

national archives of australia



1941
-
1945

*... the leader of the government,
the leader of the nation ...*

john curtin

GUIDE TO ARCHIVES OF
AUSTRALIA'S PRIME MINISTERS

by David Black and Lesley Wallace

A National Archives of Australia and
John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Joint Publication

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John Curtin

Guide to Archives of Australia's Prime Ministers

David Black and Lesley Wallace

*National Archives of Australia
and
John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library*

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Abbreviations

APC	Administrative Planning Committee
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFPAC	US Army Forces Pacific
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AJA	Australian Journalists' Association
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMF	Australian Military Force
ANU	Australian National University
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWU	Australian Workers' Union
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CMF	Commonwealth Military Forces; also, Citizen Military Forces
ERA	Electronic Research Archive (JCPML)
HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship
HMB	His Majesty's Bark
HRH	His/Her Royal Highness
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JCPML	John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
JP	Justice of the Peace
LWO	Labor Women's Organisation
MHR	Member of the House of Representatives
MML&A	MacArthur Memorial Library and Archives
MP	Member of Parliament
MRA	Moral Rearmament Association
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NFVLS	National Film and Video Lending Service
NLA	National Library of Australia
NSW	New South Wales
PM	Prime Minister
PWC	Prime Minister's War Conference
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
SA	South Australia
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
SWPA	South-West Pacific Area
UAP	United Australia Party
UK	United Kingdom
UNCIO	United Nations Conference on International Organization
US/USA	United States/United States of America
USAFPAC	United States Army Forces Pacific
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UWA	University of Western Australia
VSP	Victorian Socialist Party
WA	Western Australia
WAAF	Women's Auxiliary Air Force (UK)
WAAAF	Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force
WRANS	Women's Royal Australian Naval Service

Introduction



John and Elsie Curtin in the garden at The Lodge,
27 April 1945. JCPML00376/29.

In the darkest days of World War II John Curtin rose to become Australia's fourteenth prime minister. He led his country through extremely difficult times, which took a toll on his personal health. Today he is regarded as one of Australia's most successful leaders and a great hero.

John Curtin

John Curtin, the son of working-class Irish immigrants, was born in 1885 in Victoria. He grew up in an era of increasing social unrest, when

workers were beginning to assert their rights to decent pay and working conditions. His background, with its poverty and struggle, and the influence of socialists like Tom Mann and Frank Anstey led to Curtin's involvement in the Labour Movement and politics.

Curtin became prime minister on 7 October 1941 at a time when Australia had deployed most of its trained troops to defend Britain. On 7 December 1941 the Japanese attacked the American base at Pearl Harbor and war began in the Asia-Pacific area. As prime minister, Curtin then faced what no other Australian prime minister before or since has faced – enemy attacks on the Australian mainland and the possibility of invasion.

Curtin's subsequent actions changed the foreign policy of Australia and signalled a fundamental shift in the way Australians regarded themselves and their country's place in the world. The traditional allegiance of Australians to the British Empire shifted in the face of the practicalities of alliance with, and reliance upon, the United States in their battle for survival against the Japanese.

Curtin was not only a great wartime leader – he also formulated policies for Australia's postwar reconstruction, including planning for full employment, assisted immigration and improvements in social security. Under his leadership, the Australian Parliament passed landmark legislation, including an Act which established a uniform taxation scheme and removed the power of the states to collect income tax. His government also ratified British legislation establishing the independence of Dominion parliaments.

Curtin died in office on 5 July 1945, six weeks before the Japanese surrender and the return of peace and security to Australia.

Elsie Curtin

Elsie Curtin, wife of Prime Minister John Curtin, was the daughter of Abraham Needham, a Tasmanian union official and political associate of Curtin.

Elsie was a great support to Curtin, raising their children and handling the family's other domestic affairs. She was a lifelong champion of the Labor cause. In addition to assisting her husband with local electorate and electoral matters, especially when he was absent in Canberra, she played a very active role in the Labor Women's Organisation, becoming a life member of its Fremantle branch and serving as its state president between 1944 and 1946.

Over the years Elsie was involved in a variety of community activities, including serving on the Married Women's Court and acting as a visitor to Fremantle Prison. She was awarded life membership of a number of organisations, including the Perth Branch of the Association of Civilian Widows, the Royal Association of Justices and the Women's Justice Association. In 1970 she was made a Commander of the British Empire for 'services to the community' and for 'encouragement' to her husband during the years of World War II. She died on 24 June 1975 and is buried beside her husband in Karrakatta Cemetery.

A timeline of their lives appears at Appendix 1.

National Archives of Australia

The [National Archives of Australia](#) preserves and cares for a diverse archival collection documenting the relationship between the Australian Government and the Australian people – a rich resource for the study of Australian history, society and people.

The collection spans almost 200 years of Australian history. Its main focus is material documenting Australian government activities since Federation in 1901. The Archives has significant holdings of nineteenth-century records about functions transferred by the colonies to the Australian Government at the time of Federation and subsequently.

Access to the National Archives' collection is provided free of charge in public reading rooms located in each capital city. Researchers are assisted by specialist Archives reference staff and are provided with reference tools to help them identify and use the records in the collection. These reference tools include the [RecordSearch](#) and [PhotoSearch](#) databases, guides, publications and Fact Sheets. Researchers unable to visit a reading room may seek information and help by telephone, mail, facsimile or email.

The National Archives' website (www.naa.gov.au) provides more information about the Archives, its collection and the services it offers. A visit to the site will help you determine whether the Archives holds records relevant to your research.

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

The [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#) (JCPML), located at the Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia, was established to honour Prime Minister John Curtin, whose inspirational leadership and political courage unified Australia during the darkest days of World War II.

The JCPML collection contains records about John Curtin and his family, including books, ephemera, objects, photographs, audio-visual material, and published and unpublished official records. A number of Curtin-related themes are also supported by the JCPML research collection, including Australia's relationship with the United States of America, foreign policy, postwar reconstruction, refugees and immigration, international trade and tariffs, the role of prime ministerial wives, and how government and the public service conducts itself.

The JCPML website (john.curtin.edu.au) provides researchers, teachers, students and members of the public with information about John Curtin and records held in the JCPML and in the collections of other archival institutions.

About this guide

This guide aims to make it easier for researchers to access records relating to John and Elsie Curtin in the National Archives, the JCPML and other collections. It is a companion publication to the National Archives' *Australia's Prime Ministers* website (primeministers.naa.gov.au).

The guide contains:

- basic biographical information about John and Elsie Curtin;
- descriptions of records created by John Curtin, including official records, correspondence and private papers; and records about him including photographs, memorabilia, oral histories, and films and other audiovisual material; and
- descriptions of records of, or about, Elsie Curtin.

This guide is comprehensive, but because the collection of the National Archives alone runs to an estimated 250 kilometres of records, only a proportion of records of likely interest to readers could be located and identified. Accordingly, the search has targeted the most significant sources of relevant material and is focused on public collections in Australia. Records held by the National Archives are listed first, followed by those held by the JCPML and then by those in other national collections, and finally by those held overseas.

Record descriptions

National Archives' records on John Curtin have been grouped under relevant headings, and within each section the descriptions of series and items are then organised chronologically as far as possible. The records on Elsie Curtin are not grouped under headings but are arranged chronologically as far as possible. Each entry in the guide describes a group of records maintained together as a series. A series consists of items, which are often individual files (sometimes volumes, sets of cards, photographs, etc), received into custody by the National Archives from a creating agency or person. Series usually consist of many items, but occasionally they may consist of just a few items or even a single item.

The description for each series gives its content and function. The entry concludes with a list of items selected from the series. In many instances, particular series have been found

to contain material relevant to several sections and these have been included in each section as appropriate. The full description of each series is given only on its first appearance. As a general rule, this guide identifies rather than analyses the records. Researchers should make their own assessment of the value of information in an item.

Records on John Curtin from the [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#) are grouped under relevant headings and within each section series descriptions are arranged alphabetically by the creating agency or person. A similar approach is adopted for records held in other libraries and archives. These collections are arranged by location and then alphabetically by manuscript collection or chronologically, depending on the material.

A sample description of a [National Archives](#) record appears on the following page, while a sample description of a John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library record from the JCPML [Electronic Research Archive](#) (ERA) appears on page 11.



Prime Minister John Curtin addressing the press soon after his arrival in London for the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers, 1944. NAA: A5954, 661/12

1	LIBRARY MATERIAL, DEWEY DECIMAL NUMBER SERIES, 1911–62	A1203
2	Recorded by: 1911 Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8) 1911–62 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)	
3	Quantity: 3.60 metres (Canberra)	
4	This series consists of various reports, ministerial statements and documents relating to matters as varied as immigration, taxation, royal commissions and international affairs. Some material in this series dates back to 1903. It includes records relating to the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances, on which John Curtin served as a commissioner.	
5	Report of the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances together with evidence, 1928	A1203, 362/7/AUS/1
6	This item contains correspondence relating to a letter from John Curtin in October 1927 to the commission regarding representation of parties to the commission by counsels. This item is digitised.	

Key

- 1 This information gives the **series title** and the date range of the records that make up the series. The **series number** is shown on the upper right-hand side.
- 2 This shows the **person** or **government agency** that created the series. It also shows the **date range** during which each series was **created** or **recorded**. This date range does not necessarily correspond to the **contents date range** of the records, which appears in the series title. The CP (Commonwealth person) and CA (Commonwealth agency) number are unique identifiers allocated by the Archives to each person or agency. These numbers can be used to retrieve more information about the person or agency, and the records they created, from the Archives' online database, [RecordSearch](#).
- 3 This shows the **total volume of records** in the series. The office of the National Archives at which they are held is shown in brackets. If copies of records are held in other locations, this is indicated here.
- 4 This is a **brief description** of the **series**.
- 5 This shows the **title given to the item by the person or agency that created it**. The dates of the earliest and latest document on the file are shown. The item's **identifying number** appears on the lower right-hand side of the description. This number **must be quoted** when requesting a copy of the record or access to it.
- 6 This describes the **main contents** of an item. Note that **it does not describe** every document on the file.

①	CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1912-44	SER0206
②	Quantity: 44 items	
③	This series comprises mainly correspondence from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin (nee Needham).	
④	Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Needham, 24 August 1914	JCPML00402/5
⑤	Curtin writes to Elsie, who was then in South Africa, of his campaigning for election to the Victorian State seat of Balaclava 'Town Hall to Street-corner, to Sunday School Rooms & Cottage meetings'.	

Key

- ① Provides information about the **creator** of the records ('Curtin Family'), the **series title** ('Personal correspondence') and the **date range** of the records that make up the series. The **series identifier** is shown on the upper right-hand side. Please note that some JCPML series and item titles have been edited in this guide for the sake of brevity.
- ② Quantity information indicates the **extent** of the records in the series.
- ③ This is a brief description of the series.
- ④ Provides the **title** and **date** (or date range) of files or items in the series. The file or item identifier appears on the lower right-hand side. This identifier must be quoted when requesting a copy of the record or access to it.
- ⑤ This provides a **brief description** of the file or item.

Access to the records in the National Archives

Many series described in this guide are listed in [RecordSearch](#), the National Archives' online catalogue, which is available in the reading rooms of all offices of the Archives, at the Australian War Memorial and on the Archives' website (www.naa.gov.au). Indexes and inventories, available in reading rooms, may also be useful. Reference staff can assist researchers to use these lists.

Access to archival records is governed by the *Archives Act 1983*, which gives a right of access to most Commonwealth government records that are over 30 years old. Records over 30 years old are said to be in the *open period*. In rare instances, the government may release records less than 30 years old, under the accelerated release provisions of the Archives Act.

Some records are exempt from these access provisions (eg court records, some parliamentary records and some records of governors-general). Researchers are able to access all other open period records, including those held by agencies, unless those records contain information that falls into certain categories, called 'exemption categories', which are defined in section 33 of the Act. There are 15 exemption categories and information that falls within them is said to be 'exempt information'. Before the Archives releases records for public access, it examines them to ensure that they do not contain exempt information (see Fact Sheet 46).

Most records (97.5%) are wholly released for public access while 2% are released with some exempt information deleted. Only 0.5% of records are wholly withheld because they consist entirely of exempt information. Most exempt information is withheld to protect personal privacy, but defence, security and intelligence sensitivities are the next most common reasons for exemption.

Officers of the Archives are delegated under the Act to examine records and make decisions about whether they can be released. This is done in consultation with departments and agencies. Examination of records may often take a day or less, but if they require referral to agencies or overseas, it may take weeks or months. The Archives informs its clients of delays in this process.

If a researcher applies to see a record that is exempt from public access, the Archives will provide a written statement of reasons identifying the exempt information, the exemption category that applies and why it applies. Details of all records containing exempt information are available on [RecordSearch](#). The access status will show OPEN, OPEN WITH EXCEPTION, WITHHELD PENDING AGENCY ADVICE OR CLOSED, while the reason for restriction will show the category or categories under which the information is exempted.

