of Cite and would like to support the foundation, you can do so as follows:

By cheque payable to Curtin University Foundation or online at donate.curtin.edu.au

The Curtin University Foundation
GPO Box U1987 Perth WA 6845

Tel: +61 8 9266 9803
Email: giving@curtin.edu.au

Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you would like to know more about the Curtin University Foundation and its work.

Curtin University Foundation. Helping make tomorrow better – together.