A researcher may appeal against an exemption and the Archives will review its decision, but if it is confirmed, the researcher may then appeal to the independent Administrative Appeals Tribunal (see Fact Sheet 12). There is no charge for obtaining access or for applying to the Archives to review its decision, but an application fee applies for appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Regardless of the type of research they undertake at the National Archives, researchers will only be able to examine open period records (ie 30 years of age or older) that do not contain sensitive information or those released under the accelerated release provisions of the Archives Act.

Control records in the National Archives

Control records are created and maintained by a recordkeeping agency to help identify and retrieve records in a specific series. Agency control records include such registry tools as file registers, movement registers, subject indexes and name indexes. In this guide, control records are listed as the 'control series' of a series.

Digitised copies of records

Digitised copies of some National Archives records are available through the *Australia's Prime Ministers* website at primeministers.naa.gov.au and are available for viewing on RecordSearch. Most of the JCPML records are available online through ERA (dtl.lis.curtin.edu.au).

Citing the records

The correct citation of archival records in the National Archives, the [JCPML](#) and in other collections is important both when requesting the records and when referring to them in

written or published works. Using proper citations will not only help staff to locate records more readily, but will also help other researchers to find that material.

The correct form of citation for records held by the National Archives of Australia is expressed as follows: the name *National Archives of Australia* followed by a colon, the series number followed by a comma, and then the item number. An example is:

National Archives of Australia: A981, INT 22

The name *National Archives of Australia* may be abbreviated to 'NAA' provided the full name has been used in the first citation. National Archives Fact Sheet 7 provides further information on citing the records and can be located on the website (www.naa.gov.au/publications, and follow links).

The correct citation for records held by the JCPML is 'John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library. Collection title. File or item title. File or item ID'. For example:

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library. Records of the Curtin Family. Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Needham, 24 August 1914. JCPML00402/5.

The name *John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library* may be abbreviated to 'JCPML' provided the full name is identified in the first citation. Further information and examples are provided on the JCPML website (john.curtin.edu.au/era/copyright.html). Please note that in this guide the citation of JCPML records has been abbreviated for reasons of brevity. In this guide, for example, the above item will appear as 'Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Needham, 24 August 1914' plus the item number (see also p. 11).

For other archives and libraries, the name of the institution should be provided, followed by the reference or call number of the collection. An example is:

National Library of Australia: MS 4744

Locating additional information

Additional information on the papers of John Curtin can be located by searching on the National Archives' [RecordSearch](#) database, the [JCPML ERA](#) and the databases of other institutions. Further information on records relating to John Curtin can also be found through the *Australia's Prime Ministers* website (primeministers.naa.gov.au). This website has research maps that lead researchers into the collections of a number of archives, both within Australia and overseas.

State archives also hold records relating to service in state legislatures and interaction between prime ministers and state premiers. Appendix 2 is a 'Who's who' of key players in the Curtin story, while further reading on John Curtin can be found in Appendix 3. Addresses of the National Archives' reading rooms are in Appendix 4 and addresses of other archival institutions holding material on or about John Curtin are in Appendix 5.

1

John Curtin



Prime Minister John Curtin, c1942.
NAA: A1200, L8949

John Curtin, the only Australian Prime Minister to represent a Western Australian seat in the House of Representatives, led his country during the most critical phase of World War II. However, like his United States (US) counterpart, Franklin Roosevelt, Curtin did not live to see the final victory. At 4 am on 5 July 1945, in The Lodge, the prime minister's residence in Canberra, he became only the second Australian Prime Minister to die in office, barely six weeks before the Japanese capitulation was announced on 15 August.

In the words of his most recent biographer, John Curtin 'continues to be regarded with admiration and affection across the political divide'.¹ Many people would agree with the assessment of his immediate predecessor as Prime Minister, Arthur Fadden, that Curtin was 'one of the greatest Australians ever'.²

This is all the more remarkable given his personal and political problems during and after World War I (the 'Great War') and the internal difficulties that plagued

the Australian Labor Party (ALP) when he first became its national parliamentary leader in 1935. It is testimony to the way Curtin met the challenge of leading his country that between 1940 and 1943 he converted a slim majority of 641 votes after preferences in his seat of Fremantle to an absolute majority of nearly 23 000.

In the epilogue to his two-volume work, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, which was part of the official history of Australia during the war, Sir Paul Hasluck, who came from the opposite side of the political fence, summed up Curtin's contribution:

Curtin did not fight hard to become Prime Minister and showed some reticence about assuming office. Having come to the heavy responsibilities and finding them greatly increased by a new turn in the war that was already being waged, he grew in wisdom, character and strength with the added burdens that were laid on him. His own dedication was complete. He held back nothing from his service to the nation [and]...he had lived out his own text: 'I ask every Australian, man and woman, to go about their allotted task with full vigour and courage...We shall hold this country and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race and as a place where civilization will persist'.³

Early life, 1885–1914

John Joseph Ambrose Curtin was born in Creswick, Victoria on 8 January 1885, the eldest son of John Curtin (born 1853) and Catherine Bourke (born 1856), Irish immigrants who had married at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne in June 1883. When Curtin was only five years old his father was forced through ill health to resign from the police force and seek employment as a publican. For the next eight years the family lived in increasingly impoverished circumstances, first in Melbourne and then in a succession of country towns before returning to Melbourne where Curtin's mother assumed the main burden of supporting her husband and four children. Curtin himself left school at thirteen and worked in a series of jobs before securing longer-term employment with the Titan Manufacturing Company in 1903.

Having left the Catholic Church, and after a short spell with the Salvation Army, Curtin turned to rationalism and then to socialism under the influence of Frank Anstey, a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly and later the Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for the Victorian electorate of Bourke, who was described as a 'messianic figure whose political language was studded with religious allusions'.⁴

Although an active ALP member, Curtin also joined the more radical Victorian Socialist Party (VSP), which had been established by the British trade union leader Tom Mann in 1906. In the socialist movement Curtin found both political ideals and an important medium for personal and social relationships. After Mann returned to the United Kingdom (UK), where he later became a leading light in the British Communist Party, Curtin served as the Secretary of the VSP. In 1911 he left both this position and his job with the Titan Manufacturing Company to become the Secretary of the Victorian Timber Workers Union.

Soon after, in his union capacity, he met his future wife, Elsie Needham, daughter of Abraham Needham, a prominent Australian radical activist who had migrated to Tasmania after a spell in South Africa. Curtin's visit to Hobart in 1912 was part of his strategy to unite the timber workers into an Australia-wide federation, and Needham, at that stage a parliamentary candidate, was one of six leading members of the local Labour Movement nominated as a 'provisional committee of advice' on how to reorder the affairs of the local union.⁵

World War I and conscription, 1914–17

The outbreak of the war in 1914 found Curtin seeking to have the Labour Movement commit itself to measures designed to prevent war. However, political necessity in a federal election year in which Curtin contested a Victorian seat for the ALP swept aside the peace resolutions he had achieved with the Victorian Trades Hall Council.

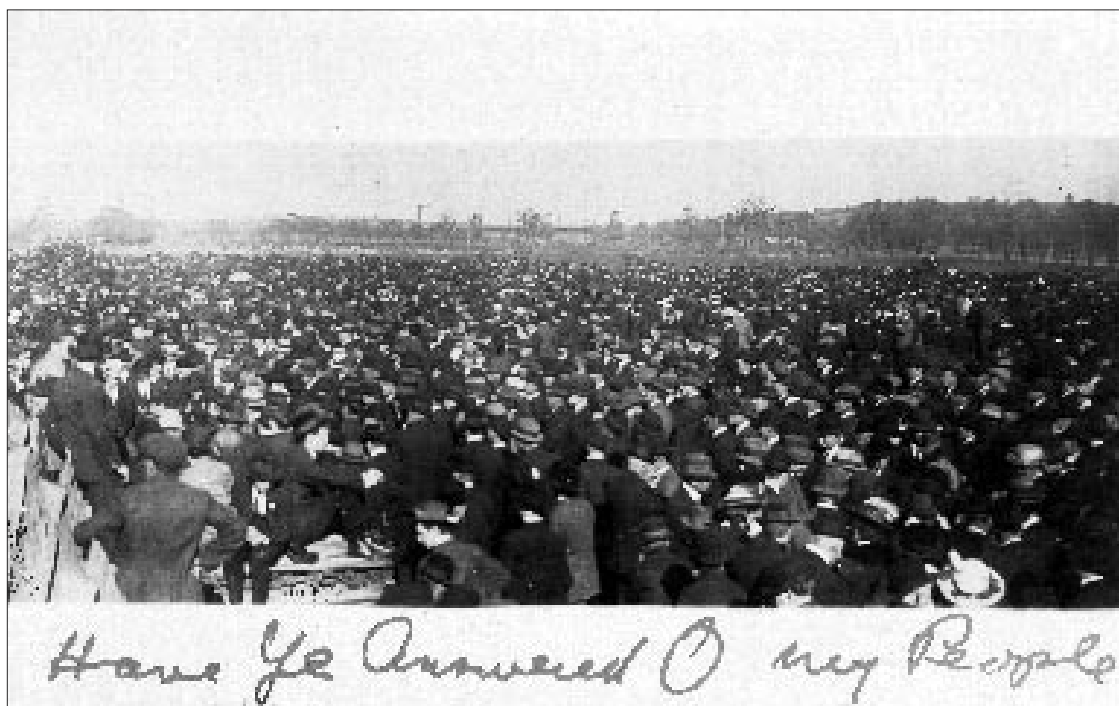
Curtin was also finding it increasingly difficult to persuade the timber workers to respond to the socialist causes espoused in his articles in the union's journal and in November 1915 he resigned as union secretary. This decision seems to have arisen not only from his frustration with the timber workers' lack of commitment to the wider ideals of working class advancement, but probably also as a consequence of problems in dealing with issues of declining union membership and of embezzlement within the union office.⁶

Despite this growing disillusionment he 'operated with the energy of a tornado',⁷ working first for the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) in the Riverina district and then for the Trades Union Anti-Conscription Committee. However, in mid-1916 he had to seek admission to hospital to deal with his growing drinking problem. Backed by the support of friends, he returned to the fray and celebrated the defeat of the first conscription referendum in October. In December that year he was jailed for failing to respond to a call-up, only to be released a few days later. Even as Prime Minister William Morris ('Billy') Hughes was expelled from the ALP and formed a new Nationalist Ministry, Curtin found personal salvation through the influence of friends and colleagues with his appointment as editor of the *Westralian Worker*, a paper then owned by the AWU in Western Australia.

Editor of the *Westralian Worker*, 1917–28

Curtin arrived in Perth at the beginning of 1917 with the task of reversing the previous editorial policy of the *Westralian Worker* and voicing strong opposition to Hughes and his continuing efforts to introduce conscription. In his new position Curtin now had the means to marry Elsie, who had followed him to the west, and the ceremony took place in a private home in April 1917. Over the next few years the couple had two children, Elsie and John, and in 1923 moved into their own redbrick home in the seaside suburb of Cottesloe.

As editor, and with his reputation as a speaker and socialist advocate from the east, Curtin soon became a leading figure in the Labour Movement in the west. He developed a close collaboration with Philip Collier, another fervent anti-conscriptionist who had become the leader of the Western Australian Parliamentary Labor Party in 1917 after the defection of former Premier 'Happy Jack' Scaddan to the pro-conscriptionists. As he and Collier celebrated the defeat of the second conscription referendum in December that year, Curtin was fined for making a statement 'likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty' when he urged 'rebellion' on the crowd if conscription were forced upon them.⁸



John Curtin wrote 'Have Ye Answered O My People' on the front of this postcard of crowds at an anti-conscription rally, 21 October 1916. On the back he noted, 'Not a bad crowd to bang at'.

JCPML00687/15/7

Despite his more settled life style in the west, Curtin's personal problems did not disappear overnight. He had to cope first with the death of his father early in March 1919 and then, seven weeks later, with the loss through influenza of his close friend Frank Hyett. Labor had performed poorly in both state and federal elections in WA in 1917, and in December 1919, at a time when he was suffering from neurasthenia, Curtin reluctantly contested the federal seat of Perth and was soundly defeated. In the aftermath he was unable to return to full-time work for several months. Without the assistance of his in-laws, who had come to live with the family towards the middle of 1919, he would have been hard pressed to meet both his editorial and family responsibilities.

For a time Curtin had been optimistic that the end of the war would pave the way for successful socialist revolutions, but by 1922 the tenor of his editorials in the *Westralian Worker* indicated that he had come to accept that parliamentary action by social democratic parties, including the ALP, 'was the only practical means of social change'.⁹ In editorials written just before and after the State Labor Congress, Curtin told his readers, 'Congress assembles with the tide of reaction almost at the flood' and that the procedure for 'Labor's Social Revolution was to be "progressively constructive and reconstructive"'.¹⁰

As Curtin went through this conversion from revolutionary socialism to parliamentary gradualism, he lost one of those who had urged him to keep faith with the cause: his father-in-law, Abraham Needham, died from a heart attack on 18 August 1922.

In the meantime, however, Curtin's journalist achievements at the paper were 'widely recognized, outside as well as inside the Labour Movement'.¹¹ In addition to his 'forceful and at times emotive' editorials in the paper, much of the content on the other pages came from Curtin's pen. He also held the post of president of the Western Australian district of the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) from 1920 to 1925. In this capacity he put a great deal of energy into seeking 'to improve its members' education as well as their wages and working conditions'. In association with a number of academics at the University of Western Australia, he arranged lecture programs without fees and formal examinations as well as informal discussions at nearby cafes. While trying to foster links between the AJA and the wider trade union movement, he also developed good working relationships with the main newspaper proprietors in Perth.¹²

In 1924, the same year as Labor under Collier regained the Western Australian Treasury benches, Curtin was appointed by the Federal Bruce-Page Nationalist-Country Party coalition Government to represent the Labour Movement at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conference in Geneva. His experiences on his first overseas trip heightened his interest in the activities and potential of the League of Nations.¹³ However, they also served to confirm his view that the opportunity to overthrow capitalism by revolutionary means had passed.

Back in Western Australia in 1925, he found himself declared 'black' by the communist-led Seamen's Union when he backed the Collier Government's use of police on the waterfront to allow passengers through the union's picket line.¹⁴ He failed again at his third attempt to enter Federal Parliament at the 1925 election – this time for the seat of Fremantle – and continued his editorial work as well as lecturing to journalists at the University of Western Australia. He also served on the federal Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances, for which he was one of two signatories to a minority report rejecting the majority finding to maintain the status quo.

In November 1928 political success finally came his way when he was elected MHR for Fremantle and took his seat on the Opposition benches behind incumbent leader James ('Jim') Scullin. In his last editorial for the *Westralian Worker* before leaving Perth, Curtin sounded his clarion call to:

...the men who have control of the political and industrial machinery of Labor – with the leaders of the workers' party... They must not fail us.
A vast – almost heart-breaking – responsibility rests on them.¹⁵

Ups and downs, 1928–35

Curtin spent nearly a year on the Opposition backbenches before the Bruce–Page Government was forced to the polls. Labor regained power in the election for the House of Representatives held in October 1929, though it was still in a hopeless minority in the Senate. Somewhat surprisingly, Curtin was overlooked for the one Western Australian position in the Scullin Ministry. The impact of the Great Depression ultimately destroyed the Scullin Government following a landslide United Australia Party (UAP) win in the federal election in December 1931, and sent Curtin back into the political wilderness along with another future Prime Minister, Ben Chifley. This experience was especially disillusioning for Curtin, and he was critical of his own government for compromising with its opponents and accepting the cost-cutting implicit in the 'Premiers' Plan' instead of calling a fresh election to secure a mandate for its own radical credit creation policies. His later commitment to full employment policies and banking reform were a direct consequence of the bitter experiences of the Scullin Government years.

Back in the west Curtin worked as a freelance sports journalist for the *Westralian Worker*. He wrote articles for the ALP (including paid articles for Western Australian newspapers) from an office in Trades Hall until 1933 when Collier, back as Premier after three years in opposition, employed him to write the Western Australian Government's submission to the newly formed Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Despite suggestions he should return to Victoria to contest the federal seat being vacated by Frank Anstey, his long-standing colleague and mentor, Curtin stood again for Fremantle in 1934. He won Fremantle narrowly in an election in which Labor regained only a handful of the seats it had lost in 1931, while the breakaway Lang Labor forces in New South Wales won five additional seats, giving them a total of nine federal seats. Amid ever-increasing emphasis on issues of national security, Curtin was elected to the front bench and, less than a year later, when Scullin stood down in September 1935 he won the federal parliamentary leadership by one vote from Scullin's deputy, Queenslander Frank Forde.

Among the reasons for Curtin's success, over and above his pledge to abstain from alcohol, were his union background and impeccable loyalty to ALP principles during the crisis years of the Great War and the Great Depression. In addition, he had the advantage of living in Western Australia, a state where the ALP had been in opposition throughout the worst years of the Depression, far removed from the feuds bedevilling the party in the east.¹⁶

Leader of the Opposition, 1935–41

Curtin's most immediate task as leader was to restore Labor unity and in the process sideline the Lang Labor forces in New South Wales, a group to which he had been implacably opposed from the outset. In February 1936, following a unity conference in New South Wales, he succeeded in securing the return of the Lang Labor members to the Federal Caucus of the ALP, though problems with the Lang Labor group recurred on and off again until as late as 1941.

On the foreign policy front Curtin had to steer a course between widely divergent views within his own party – for example, during the Spanish Civil War, the ALP Left urged support for the incumbent Spanish Government while other Labor factions, including the party's Catholic wing, totally repudiated such an approach. On this, and on the issue of supporting sanctions against Italy over its invasion of Abyssinia, Curtin essentially sought to avoid adopting a definite policy.¹⁷

In Parliament he advocated a defence policy of self-reliance with a build-up particularly of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). However, he could not avoid the charge of isolationism at the 1937 federal election, at which the Lyons Government was returned comfortably to power, although Labor did make gains in the Senate. Soon afterwards both Government and Opposition leaders alike were relieved when war seemed to have been avoided with the Munich Agreement of September 1938. Curtin also was far from enthusiastic about the provocation to Japan offered by the Port Kembla waterside workers when, at the end of 1938, they refused to load pig-iron for export to Japan.¹⁸

Isolationism was swept aside by the rapid course of events in 1939. In May that year Curtin managed to dissuade the Australian Council of Trade Unions from boycotting a manpower survey. When war broke out in September 1939 he backed Australian participation while opposing the introduction of compulsory military training. He also warned against leaving Australia undefended with the dispatch of a voluntary expeditionary force to the European front, a move that Prime Minister Robert Menzies eventually confirmed on 28 November 1939.

However, Menzies, who had won the UAP leadership in May 1939 following the death of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, found it difficult to maintain electoral support during the period of the 'Phony War'. At the same time, despite fresh problems with Lang Labor, which had opposed a New South Wales' ALP conference motion condemning the possibility of war against Russia, Curtin managed to hold the party together. Following the federal election of September 1940 the Menzies Government was in power only with the support of two Victorian independents, Arthur Coles and Alex Wilson. Ironically, Curtin himself in Fremantle faced what seemed certain defeat early in the count until he was saved by late postal votes from servicemen and a substantial leakage of preferences from an unendorsed Nationalist Party candidate.

In the aftermath of the election Curtin found himself at the head of a significantly augmented party that included Ben Chifley and Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, who had stood down from the High Court of Australia to contest the New South Wales federal seat of Barton. Only a week after the outbreak of war in 1939 Curtin had opposed the idea that Labor should enter a national government of all parties such as would eventuate in the United Kingdom a few months later, contending that he and his party would 'better be able to do our duty for the country, usefully and forcefully, as unfettered watchdogs of the

public interest'.¹⁹ Now, in the wake of his narrow victory in the election, Menzies again offered Labor membership in a national government and Curtin again refused. Instead Menzies agreed to Curtin's counter proposal for the establishment of an advisory war council. This arguably gave Curtin a much-enhanced awareness of war policy issues without having to take any of the responsibility for, or suffer any community backlash against, the wartime controls that continued until Japan came into the war.

Menzies was overseas for four months in the first half of 1941 and during his absence Curtin and Acting Prime Minister and Country Party leader Arthur Fadden issued a joint statement warning of the deterioration of the security situation in the Pacific. Curtin also agreed to the dispatch of the Australian 8th Division to Singapore after British Prime Minister Winston Churchill promised to send part of the British fleet to the region if Australia's strategic interests were threatened.

On his return to Australia in May, and beset by dissension in his own party, Menzies offered to serve under Curtin in a national government, an invitation again rejected by Curtin despite pressure from within his own ranks, especially from Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, who wanted power at the first opportunity. On 28 August Menzies resigned and Arthur Coles, who had temporarily rejoined the UAP, resigned in protest to revert to his independent status. The subsequent stopgap government led by Fadden lost power when Coles and the other independent, Alexander Wilson, crossed the floor of the House to secure the passage of a no-confidence vote on the Fadden Government's Budget by 36 votes to 33.

This was the eighth – and to date, the last – occasion on which a government either lost office or was forced to an election following a vote in the House of Representatives. On 7 October 1941 Curtin was sworn in as Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Coordination (later Defence), heading a nineteen-man ministry with Frank Forde as his deputy, Ben Chifley as Treasurer and effectively number two in the Cabinet, and Dr Evatt as Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs.

Prime Minister, 1941–45

WARTIME LEADER IN THE CRITICAL YEARS 1941 TO 1943

Informed by his involvement in the Advisory War Council, in the weeks following his assumption of the office of Prime Minister, Curtin generally continued the policies of the previous government. However, he did insist that the Australian 9th Division be relieved from the siege of Tobruk. In mid-November 1941, the Royal Australian Navy cruiser HMAS *Sydney* was lost with all hands in an engagement with the *Kormoran*, a German raider disguised as a merchant cruiser. On 1 December 1941 the War Cabinet held an emergency meeting in Melbourne amid rapidly growing concern over Japanese belligerence.

On the morning of 8 December, barely two months after taking office, Curtin was awoken by his press secretary to the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and Australia for the first time in its history independently declared war on a foreign power. Before the month was out, and in the aftermath of the loss of the British warships HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* and the growing recognition that the British response would be

inadequate for the defence of Singapore, Curtin delivered his New Year's message to the Australian public in the form of an article published in the *Melbourne Herald* of 27 December 1941:

Without any inhibitions of any kind I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free from any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength, but we know, too, that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on.

We are, therefore, determined that Australia shall not go, and we shall devote all our energies towards the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against our enemy.²⁰

When Singapore fell to the Japanese on 15 February 1942, Curtin in a press statement told the Australian people:

The fall of Singapore can only be described as Australia's Dunkirk...[The] fall of Dunkirk initiated the battle for Britain. The fall of Singapore opens the Battle for Australia...What the Battle for Britain required, so the Battle for Australia requires...Our honeymoon has finished. It is now work or fight as we have never worked or fought before...²¹

Four days later – and after the first bombing of Darwin, the first 'physical contact of war within Australia' – Curtin, from hospital where he had been admitted with gastritis, was asking Australians each to 'vow that this blow at Darwin and the loss it has involved and the suffering it has occasioned shall gird our loins and nerve our steel'.²²

Against this backdrop Curtin and Churchill engaged in a war of cables concerning the control of two divisions of Australian troops returning from the Middle East with the Dutch East Indies as their original intended destination. While Curtin was urging that these troops should now return to Australia to take part in the defence of their homeland against a possible Japanese invasion, Churchill, supported by US President Roosevelt, wanted at least one of the divisions to be diverted to Burma to help keep China in the war and provide a base for future operations against Japan itself.

When Churchill unilaterally ordered the diversion of the Australian 7th Division to Burma, Curtin, who was 'unable to sleep for days at a time'²³ while the troops were crossing the Indian Ocean, countermanded this order, telling the British Prime Minister that 'it was quite impossible to reverse a decision which we have made with the utmost care'.²⁴ He did, however, allow a significant number of troops to stop off in Ceylon as a temporary measure, but only after the main body of troops reached Australia safely was Curtin released 'from great darkness and unhappiness'.²⁵

On 14 March Curtin became the first Australian Prime Minister to address the American people,²⁶ referring in his broadcast to Australia as 'the last bastion between the West Coast of America and the Japanese'.²⁷ Four days later General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Australia to take up his appointment by Roosevelt – 'with Curtin's agreement'²⁸ – as

Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area. The nature and consequences of the working relationship that was to develop between these two men of such strikingly different personalities have become both the stuff of legend and the source of historical controversy, especially concerning the degree to which Curtin was justified in an apparent surrender of national sovereignty.

However, despite the problems arising from the Allied decision to concentrate on a 'Hitler-first' strategy, a decision of which Curtin only became fully aware in May 1942, the American naval victories of the Coral Sea and Midway Island in May and June effectively removed the immediate threat of invasion. The Coral Sea victory also provided Curtin with the setting for his 'most stirring war time speech', in which he called on each Australian:

...who today is being defended by these gallant men in that engagement...that he owes it to these men, and to the future of the country, not to be stinting in what he will now do for Australia.²⁹

As the months went by Curtin's task increasingly became one of sustaining the total war effort in the face of 'growing public complacency'.³⁰ During the struggle for New Guinea, when Port Moresby was under serious threat, for a time Curtin's 'sea of austerity' required rationing of a whole variety of civilian goods, with added taxes on alcohol, tobacco and cinema and theatre tickets, the reduction of greyhound and horse racing, and restrictions on meals at restaurants and cafes.³¹

Fortunately, 'his intensity and passion made a profound impact' on the nation at large³² and a high degree of cooperation was achieved. By October 1942 the US Ambassador to Australia, Nelson Johnson, felt able to assure President Roosevelt that Curtin had succeeded in lifting the 'black blanket of despair' from his fellow countrymen.³³

One major source of concern to Curtin for much of the war was the ongoing conflict with sections of the trade union movement on the coalfields, which at times drove him to the point of despair;³⁴ however, despite numerous outbreaks of industrial conflict, no major strike took place. In this regard, Curtin was greatly assisted after his government lifted the ban on the Communist Party, which, as a consequence of Hitler's invasion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, now gave total ongoing support to the war effort.



Prime Minister John Curtin shaking hands with General Douglas MacArthur, Sydney 8 June 1943
JCPML00376/69.

In any case, by mid-September 1942, the tide was turning as the Japanese were being pushed back along the Kokoda Track in New Guinea. Kokoda itself was retaken on 2 November while the great Allied victory at El Alamein two days later provided the opportunity for the Australian 9th Division to be brought home from the Middle East.

In late October, confronted with arguments about the responsibility Australia owed to its Allies in pursuing the offensive into territory occupied by the Japanese, Curtin decided to seek to persuade the ALP to change the party policy that to this point had prevented Australians from being conscripted to fight outside Australian territory. Given his party's – and his own – strong opposition to conscription during World War I, Curtin had a battle on his hands when he raised the issue using the term 'one army under one command' at the party's national conference in November 1942 and again at a special conference in January 1943.³⁵

Despite strong opposition from Arthur Calwell and others, Curtin won the day by confining his proposal to extend conscription to an area south of the Equator and east to the Solomon Islands,³⁶ arguing that essentially all he was doing was modifying the definition of 'Australian territory' to enable full Australian involvement in campaigns in 'islands outside the political administration of Australia but strategically vital to Australia'.³⁷

Ironically, this made little practical difference in the conduct of the war since no Australian conscripts in the Australian Imperial Forces fought outside Australian territory, except for militia units in Merauke in Dutch New Guinea.³⁸ However, politically and psychologically this was a crucial triumph for Curtin, which both defused the situation within the ALP and also led to divisions within the Opposition ranks in terms of the formation of the breakaway 'National Service Group',³⁹ as well as removing a potentially damaging issue from the agenda for the forthcoming 1943 election campaign.

ON THE HOME FRONT

The conversion of the Australian economy to the needs of total war has been described as a 'massive achievement'.⁴⁰ A critical element in this regard was the Curtin Government's achievement of effectively excluding the states from collecting income tax. In July 1942 the High Court ruled as constitutional a series of Acts passed by the Australian Parliament that provided, among other things, for Commonwealth financial assistance to the states provided they did not attempt to collect their own income taxes. The Commonwealth's action followed the refusal of the states to cede this power voluntarily for the duration of the war, but the effect of the High Court's ruling on the uniform tax case was to bring about an extraordinarily significant permanent change in federal-state relations. The Government also introduced legislation to enable it, rather than the states, to collect an entertainments tax.

Opposition within the ALP to the increased taxation, especially of lower income workers, that flowed from the new tax scales was eased by the government's decision to use some of its newly found flow of income to introduce Commonwealth widows' pensions. At the beginning of 1943 the Curtin Government created a 'National Welfare Fund', which was financed from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, 'as an integral part of the Government's plans for the social security of the people'.⁴¹ Unemployment, sickness and pharmaceutical benefits followed during the Curtin Government's second term (1943–45), but plans for an effective national scheme of hospital and medical benefits ran into problems with strong opposition from the medical profession.

In terms of international law and status, the passage of the Statute of Westminster Adoption Act in the second half of 1942 was of considerable legal significance. Even before its adoption by the Australian Parliament, the enactment of the statute by the British Parliament in 1931 amounted to a declaration 'that the imperial parliament would exercise no supervisory powers over the legislation of self-governing dominions'. However, the Lyons and Menzies governments had made no formal moves to ratify the Act because of continuing dependence on British naval power in the event of a threat to Australia's security. They had asserted that Australia's effective independence was more than adequate without legal statement.⁴²

The passage of the 1942 legislation, piloted through the Australian Parliament by the Minister for External Affairs, Dr Herbert Evatt, removed legal constraints relating to extra-territoriality and the *Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865* (UK), thus allaying legal doubts about the extent of the government's constitutional powers to pursue the war effort and to plan for postwar reconstruction.⁴³ Opposition by a number of non-Labor politicians to ratifying this statute was mainly on the grounds that it might have the long-term effect of weakening ties with Great Britain but this was certainly never part of Curtin's or Evatt's intentions.

The Curtin Government also secured the passage of the *Australian Broadcasting Act 1942*, which replaced the *Australian Broadcasting Act 1932* and provided a comprehensive code that covered both the national broadcasting service and what the government described as the 'necessary minimum regulation' of commercial broadcasting.⁴⁴ The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) was reconstructed to consist of five commissioners, and a parliamentary standing committee was given the power to investigate all broadcasting matters.

Other legislation passed during the life of the first Curtin Government included the *Dairying Industry Assistance Act 1942* and its amending legislation (1943), which provided for a subsidy to, and the regulation of, industrial relations in the dairy industry; the *Women's Employment Act 1942*, which was concerned with allowing women to undertake work 'previously performed by men or not performed at all in Australia'⁴⁵ and also (in the pre-equal pay era) with the fixing of terms and conditions for women so employed; the *Commonwealth Electoral (War-Time) Act 1943*, which gave the vote to those aged between 18 and 21 who had served or were serving in the armed forces outside Australia; and the *Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act 1943*, which amended earlier legislation by extending its provisions to members of the women's fighting services.

THE 1943 ELECTION

Towards the middle of 1943, with the deadline for the federal election only weeks away, the Opposition stepped up its attack on the Minister for Labour and National Service, the Right Honourable Edward ('Eddie') J Ward, and his accusations (first voiced in October 1942) that the Menzies and Fadden governments had agreed to a plan, known as the 'Brisbane Line', for concentrating Australian defence forces in east-central Australia.

Curtin, while privately describing Ward as a 'ratbag',⁴⁶ let the issue run for a time before suspending Ward from his Ministry and establishing a royal commission⁴⁷ to investigate the issue. The royal commissioner, the Honourable Charles John Lowe, subsequently ruled that he could not make a finding because Ward had used parliamentary privilege to refuse to give evidence.

In early July, after surviving a no-confidence motion on 24 June by 27 votes to 26, Curtin obtained a dissolution of the House of Representatives with an election scheduled for 21 August 1943. During the election campaign Curtin, who made the first ever national policy speech from Canberra, concentrated both on his government's success in the conduct of the war and his schemes for postwar reconstruction while his party emphasised that 'You can't have Curtin if you don't vote Labor'. Many electors were probably also reassured when Curtin, in Perth three days before the election, promised that 'my government during the war will not socialize any industry'.⁴⁸

The result was Labor's greatest ever landslide federal election victory – winning 49 of the 73 seats in the House of Representatives and all nineteen Senate seats being contested. From 1 July 1944 the Curtin Government would have a commanding majority in both Houses of the Federal Parliament, the first time a Labor national government had been in this position since before the conscription split in 1916. The election was also notable for the election of the first women members of the Australian Parliament – Dame Enid Lyons, widow of former Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, in the House of Representatives, and Dorothy Tangney from Western Australia to fill a casual vacancy in the Senate.

1943 TO 1945

For Curtin and his government the later years of the war have been described as 'a time of frustration rather than mastery'.⁴⁹ While Curtin and his ministers grappled with the competing demands of industry and the armed services, General MacArthur's war strategy was increasingly based on limiting direct participation by Australian troops, including their total exclusion from the invasion of the Philippines. In this sense 'Australian strategy was increasingly dictated by the constraints of allied diplomacy'⁵⁰ and as a consequence the links between Curtin and MacArthur became less and less significant, which in turn seemed to imply a lessening of Australian participation at the peace table.

Curtin's own health also had become a matter for ever-increasing concern. In retrospect it seems that after a major overseas trip to the UK and the US in April-June 1944, he was 'never the same man again'. After heart trouble forced him into hospital in November, he did not return to duty until late January 1945 and made only one more major parliamentary speech before the onset of his last illness in April 1945.

On the international front, Evatt, in a speech to Parliament in October 1943, had listed Australian priorities as including Australia's right to 'take part in all aspects of the post-war settlement',⁵¹ Australia's predominant interest in the Pacific regions, the 'pivotal' position of Australian-New Zealand collaboration and the right of smaller nations to play their part in planning for the United Nations.

For his part, Curtin – perhaps, it has been suggested, in response to the post-election return of Menzies as Opposition leader – placed great emphasis on modernising Australia's traditional links with Britain and the Commonwealth. In an address to the Federal ALP Conference in December 1943, Curtin had proposed the development of machinery for the imperial coordination of policy between the meetings of British Commonwealth prime ministers that were inevitably periodic. In this regard, he possibly hoped that Australia would have more scope for independent action and contribution to policymaking than would be possible through the Australian-US relationship. Certainly this seems to have been the major motive behind the Anzac Agreement between Australia and New Zealand,

which was signed on 21 January 1944 after a conference in Canberra between delegates from the two nations.

The Anzac Agreement, as formulated by Evatt, sought the establishment of a regional zone of defence comprising the South-West and South Pacific areas that was based on Australia and New Zealand.⁵² In this regard, the signatories agreed that 'it would be proper for Australia and New Zealand to assume full responsibility for policing or sharing in policing such areas...[in the region] as may from time to time be agreed upon'.⁵³ The agreement has been described as akin to the 'Monroe Doctrine' that the US had asserted for the Americas, with its declaration that 'no change in the sovereignty or system of control of any of the islands of the Pacific should be effected' without the concurrence of the signatories and that the US 'should not retain control over bases built on British territories, including Australia and New Zealand'.⁵⁴

Curtin's trip in April, May and June 1944, first to Washington and then to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London before returning via Canada, had two central objectives. On the first issue he achieved Anglo-American agreement to the view that the Australian contribution to the war effort would increasingly be directed to the provision of food and other supplies rather than military personnel. His second objective concerning the establishment of postwar Commonwealth collaborative machinery in the form of a secretariat based in London did not attract any support – in retrospect he was twenty years ahead of his time.

Nevertheless, he had established his credentials in terms of maintaining the British connection – while in the UK he was awarded the freedom of the City of London – and six months earlier he had secured the nomination of the King's brother, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, to succeed Lord Gowrie as Governor-General. From a personal point of view, however, Curtin would have regretted Lord Gowrie's departure in the second half of 1944 after eight years in the post, as he had developed a warm friendship with the Governor-General and his wife during many a lonely weekend in Canberra.

Curtin found the Anzac Agreement somewhat of an embarrassment when meeting with Roosevelt in the US in 1944, but he strongly supported the concept of an international security organisation in place of the League of Nations that had so disappointed him in the interwar years. While he had always given Evatt strong backing in his role as Minister for External Affairs, Curtin did not particularly like him – hence his decision in 1945 to appoint Frank Forde as leader of the Australian delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization held in San Francisco, California to establish the United Nations. However, by the time Forde and Evatt arrived at San Francisco, Curtin was in hospital and it was Evatt who secured the publicity with his energetic – if at best only partly successful – campaign to enhance the status of the 'middle powers' in the world organisation.

On the domestic front ever-increasing attention was being given to the issue of the postwar world. Until February 1945 Curtin's loyal and most influential lieutenant, Ben Chifley, was at the helm of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction, which was established in December 1942. Alongside the expansion of social welfare benefits, funded from the greatly increased taxation revenue available to the Commonwealth since the uniform taxation legislation of 1942, was a range of issues relating to Keynesian planning for the postwar economy, which had the 1945 'White Paper on Full Employment' as its centrepiece. In

this regard, available evidence shows that Curtin played a considerable personal role in influencing the final text of the White Paper.⁵⁵

Curtin also gave total backing to Chifley's legislative reform of the banking system, which aimed at ensuring government control of the monetary system – an issue close to Curtin's heart (as it was to Chifley's) after the difficulties the Scullin Government faced with the Commonwealth Bank Board during the Great Depression. Other important developments included the negotiation of a Commonwealth–state housing agreement and the establishment of various rural and regional reconstruction bodies.

While the establishment of a separate Department of Immigration did not occur until after Curtin's death, the appointment of Arthur Calwell as Minister for Information after the 1943 election paved the way for the active postwar migration policy that Curtin had strongly favoured. On the education front, planning was under way in 1944 and 1945 for the establishment of the Australian National University and the provision of Commonwealth scholarships to university students.

One serious setback for Curtin and his government, however, was the crushing defeat of Evatt's attempt to gain greatly increased constitutional power for the Commonwealth with his 'Fourteen Powers' referendum in August 1944. Curtin certainly favoured the general principle of constitutional reform to enhance the power of the Commonwealth and told a convention of federal and state representatives in November 1942 that as the Commonwealth pursued objectives such as improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security, it would find that 'at every turn in the problem of post-war reconstruction we shall be confronted by some constitutional barrier'.⁵⁶

At the same time, wisely as it turned out, he was far from enthusiastic, after several states had failed to legislate in terms of the November 1942 agreement, about asking electors to endorse a large-scale 'package proposal', and on his return from overseas took little part in the campaign. Politically, the successful 'No' campaign greatly assisted Menzies in his moves for the reunification and rejuvenation of the non-Labor parties, which culminated in the formation of the Liberal Party of Australia towards the end of 1944.

FINAL DAYS

After suffering a coronary occlusion in November 1944, Curtin was hospitalised in Melbourne. His daughter Elsie came to Melbourne to be with him as he slowly recovered and then his wife came to Canberra and stayed with him at The Lodge until he resumed official duties on 22 January 1945. Almost immediately he had to defend his government against charges that moves to nationalise Australia's internal airlines were part of a wider 'socialist agenda'. These moves were blocked by the High Court and subsequently the Chifley Government established Trans Australia Airlines in 1946 and acquired Qantas in 1947.

At the same time, in a speech to government and industry representatives, Curtin described government action to prevent rising unemployment as the necessity of an 'enlarged role' for government. On 28 February 1945 he made what might be described as his last major parliamentary speech, which dealt with the war effort (past and present) and canvassed the prospects for an international peacekeeping organisation, warning that 'countries cannot always have their own way, if they really wish to live in amity'.⁵⁷

On 18 April Curtin paid his parliamentary tribute to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had died six days earlier. At the end of the month Curtin was admitted to a private hospital in Canberra and, with Frank Forde absent at the San Francisco Conference, it fell to Chifley, the Acting Prime Minister, to announce the German surrender on 8 May. After several weeks in hospital, Curtin returned to The Lodge and remained there with his wife Elsie until his death on 5 July. After services in Canberra and a lying-in-state in King's Hall on 6 July, his body was flown to Perth and he was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery on Sunday, 8 July before a crowd estimated at over 20 000. For much of his life Curtin had not been a religious man and there is conflicting evidence about the extent to which he maintained his beliefs, but it was at Curtin's own request, made in his final weeks, that the funeral service was conducted by his friend, the Reverend Hector Harrison, a Presbyterian.

Curtin's deputy, Frank Forde, who had returned from the San Francisco Conference only a few days before Curtin's death, served as Prime Minister for only one week, still the shortest term ever for any Australian prime minister. On 12 July the Labor Caucus elected Ben Chifley to the leadership by a substantial majority and his government was sworn in on the following day, with the only change from Curtin's last Ministry the inclusion of a Western Australian, Herbert V Johnson, to replace Curtin himself. Chifley had always been a valuable personal and political ally and confidante to Curtin, and his weeks as Acting Prime Minister after Curtin's hospitalisation in April undoubtedly contributed to the ease of his victory.

For Geoffrey Serle, the 'great justification of Curtin as Prime Minister is not merely that there was no viable alternative government in 1941–45, but that his contemporaries acknowledged that no other politician was fit for the task'.⁵⁸ At Australia's most critical hour Curtin 'successfully projected himself as national leader, inspiring respect from cynical Australians as few Prime Ministers have done. His achievements all derive essentially from character...'⁵⁹

In terms of ideals, the inscription on his gravestone perhaps best sums up Curtin's outlook and contribution to Australia:

His country was his pride
His brother man his cause.

Notes

¹ David Day, 'John Joseph Curtin' in Michelle Grattan (ed.), *Australian Prime Ministers*, New Holland Publishers, Sydney, 2000, p. 218.

² Geoffrey Serle, *For Australia and Labor. Prime Minister John Curtin*, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, Bentley, 1998, p. 31.

³ Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970, p. 634.

⁴ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 219.

⁵ David Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 1999, p. 146.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 205–211.

⁷ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 224.

⁸ Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, p. 251.

⁹ Dianne Sholl, 'John Curtin at the "Westralian Worker" 1917–1928: an examination of the development of Curtin's political philosophy as reflected in his editorials', BA (Hons) thesis, University of Western Australia, 1975, p. 38.

¹⁰ *Westralian Worker*, 2 June and 4 August 1922.

¹¹ Fred Alexander, 'John Curtin the Prime Minister', in Lyall Hunt (ed.), *Westralian Portraits*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1979, p. 228.

¹² Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, pp. 275–276 and Alexander, 'John Curtin the Prime Minister', p. 228.

¹³ Alexander, 'John Curtin the Prime Minister', p. 228.

¹⁴ See Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, p. 291–296.

¹⁵ *Westralian Worker*, 7 December 1928.

¹⁶ David Black, *In His Own Words: John Curtin's Speeches and Writings*, Paradigm Books, Curtin University, Bentley, 1995, p. 122.

¹⁷ See, for example, Serle, *For Australia and Labor*, p. 18 – 'Abyssinia and Spain were irreconcilable issues on which Curtin deliberately decided not to lead'.

¹⁸ Serle, *For Australia and Labor*, p. 19.

¹⁹ From a radio broadcast by John Curtin, 10 September 1939, the text of which was printed as a pamphlet by the Western Australian State Executive of the ALP headed 'Australia and the War, Labor's Standpoint', cited in Black, *In His Own Words*, p. 160.

²⁰ Cited in Black, *In His Own Words*, pp. 194–195.

²¹ Commonwealth Government, *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister (the Hon. John Curtin)*, No. 19, 16 February 1942, p. 7.

²² *ibid.*, No. 19, 19 February 1942, p. 9.

²³ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 233.

²⁴ Curtin to Churchill, 23 February 1942, cited in Black, *In His Own Words*, p. 200.

²⁵ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 234.

²⁶ Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1977, p. 275.

²⁷ *Digest of Decisions and Announcements and Important Speeches*, No. 22, 14 March 1942, pp. 10–12.

²⁸ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 234.

²⁹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives), 170, 8 May 1942, pp. 1060–1061.

³⁰ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 235.

³¹ Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, p. 480.

³² Geoffrey Serle, 'John Curtin', in John Ritchie (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 13, 1940–80, University Press, Carlton, Melbourne 1993 (4), p. 556.

³³ Day, 'John Joseph Curtin', p. 235.

³⁴ See, for example, Black, *In His Own Words*, pp. 205–206 and 233–237.

³⁵ See Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942–1945*, p. 338 and generally pp. 326–352.

- ³⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 341 for a map of the relevant territory.
- ³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 337.
- ³⁸ Gavin Long, *The Six Years War. Australia in the 1939–45 War*, Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Sydney, 1973, p. 296.
- ³⁹ Gavin Souter, *Acts of Parliament. A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Burwood, 1988, p. 356.
- ⁴⁰ Serle, 'John Curtin', p. 555.
- ⁴¹ Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942–1945*, p. 385.
- ⁴² Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, p. 298.
- ⁴³ David Lowe, 'Australia in the World', in Joan Beaumont, (ed.), *Australia's War 1939–45*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1996, p. 166.
- ⁴⁴ See NAA: A432, 1948/25, 'Legislative and Administrative Record of Curtin and Chifley Governments'.
- ⁴⁵ Geoffrey Sawer, *Australian Federal Politics and Law 1929–1949*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1963 (74), p. 133.
- ⁴⁶ Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, p. 356.
- ⁴⁷ 'The Royal Commission into Alleged Missing Documents relating to Defence Plans', also known as the 'Brisbane Line' Royal Commission.
- ⁴⁸ Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, p. 358.
- ⁴⁹ Serle, 'John Curtin', p. 556.
- ⁵⁰ Joan Beaumont, 'World War II', in Graeme Davison et al. (eds), *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998 (99), p. 695.
- ⁵¹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives), 176, 14 October 1943, p. 570.
- ⁵² Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942–1945*, p. 480.
- ⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 481.
- ⁵⁴ See Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, p. 528 and Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942–1945*, p. 483.
- ⁵⁵ See Tim Rowse, 'Curtin and Labor's Full Employment Promise', paper presented at *From Curtin to Coombs: War and Peace in Australia*, Seminar at Curtin University of Technology, 25 March 2003.
- ⁵⁶ *Digest of Decisions, Announcements and Important Speeches*, No. 46, 24 November 1942, cited in Black, *In His Own Words*, pp. 218–219.
- ⁵⁷ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives), 181, 28 February 1945, p. 173 cited in Black, *In His Own Words*, p. 250.
- ⁵⁸ Serle, *For Australia and Labor*, p. 47.
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.*

2

Records in the National Archives

The National Archives of Australia holds significant records relating to John Curtin. Many of these records have been digitised and are available for viewing online through the National Archives' [RecordSearch](#) database.

The records are listed chronologically as far as possible under the following headings:

- Early life and career to 1935
- Leader of the Opposition, 1935–41
- Prime Minister, 1941–45
- Death and memorials, 1945–82
- Portraits and photographs, 1885–1945

Early life and career to 1935

FULL COURT CASE RECORDS, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1903–73

A10078

Recorded by: High Court of Australia, Office of the Registry, Perth (Western Australia) (CA 8195)

Quantity: 5.76 metres (Canberra)

This series documents appeals from decisions made in the Perth Supreme Court by single Justices of the High Court and, later, appeals from decisions made in the Federal Court. It contains one item relating to John Curtin.

John Curtin v Hugh Annan Corbett, 1917–19

A10078, 1918/1

This file relates to an appeal by Curtin against the decision of the Court of Summary Jurisdiction, that statements Curtin had made were 'likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty' under the *War Precautions Regulations 1915*. Curtin had been found guilty and fined £15 plus costs and ordered to pay a surety of £25 for good behaviour, which was a heavy financial imposition at the time. The determination by the High Court of Australia is not recorded on the file, although the case is otherwise well documented.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS, 1906-21**M4124**

Recorded by: The Hon. Edward John Russell (CP 679)

Quantity: 0.72 metres (Melbourne)

This series consists of photographs and negatives of a small number of papers collected by Senator Edward John Russell. This series includes personal correspondence from prime ministers William Hughes and Andrew Fisher and leaflets from the *Labor Call* and the *Australian Worker*. One item in this series relates to John Curtin.

'How to vote' pamphlet picturing six Labor Senate candidates, 5 September 1914**M4124, 4**

This item includes a pamphlet for 'J Curtin, candidate for the Balaclava electorate', which states the ALP's platform and record of accomplishment. The item title on [RecordSearch](#) lists the other candidates' names (S Barker, A Blakey, E Findley, A N McKissock and E J Russell).

LIBRARY MATERIAL, DEWEY DECIMAL NUMBER SERIES, 1911-62**A1203**Recorded by: 1911 Department of Home Affairs (I) (CA 8)
1911-62 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 3.60 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of various reports, ministerial statements and documents relating to matters as varied as immigration, taxation, royal commissions and international affairs. Some material in this series dates back to 1903. It includes records relating to the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances, on which John Curtin served as a commissioner.

Report of the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances together with evidence, 1928**A1203, 362/7/AUS/1**

This item contains correspondence relating to a letter from John Curtin in October 1927 to the commission regarding representation of parties to the commission by counsels. This item is digitised.

Royal Commission on Child Endowment - minutes of evidence, 1928-29**A1203, 362/7/AUS/2****CORRESPONDENCE FILES, CLASS 5 (ROYAL COMMISSIONS), 1921-50****A460**

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 6.75 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of papers relating to particular royal commissions. Papers for each commission generally include correspondence relating to its establishment and procedures, transcripts of evidence, reports and subsequent correspondence consequent on the report. Some material in this series dates back to 1906. It includes records relating to the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances, on which John Curtin served as a commissioner.

Child Endowment - main file personnel - accommodation, 1927-29**A460, A5/32A**

Royal Commission – Child Endowment – general, 1927–28 [A460, B5/32](#)

Royal Commission on Child Endowment – financial, 1927–30 [A460, D5/32](#)

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1927–42 [A981](#)

Recorded by: Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 146.89 metres (Canberra)

This series contains files and records on External Affairs subjects, including League of Nations and Committee of Imperial Defence material, and files from the Prime Minister's Department. It includes records relating to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conference Curtin attended in 1924. These items are digitised and available for viewing on [RecordSearch](#).

ILO – sixth conference – reports, 1906–29 [A981, INT 24](#)

This item includes reports from the 6th session of the ILO held in Geneva, June–July 1924, by the Australian Employers' Delegate (W C F Thomas), the Australian government delegate and the delegate representing the workers of Australia (John Curtin).

ILO conferences – sixth conference – agenda, 1923–25 [A981, INT 20](#)

ILO – sixth conference – delegates, 1923–24 [A981, INT 21](#)

This item includes correspondence regarding the appointment of commissioners, administrative matters, travel and other matters. It includes cables to and from Curtin, along with state nominations for labour delegates.

ILO sixth conference – financial, 1923–25 [A981, INT 22](#)

This item contains letters, cables and accounts relating to delegates, particularly Curtin. It also contains expense sheets and delegates' commissions to ILO.

ILO – sixth session – recommendations and conventions, 1924–26 [A981, INT 23](#)

This item includes copies of the recommendations adopted at the sixth conference regarding the utilisation of workers' spare time and the responses of the states to the recommendation.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COMMISSION, 1928 [CP660/30](#)

Recorded by: Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances (CA 2444)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of one item containing correspondence relating to the general administration of the commission. It includes lists of witnesses (by state) and a summary of points for the commission's consideration.

Royal Commission on Child Endowment – correspondence, 1928 [CP660/30, 1](#)

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1929–**A432**

Recorded by: 1929– Attorney-General's Department (CA 5)
1958 Deputy Crown Solicitor's Office, ACT –
portion relating to Deputy Crown Solicitor's
matters (CA 832)

Quantity: 2021.79 metres (Canberra); 352.62 metres (Sydney);
0.56 metres (Darwin)

This is the main correspondence series of the Attorney-General's Department. Some material in this series dates back to 1901. It includes records relating to the Royal Commission on Child Endowment or Family Allowances, on which John Curtin served as a commissioner.

Royal Commission on Child Endowment, 1927–29

A432, 1929/219**TRANSCRIPTS OF HEARINGS AND RELATED HEARING DOCUMENTS OF
COMMONWEALTH GRANTS COMMISSION, 1933–73****A2776**

Recorded by: 1933 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1933–73 Commonwealth Grants Commission (I) (CA 261)
1973 Grants Commission (CA 1535)

Quantity: 17.82 metres (Canberra)

This series contains transcripts of hearings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission and some related material, including published reports, government or semi-government statistical publications and other material produced as evidence by the states during the hearings. It contains many items relating to the commission on which Curtin represented Western Australia.

South Australia – evidence, 1933

A2776, SA 1933

John Curtin represented Western Australia at these proceedings in South Australia.



From left to right: William Morris Hughes, John Curtin and HRH the Duke of Gloucester, Canberra, 1945. NAA: M1218, 9

Canberra – evidence (1933–34), 1934 [A2776, C1933–1934/1](#)
This item contains a report on the claims made by Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

Canberra – evidence, (1933–34), 1934 [A2776, C1933–1934/3](#)

Commonwealth Grants Commission – Western Australian evidence (1933–34) – first day, 1934 [A2776, WA 1933–34/1](#)
There are seven other files listing the days of proceedings for the Western Australian evidence.

Commonwealth Grants Commission – Western Australia – evidence (1933–34), 1934 [A2776, WA 1933–34/2](#)

Canberra – evidence (1934–35), 1935 [A2776, C1934–35/2](#)

Canberra – evidence (1934–35), 1935 [A2776, C1934–35/3](#)

Commonwealth Grants Commission – Western Australian evidence (1934–35) – readers' copy, 1934–35 [A2776, WA 1934–35](#)

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1933– [A2770](#)

Recorded by: 1933–73 Commonwealth Grants Commission (I) (CA 261)
1973–76 Grants Commission (CA 1535)
1976– Commonwealth Grants Commission (II) (CA 4474)

Quantity: 10.26 metres (Canberra)

This series was raised by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. It covers all the commission's general business, and includes items relating to the commission on which Curtin represented Western Australia. The following items have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

Commonwealth Grants Commission – official correspondence, 1933–35 [A2770, 23 part 1](#)

Western Australia, 1933–35 [A2770, 241](#)

VOLUME OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS, 1933– [A2775](#)

Recorded by: 1933–73 Commonwealth Grants Commission (I) (CA 261)
1973–76 Grants Commission (CA 1535)
1976– Commonwealth Grants Commission (II) (CA 4474)

Quantity: 2.25 metres (Canberra)

The series consists of minutes of meetings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Commonwealth Grants Commission – minutes of meetings (five volumes), 1934–46 [A2775, whole series](#)

This item is digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

Leader of the Opposition, 1935–41

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1903–38

A1

Recorded by: 1903–16 Department of External Affairs (I) (CA 7)
1916–28 Department of Home and Territories (CA 15)
1928–32 Department of Home Affairs (II) (CA 24)
1932–38 Department of the Interior (I) (CA 27)

Quantity: 456.35 metres (Canberra); 2.04 metres (Darwin)

This series contains correspondence files dealing with administrative and personnel matters as well as the various functions administered by this agency – eg immigration, emigration, external affairs, forestry, forestry education, lands and surveys, transport, railways and shipping.

Car hire for Leader of the Opposition, 1928–36

A1, 1935/12050

This item mainly relates to James Scullin, but also contains a memorandum summarising financial arrangements for motorcar services for leaders of the Opposition and their private secretaries.

J Curtin, MP – employment on Commonwealth and state works – question in Parliament, 1935–37

A1, 1935/10522

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS OF ROBERT GORDON MENZIES, 1934–46

CP450/10

Recorded by: 1934–46 Rt Hon. Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, PC, KT, CH, QC (CP 54)
1934–39 Attorney-General's Department (CA 5)
1939 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 0.06 metres (Canberra)

This small series contains a residue of the papers of Robert Gordon Menzies, mainly from his time as Attorney-General (1934–39) and as Prime Minister (1939). This series comprises assorted publications, reports, circulars and a small quantity of correspondence and other miscellaneous papers.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Menzies] Miscellany, 1933–38

CP450/10, 3

This item includes election campaign itineraries for Joseph Lyons, Dr Earle Page and John Curtin for September to October 1937. This item has been digitised.

'THE SHEDDEN COLLECTION', 1937–71

A5954

Recorded by: 1937–71 Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden KCMG, OBE (CP 320)
1937–39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)
1939–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
1942–71 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 200.98 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in other offices of the [National Archives](#)

Sir Frederick Shedden was the Secretary of the Department of Defence between 1937 and 1956. This series contains records he collected during his career and collated during his retirement when researching and writing a book

(unpublished at the time of his death in 1971) on the history of Australian defence policy from 1901 to 1945. This series contains drafts of this work together with copies of departmental correspondence, files, reports, press cuttings and copies of War Cabinet and Advisory War Council records. Many of the following items have been digitised.

- Speech in Parliament on Defence Estimates on 5 November 1936 by the Hon. John Curtin, 1926–37** [A5954, 886/3](#)
- Aircraft manufacture – resolutions of ALP, 6 April 1936** [A5954, 873/4](#)
- Australian Labor Party Platform – Defence amendments made by ALP conference at Adelaide, July 1936** [A5954, 885/2](#)
- Debate on Defence Estimates for 1936–37 – speech by the Leader of the Opposition, 5 November 1936** [A5954, 1029/7](#)
- [Book] A new defence programme and Labor’s re-statement of policy (1936–37), 1936–66** [A5954, 764/24](#)
- Imperial Conference – review of proceedings – speech by Leader of the Opposition, 25 August 1937** [A5954, 1073/8](#)
- Labor Defence policy – statement by Leader of Opposition, and press report, September 1937** [A5954, 1029/8](#)
- Imperial Conference – review of proceedings – speech by the Leader of the Opposition (Curtin MP), 1937** [A5954, 2390/31](#)
- The Defence Estimates, 1937–38 – speech by Leader of the Opposition (Curtin MP), 1937** [A5954, 2390/33](#)
- Booklet No. 2 – speeches delivered by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence, 1937–39** [A5954, 1137/3](#)
This item also includes speeches by John Curtin.
- Labor policy – notion of want of confidence – speeches by Leader of Opposition and the Prime Minister, 1938** [A5954, 1077/6](#)
This item also includes a speech by the Minister for Defence, the Rt Hon. Harold Thorby.
- Army administration – remarks in press by Commandant, 5 Military District concerning Leader of Opposition, 1939** [A5954, 888/2](#)
- International emergency, 1939 – observations by Leader of the Opposition, 25–26 August 1939** [A5954, 432/22](#)
- Defence Bill (No. 2) 1939 – introduced by Leader of the Opposition (Mr Curtin), 1939–66** [A5954, 1152/1](#)
- Formation of Advisory War Council – correspondence between Prime Minister and Leader of Opposition, 1940** [A5954, 206/5](#)
This item includes correspondence on the proposed formation of a national government, dating from October 1940.
- (Publication of speeches and statements) Speeches by the Right Honourable R G Menzies, 1940** [A5954, 1667/15](#)
This item includes speeches made by John Curtin as the Leader of the Opposition.
- Federal elections – policy speech by Mr Curtin, Leader of the Opposition, 1940** [A5954, 594/1](#)

Labor Party proposals for increase in Army pay and allowances – review of scales of pay for Special Forces, 1940 [A5954, 548/2](#)

Advisory War Council Minutes (original set), volume 1, 1940–41 [A5954, 812/1](#)

This item contains original sets of minutes (nos 1 to 596) of meetings held by the Advisory War Council. It is one of several items in this series that contain Australian War Council minutes.

Commonwealth Railways timetable, 1940–41 [A5954, 718/2](#)

This item relates to Agendum No. 13/1940 of the Advisory War Council, which dealt with Curtin's request that the Commonwealth Railways timetable be arranged to provide for a daily transcontinental train.

Notes on proposal of leader of Labor Party to increase Australian Imperial Force (AIF) rates of pay and rental allowance, 1940–41 [A5954, 270/5](#)

Prime Minister's review at NSW Labor Party Conference, Sydney, 6 June 1943 [A5954, 611/6](#)

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1939–42

[MP508/1](#)

Recorded by: 1939 Army Headquarters, Department of Defence (II) (CA 2671)

1939–42 Department of the Army (CA 36)

Quantity: 0.41 metres (Darwin); 144.37 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains files relating to wartime administration of Australia's military forces. It deals with matters such as compensation, defence and fixed defences, and the medical and dental corps.

Rates of pay – AIF militia and British, New Zealand, South African and Canadian military forces, 1940–41 [MP508/1, 247/701/360](#)

This item relates to a request made by John Curtin, MP.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1939–46

[SP112/1](#)

Recorded by: Department of Information – Press Division (CA 34)

Quantity: 13.68 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of general correspondence files of the Press Division of the Department of Information.

Pamphlets [and] broadcast speeches by Labor leaders, 1941 [SP112/1, 428/3/114](#)

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, CLASS 1 (GENERAL, PASSPORTS), 1939–50

[A659](#)

Recorded by: 1939 Department of the Interior (I) (CA 27)

1939–45 Department of the Interior (II) (CA 31)

1945–50 Department of Immigration (CA 51)

Quantity: 101.8 metres (Canberra); 1.04 metres (Darwin); 0.36 metres (Victoria)

This series consists of correspondence files documenting the operational functions of the Department of Interior from 1939 to 1945 and of the Department of Immigration from 1946 to 1950. Subjects covered include migration, lands and surveys, elections and forestry.

Curtin, John MP – urging that electoral rolls be printed yearly, 1940[A659, 1940/1/7701](#)**CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 'W' (WAR) INFIX, 1939–50**[A1539](#)

Recorded by: Department of Trade and Customs (CA 10)

Quantity: 90.54 metres (Canberra)

This series contains files of correspondence, reports, decisions, opinions, cablegrams and other material relating to wartime restrictions – eg trading with the enemy and restrictions on communications with the enemy or enemy-held territories.

Telegram from Leader of the Opposition – increased prices on commodities and the 'pass it on' system, 1940–41[A1539, 1940/W/18740](#)**NAVY SERIES, 1939–50**[MP150/1](#)

Recorded by: 1939 Navy Office (III) Department of Defence (I) (CA 2456)

1939–50 Navy Office (IV) Department of the Navy (II) (CA 38)

Quantity: 118 metres (Melbourne)

This series contains general correspondence of the Secretary to the Department of the Navy relating to a wide variety of matters.

Suggestion that naval training centres should be established at Albany, Bunbury, etc, 1941[MP150/1, 449/201/820](#)

This item relates to a letter from John Curtin, MP.

ADVISORY WAR COUNCIL MINUTES (CARBON COPIES), 1940–45[A2682](#)

Recorded by: Advisory War Council (CA 495)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra); 0.18 metres (Sydney); 0.18 metres (Melbourne)

This series consists of volumes of carbon copies of Advisory War Council minutes. The originals are in the Shedden Collection. They have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#) (see items A5954, 812/1 to A5954, 815/2).

John Curtin was a member of the Advisory War Council from its inauguration until his death in 1945.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1940–57[A663](#)

Recorded by: 1940–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)

1942–57 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 33.21 metres (Canberra); 0.05 metres (Darwin)

This series records the main administrative activities of the Department of Defence with regard to its coordinating and policymaking functions. The series contains some secret and confidential files.

Defence Act (No. 2) 1939 – Bill [introduced] by Mr Curtin, Leader of the Opposition, 1939[A663, O3/2/1299](#)

FOLDERS OF SUBJECT-BASED CORRESPONDENCE, 1964–91**M4289**

Recorded by: Hon. Kim Edward Beazley, AO (CP 107)

Quantity: 4.86 metres (Perth)

This series comprises a collection of papers created by Kim Edward Beazley during his term as the MHR for Fremantle, Minister for Education and as a member of various committees. Some material dates back to 1929.

The series includes the following Australian Labor Party material from the period of John Curtin's leadership.

Minutes of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party – period of John Curtin's leadership, 1935–45

M4289, 42**Prime Minister, 1941–45**

Records relating to John Curtin in his years as Prime Minister have been further subdivided under the following headings:

- Prime ministerial records
- Cabinet records
- Defence matters
- External affairs
- Legislation
- Invitations, honours and social engagements
- The economy
- Communication and information
- Education
- Australian Labor Party

PRIME MINISTERIAL RECORDS**CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1901–50****A461**

Recorded by: 1934–35 Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)
1934–50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 145.98 metres (Canberra); 0.29 metres (Darwin)

This series consists of general correspondence files covering subjects that came to the prime minister's attention. Some material in the series dates back to 1901. The following items have been digitised.

Prime Minister – movements, 1940–44**A461, C4/1/12 part 3**

This item contains telegrams and itineraries relating to travel by Prime Minister John Curtin within Australia.

Governments – Curtin and Chifley ministries, 1941–45**A461, AP4/1/3**

This item includes correspondence relating to the appointment of ministers to acting positions. It includes a letter from John Curtin, dated 30 April 1945, appointing Ben

Chifley as Acting Prime Minister. The item also includes press statements from July 1943 by Prime Minister Curtin on Opposition policy.

Prime Minister – Rt Hon. J Curtin, 1941–45

[A461, R4/1/12](#)

This item mainly comprises correspondence from individuals, organisations, representatives and statesmen of foreign countries, and friends and colleagues of John Curtin. Subjects include messages of congratulations and good will on his becoming prime minister and on election results (eg telegram of congratulations from Tatsuo Kawai, Japanese Minister in Australia, October 1941); Christmas and New Year greetings; and messages relating to the health, illness and death of Prime Minister Curtin.

The item also includes press statements regarding Curtin's health, a speech made by Curtin at the Triennial Federal Conference of the ALP in 1943, the Prime Minister's itinerary for 26 July to 20 August 1943, a national broadcast by Curtin on 17 June 1942, a broadcast by Curtin to people of Great Britain on 29 April 1942 and a broadcast to people of Australia on 8 May 1942.

Prime Minister's staff, 1941–49

[A461, Z1/1/1](#)

This item includes a letter from Curtin to the Public Service Commissioner in 1941 regarding appointments to his personal staff (eg classifications, salaries and travelling allowances).

Messages to and from the Prime Minister – general, 1941–50

[A461, B4/1/12 part 2](#)

This item contains correspondence from Curtin's period as Prime Minister, including messages of goodwill such as Christmas and New Year wishes between individuals, organisations and officials of Allied governments (eg UK Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek and the International Red Cross).

OATHS, CORRESPONDENCE AND GAZETTE NOTICES – APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS OF COMMONWEALTH MINISTRIES, 1901–56

[A5447](#)

Recorded by: Federal Executive Council (CA 2)

Quantity: 0.72 metres (Canberra)

This series deals with Commonwealth ministries including the first and second Curtin ministries. Items in this series have been digitised and are available for viewing on [RecordSearch](#).

24th Commonwealth Ministry – 1st Curtin Ministry [ministerial oaths and correspondence], 1941–42

[A5447, 40](#)

25th Commonwealth Ministry – 2nd Curtin Ministry [ministerial oaths and correspondence], 1943–45

[A5447, 41](#)

TAPE RECORDINGS OF WARTIME SPEECHES MADE BY JOHN CURTIN, 1939-44**M1219**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra); 0.18 metres (Sydney)

This series consists of seven sound recordings, including a talk by John Curtin as Opposition leader on the death of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons on 7 April 1939 and six speeches delivered by Curtin as Prime Minister, both in Australia and overseas. The speeches are:

- the declaration of war on Japan, 8 December 1941;
- Curtin's speech to the American people, 14 March 1942;
- Curtin's speech at the laying of the foundation stone for the American Legation, Canberra, 4 July 1942;
- Curtin's austerity talk, dated around October 1942;
- Curtin's speech on receiving the Freedom of the City of London, 10 May 1943; and
- Curtin's address to the House of Commons, Ottawa, 1 June 1944.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1939-47**A1608**

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 41.22 metres (Canberra); 0.22 metres (Darwin)

This series consists of files relating to World War II. It includes information on a whole range of matters that reflect the ways in which the war impinged on all aspects of public life, national security, government administration and policymaking. The following items have been digitised.

Declaration[s] of war - (1) Germany (1939); (2) Italy (1940); and (3) Japan (1941), 1939-42

A1608, M41/1/1

War records - conscription (including the use of militia outside Australia), 1939-42

**A1608, V45/1/12
part 1**

This is part one of a two-part file that includes representations to prime ministers Menzies and Curtin from unions and community organisations about conscription.

Visit of Prime Minister (Rt Hon. John Curtin) abroad, 1942-44

A1608, CG65/1/1

This item contains correspondence and other material relating to the shipping of two cases of goods (including books and gifts) from the UK to Australia. It also holds letters from Prime Minister Curtin thanking the personnel who accompanied him overseas and correspondence about travel arrangements for Mr Curtin and his party, along with letters of introduction. The item also includes a press statement, dated 24 April 1944, made by Prime Minister Curtin about his visit to the US.

Visit of Prime Minister (Rt Hon. J Curtin) abroad - financial, 1944-45

A1608, CH65/1/1

War records – conscription (including the use of militia outside Australia), 1942–44

The second part of A1608, V45/1/12 contains *Hansard* extracts and a prime ministerial statement by Curtin.

**A1608, V45/1/12
part 2**

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN CURTIN AS PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1941–44

M1415

Recorded by: 1941–44 The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)

1944 The Rt Hon. Francis Michael Forde PC (CP 81)

1941–44 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 12.6 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises correspondence files maintained in the Prime Minister's Office from October 1941, when John Curtin became Prime Minister, to December 1944. The series also reflects the extended periods in 1944 when Frank Forde was Acting Prime Minister, but does not include the correspondence for the last six months of Curtin's term of office until his death in early July 1945.

The files mainly contain representations made directly to Curtin. The earliest of these relate to matters initially raised with Curtin as the MHR for Fremantle and then with him as Prime Minister, or matters that were passed on to him from the Fadden Government. Some letters are addressed to Mrs Elsie Curtin, to his Private Secretary, Eric Tonkin, or, in 1944, to Frank Forde.

The correspondence originated from political colleagues, personal friends, branches of political parties (particularly the ALP), trade unions, local government authorities, returned servicemen's associations, business interests, the general public, churches, women's groups and other community organisations.

The subject matter is wide-ranging and deals with requests for exemption or release from military service; pay and conditions for servicemen and their families; pensions; rationing; questions about liquor, censorship, manpower, the effect of particular National Security Regulations, requisitioned property, aliens, internees, war loans, daylight saving and pay-as-you-earn taxation; comments on the government's conduct of the war and expressions of support; American forces in Australia; the 1944 referendum; the appointment of His Royal Highness (HRH) the Duke of Gloucester as Governor-General and the re-appointment of Stanley Melbourne Bruce as High Commissioner in London; and postwar planning and so on.

The series also contains a small amount of official and more personal correspondence dealing with Curtin's travel arrangements and expressions of goodwill and concern about his health. Some policy issues are dealt with, mainly through individual cases, such as the treatment of aliens, wartime regulations, postwar reconstruction, immigration policy, housing, Indigenous Australians and appointments to official positions.

In general, replies were sent out under the signature block of Curtin's main private secretaries (Eric Tonkin and Frederick McLaughlin) or were signed directly by Curtin himself or by Forde.

In addition to letters, telegrams and handwritten notes, items in this series may also contain newspaper clippings, pamphlets, patriotic songs, poems and a few photographs. These items provide considerable insight into Curtin as Prime Minister and into Australia during the war years. Many items in this series have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN CURTIN AS PRIME MINISTER, SPECIAL SUBJECT SERIES, 1941-44

M1416

Recorded by: 1941-44 The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)
1944 The Rt Hon. Francis Michael Forde PC (CP 81)
1941-44 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 1.98 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises special subject correspondence files maintained in the Prime Minister's Office from 1942 to the end of 1944. In general the files relate to major public issues or aspects of government business. The 1944 files also reflect the increasing role of Frank Forde as Acting Prime Minister in the latter period of the Curtin Government. However, there are no files covering the last six months of Curtin's term of office until his death in July 1945.

Most files contain representations from community groups, local government authorities, trade organisations or individuals on a particular issue – eg wartime restrictions on alcohol, the legalisation of the Communist Party, John ('Jack') Lang, racing and so on. Rather than being sent directly to Prime Minister Curtin, these letters were often forwarded to his office by the correspondent's local member of Federal Parliament. Other files contain material relating to general government business, eg the Defence Act, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, invitations accepted and declined, correspondence with state premiers and so on. Many of these items contain copies of correspondence from departmental files kept by the Prime Minister's Department. A few files cover more personal matters such as birthday and Christmas greetings, and two files (items 28 and 54) contain material relating to Mrs Elsie Curtin.

Most letters received a generic reply relating to the particular issue, which was sent out under the signature block of one of Curtin's private secretaries, Eric Tonkin or Frederick McLaughlin. Many of the file copies of the replies are on recycled paper, a wartime austerity measure. Wartime considerations are also reflected in the date of some replies, in particular 25 December or 1 January, days which in normal circumstances would have been public holidays.

This fascinating series consists of items that, like those in [M1415](#), provide considerable insight into John Curtin as Prime Minister and Australia during the war years. Items in this series have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).



Among the many Christmas greetings sent to Prime Minister Curtin in 1943 was this card from Flight Sergeant D J Chapman and the 'RAAF boys' of No. 150 Squadron. NAA: [M1416, 76](#), p. 49

REPORTS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS MAINTAINED BY JOHN CURTIN AS PRIME MINISTER, 1941–45

M2319

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)
Prime Minister's Department – Prime Minister's Office
(CA 12)

Quantity: 0.27 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of a small collection of miscellaneous reports and conference papers apparently maintained by Prime Minister Curtin during World War II. Some items

relate to an inquiry into newspaper reports on a trade delegation to the US (1941) while other articles deal with civil aviation (1944), political warfare against Japan (1945), and the coordination and control of supplies in wartime (1950). The remaining items mainly date from 1944 and relate to a conference of Australian and New Zealand ministers on Pacific affairs, activities of the Department of Supply and Shipping, discussions held in London on Empire air mail services and other postal matters, War Cabinet procedures and inter-departmental consultation.

FOLDER ENTITLED '9TH DIVISION AIF' – COPIES OF CABLES RELATING TO THE RECALL OF THE DIVISION FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, 1942

A4763

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 0.09 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of a single folder containing copies of cables, original cables and drafts of cables between Prime Minister Curtin, Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt and others concerning the withdrawal of the 9th Division from the Middle East and its return to the South-West Pacific.

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA OF MEETINGS OF [BRITISH] COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, 1944–61

A6712

Recorded by: 1944–69 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1969–70 Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)
1970–71 Department of Foreign Affairs (CA 1382)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of volumes of minutes of meetings and texts of memoranda and other documents produced for meetings of British Commonwealth prime ministers by their London-based secretariat. The items of greatest relevance to this guide remain with their creating agency, awaiting transfer to the [National Archives](#).

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOSEPH CHIFLEY AS PRIME MINISTER, 1945–49

M1455

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. Joseph Benedict Chifley PC (CP 268)
Prime Minister's Department – Prime Minister's Office (CA 12)

Quantity: 12.6 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises correspondence files maintained in the Prime Minister's Office when Joseph Benedict ('Ben') Chifley was Prime Minister. It also includes some papers relating to Chifley in his capacity as Treasurer and Acting Prime Minister during John Curtin's final illness.

Correspondence in this series includes reports and memoranda from political colleagues and representations from individuals, unions, returned servicemen's associations, community organisations, local government authorities and so on. The items are arranged alphabetically in eight chronological sequences. These items are digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'B', part 1, 1944–45**M1455, 4**

This item includes an invitation from Mayor of Bath (England) offering the freedom of that city to John Curtin (July 1944).

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'F', part 1, 1945**M1455, 16**

This item includes a personal letter from Frederick McLaughlin (one of Curtin's private secretaries) to G Fitzpatrick relating to Prime Minister Curtin.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'F', part 2, 1945**M1455, 17**

This item includes a personal letter to John Curtin from Major O C W Fuhrman.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'W', part 3, 1945**M1455, 48**

This item includes an invitation from the World Youth Council for John Curtin to become its Australian patron.

SUBJECT FILES OF JOSEPH CHIFLEY AS PRIME MINISTER, 1945–49**M1459**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. Joseph Benedict Chifley PC (CP 268)
Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 1.08 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of folders of correspondence on particular subjects maintained in the Prime Minister's Office during the prime ministership of Ben Chifley. Two items in this series relate to the use of schools for defence purposes during World War II. These items date from the period of the Curtin Government and are digitised and available for viewing online on [RecordSearch](#).

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Masonic School, Baulkham Hills, 1943–45**M1459, 1**

This item concerns the return of this school to Masonic authorities after its use by the Army. This item includes correspondence of Prime Minister John Curtin.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Townsville schools, 1944–45**M1459, 2**

This item is concerned with the return of schools occupied by units of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). It includes correspondence of Prime Minister Curtin and Acting Prime Minister Frank Forde.

MISCELLANEOUS LIBRARY MATERIAL, 1961–**B5459**

Recorded by: 1961–74 Commonwealth Archives Office, Victorian and
Tasmanian branches (CA 852)
1974– Australian Archives, Vic (CA 1727)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Melbourne)

This series consists of small printed booklets entitled *Digest of decisions and announcements, and important speeches by the Prime Minister*, which are effectively summaries of key Commonwealth government policy statements and

activities. The series commenced in October 1941 with the Curtin Government and continued until the defeat of the Chifley Government on 19 December 1949. The subject matter from the Curtin period is primarily concerned with the state of the war and aspects of Australia's war effort, including administrative arrangements, war casualties, honours and awards, industries, loans, prisoners-of-war, air raid precautions and attacks, National Security Regulations and so on.

The Chifley Government period is more concerned with postwar reconstruction, international organisation and Australian foreign policy. It also includes Budget speeches, speeches introducing key legislation or enunciating policy and Chifley's 'Report to the Nation' broadcasts (1948–49).

The digests include speeches and statements made by both Curtin and Chifley and several of their ministers, particularly Forde, Evatt and Dedman. Many of the speeches were given in Parliament (and will also appear in Hansard) while others were probably obtained from other government sources or were reported in the media.

CABINET RECORDS

FILE MARKED 'MCCARTHY' [COPIES OF CABLES AND TELEPRINT MESSAGES], 1941–42

A2871

Recorded by: Secretary to Cabinet/Cabinet Secretariat (I) (CA 3)

Quantity: 0.27 metres (Canberra)

The series consists of a single file containing copies of cables and teletypes sent to the Prime Minister and seen by him.

McCarthy, 1941–42

A2871, 1

This item includes a cable from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, to the Prime Minister of Australia (No. 856) regarding a report on members of the Allied forces at large in Greece and Crete. This item has been digitised and can be viewed on [RecordSearch](#).

CURTIN, FORDE AND CHIFLEY MINISTRIES – FOLDERS OF CABINET MINUTES AND AGENDA, 1941–49

A2700

Recorded by: Secretary to Cabinet/Cabinet Secretariat (I) (CA 3)

Quantity: 24.26 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in other offices of the [National Archives](#)

This series contains Cabinet minutes and agenda together with associated submissions, reports, correspondence and other related appendixes. Each item in the series relates to a particular subject discussed by Cabinet, including minutes, agenda, submissions and associated material.

CURTIN, FORDE AND CHIFLEY GOVERNMENTS – AGENDA SUBJECT CARDS, 1941–49**A2701**

Recorded by: Secretary to Cabinet/Cabinet Secretariat (I) (CA 3)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Canberra); 0.18 metres (Sydney)

This series consists of three volumes of typed 'subject cards', with one card for each agendum number, filed in numerical order, which holds details of the subject, date considered by Cabinet and text of the decision. Items in this series have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

CURTIN, FORDE AND CHIFLEY MINISTRIES – FOLDERS OF CABINET MINUTES (WITH INDEXES), 1941–49**A2703**

Recorded by: Secretary to Cabinet/Cabinet Secretariat (I) (CA 3)

Quantity: 2.07 metres (Canberra); 0.18 metres (Sydney)

This series contains typed minutes of Cabinet meetings and a small amount of covering correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary. Volumes 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2 and 3A cover the period of the Curtin Ministry. These volumes have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

DEFENCE MATTERS**CORRESPONDENCE FILES, CLASSIFIED 301 SERIES, 1935–58****A816**

Recorded by: 1935–39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)
1939–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
1942–58 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 89 metres (Canberra); 0.72 metres (Darwin)

This series records all security-classified matters dealt with by the Department of Defence. It includes a large amount of information-gathering and the information itself; policy matters; and technical information about matters such as armaments, manpower and deployment.

Defence of South Australia – representations from SA Premier to Prime Minister, 1942**A816, 14/301/228****Prime Minister's message as to potentialities of enemy attack of Australia by way of New Guinea, 1942****A816, 14/301/559****Conference of Chairman, APC [Administrative Planning Committee] with Prime Minister, 1942****A816, 31/301/373 4/21**

This item deals with a conference that took place on 14 February 1942 and was concerned with expediting Allied works and the suggested amendment of procedures for obtaining financial funds.

Strategical situation in Far East and Pacific following the fall of Singapore – future employment of AIF, 1942**A816, 52/302/142****Organisation of the RAAF – File No. 1 to 30 September 1944 [RAAF Command Allied Air Force], 1942–44****A816, 31/301/196A**

This historically significant file deals with top-level exchanges between General Douglas MacArthur; Prime Minister John Curtin; US General George Kenney, the Commanding General of the Allied Air Forces in the South-

West Pacific Area (SWPA); Australian air vice-marshals George Jones and Bill Bostock; Minister for Air, Arthur Drakeford; and others, including ministers in the War Cabinet and on the Defence Committee.

Material in the file details arguments over operational and administrative control of RAAF Command, which was established to cooperate with US Fifth Air Force. When the War Cabinet considered top-level appointments in the RAAF and its role vis-a-vis American commanders, generals MacArthur and Kenney supported Air Vice-Marshal Bostock and while Drakeford and the Australian Chiefs of Staff supported Air Vice-Marshal Jones.

Lease-lend⁶⁰ cable regarding C-in-C, SWPA to submit Australia requisitions..., 1942-44

[A816, 42/302/14](#)

Reciprocal lend-lease - agreement and correspondence between Curtin, Wasserman and MacArthur, 1942-44

[A816, 42/302/14 attachment](#)

Review by Rt Hon. J Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, 1944

[A816, 11/302/8](#)

This item contains a review by Prime Minister Curtin of the meeting of Dominion prime ministers in London in May 1944.

Representations by RAAF personnel to Prime Minister during his visit to the UK (May 1944), 1944-45

[A816, 58/301/126](#)

'THE SHEDDEN COLLECTION', 1937-71

[A5954](#)

Recorded by: 1937-71 Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden KCMG, OBE (CP 320)

1937-39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)

1939-42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)

1942-71 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 200.98 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in offices of the [National Archives](#)

Please see series description on p. 36. This large series contains a wealth of material relevant to Prime Minister John Curtin. Only a representative selection is itemised below as a guide to some of the subjects covered. Most of them are digitised and available for viewing online on [RecordSearch](#).

Please note that the following items are listed chronologically and then by item number.

British and world Commonwealth cooperation [...] Empire proposals, 1911-45

[A5954, 1153/2](#)

This item includes Prime Minister Curtin's proposal for an Imperial Consultative Council (Adelaide, 1943) and his speech at the Triennial Federal Conference of the Australian Labor Party (December, 1943).

Amendment of the Defence Act to enable militia forces to be used outside [the] Commonwealth, 1920-44

[A5954, 1630/6](#)

This item includes notes and newspaper cuttings regarding Prime Minister Curtin's speeches and announcements.

- War Cabinet Minutes [Original] Volume 1, 1939–40** [A5954, 803/1](#)
This item holds minutes of meetings of the War Cabinet from 27 September 1939 to 6 February 1950 (minute nos 1 to 158). This item also holds copies of Full Cabinet minutes (nos FC1 to FC15). It is the first in a number of items containing originals of the minutes of the War Cabinet. See also A5954, 803/2 to A5954, 811/2.
- Summaries of decisions of the War Cabinet, 1939–46** [A5954, 735/1](#)
This item is the first of four containing summaries of decisions made by the War Cabinet between 1939 and 1946. See also items A5954, 735/2 to A5954, 735/4.
- War Cabinet notes – volume 1, 1940–41** [A5954, 729/1](#)
This item is the first of nine items in this series dealing with War Cabinet notes. See also A5954, 729/2 to A5954, 733/3.
- Australian Advisory Councillors' forms of oath, 1940–45** [A5954, 815/3](#)
This item contains the original signed oaths taken by members of the Advisory Council. It includes John Curtin's signed oath (dated 29 October 1940).
- Advisory War Council under Labor Government, 1941** [A5954, 206/14](#)
- Australian war effort – reviews by Prime Minister, 16 December 1941** [A5954, 312/6](#)
- International relations – declaration of war against Finland, Hungary, Roumania [sic] and Japan, December 1941** [A5954, 437/8](#)
- Australian war effort – reviews by Prime Minister, 1941–42** [A5954, 308/6](#)
- Defence of Australia – appreciation of immediate danger of invasion in force (January 1942), 1941–42** [A5954, 554/4](#)
This item deals with the reinforcement of the home defence force by US troops.
- Advisory War Council minutes (original set) Volume 3, 1941–42** [A5954, 813/1](#)
This item contains volume 3 of the original set of minutes for meetings of the Advisory War Council from 6 August to 12 December 1941. It is the first in a number of items containing sets of AWC minutes. See also A5954, 813/2 to A5954, 815/3.
- Mr Curtin's speeches (1941), 1941–42** [A5954, 1931/1](#)
This item contains press cuttings.
- Statements by Mr Curtin on relationship of Australia to USA, 1941–42** [A5954, 2205/2](#)
This item mainly comprises statements and press cuttings.
- Exchange of cablegrams between Churchill and Curtin after outbreak of war with Japan, 7 December 1941 to 30 October 1942** [A5954, 581/17](#)
- AIF and militia – question of merging – militia employment outside Australia – amendment of Defence Act, 1941–43** [A5954, 1943/1](#)
This item mainly contains speeches by Fadden and Forde, but it also contains some material relevant to Curtin, in the context of parliamentary debate.

Twelve months of Labor rule – record of Curtin Government in its first year of office (October 1941–42), 1941–45	A5954, 1947/8
Lease-lend – press statements (6 August to 8 June 1941), 1941–46 This item includes a two-page statement by Curtin regarding an agreement with the US to terminate lend-lease and reciprocal aid.	A5954, 708/2
Future employment of AIF – return to Australia and proposed diversion to Burma, 1941–51	A5954, 573/2
The fall of Singapore and strategic position in Far East and Pacific following outbreak of war with Japan, 1941–55	A5954, 571/4
[Book] ‘Prime Minister Curtin’s appeal to United States of America’ [etc], 1941–c1965 This item relates to Curtin’s appeal (‘Without any inhibitions and free of any pangs...’) to the US on 27 December 1941.	A5954, 824/5
Notes of discussions with General MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), South-West Pacific Area (SWPA), 1942	A5954, 3/5
Public statements by ministers – direction by Prime Minister to ensure discretion from security aspect, 1942	A5954, 326/22
Prime Minister’s war communiqués – SWPA, 16 March to 21 April 1942	A5954, 349/1
Prime Minister’s War Conference [PWC] agendum No. 1/1942 [changes in machinery...], 8 April 1942	A5954, 669/1
Postwar reconstruction – Australian plans, 9 June to 22 December 1942	A5954, 607/1
Uniform taxation, 16–18 June 1942	A5954, 374/17
US forces in Australia – cables and press statements by Prime Minister, 1942	A5954, 569/5
Review by Prime Minister Curtin following the exchange of views with Churchill and Roosevelt, 1942 This item is concerned with global strategy and the needs of SWPA. It includes material on the secret session of Parliament of 8 October 1942.	A5954, 587/7
Australia’s relations with USA in conduct of Pacific War – Prime Minister’s statement (December 1941), 1942	A5954, 654/27
Estimates of expenditure, 1942–43 – Prime Minister’s direction, 18 July 1942	A5954, 375/20
Messages to General MacArthur, 1942–43	A5954, 289/4
PWC minutes, 1942–43 This item contains minutes nos 1 to 26 of the PWC, covering the period from 8 April 1942 to 17 March 1943.	A5954, 1/1
Messages from General MacArthur, 1942–43	A5954, 289/6
Questions of high policy between the Prime Minister and the C-in-C [MacArthur], 1942–43	A5954, 1598/5

- Statements by Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr Ward)...[etc], 1942-43** [A5954, 2218/1](#)
This item deals with an attack on the defence policy of the previous government, particularly in relation to the Brisbane Line controversy of October 1942, and with attitudes towards the Prime Minister's proposal for amendment of the Defence Act in November 1942.
- Austerity campaign, 1942 - statements by the Prime Minister, 1942-44** [A5954, 305/6](#)
- Strategical [sic] plans for defence of Australia following arrival of General MacArthur (March 1942)... [etc], 1942-44** [A5954, 1300/1](#)
This item includes General Blamey's explanation of defence plans following remarks about the 'Brisbane Line'.
- Prime Minister's Committee on National Morale, 1942-46** [A5954, 328/21](#)
- Ministerial - Prime Minister (Mr Curtin), 1942-47** [A5954, 1944/9](#)
This item mainly holds press cuttings, along with some statements and correspondence of the Prime Minister.
- Statute of Westminster (1931), 1942-61** [A5954, 1202/1](#)
This item contains an old photocopy of a monograph by Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, circulated in support of the *Statute of Westminster Adoption Bill 1942*, and a copy of the Act. The only original documents on the file date from 1957 to 1961.
- Lieutenant-General Lavarack - correspondence with Prime Minister [on sending AIF division to Burma, etc], 1943** [A5954, 266/7](#)
This item concerns advice to the Curtin Government in February 1942 about the direction of an AIF division to Burma. It includes correspondence between Australian Lieutenant-General Sir John Lavarack and Prime Minister Curtin.
- Transport of Army personnel to Western Australia - use of cattle trucks - criticism by Prime Minister, 1943** [A5954, 270/34](#)
- Prime Minister's review at NSW Labor Party Conference, Sydney, 5-16 June 1943** [A5954, 611/6](#)
- Election campaign (July-August 1943) - policy speech by Prime Minister Curtin (26 July 1943), 1943** [A5954, 599/2](#)
This item contains political and press comment on the election campaign and associated matters.
- PWC with state premiers and chiefs of staff - Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, 1943** [A5954, 692/3](#)
This conference took place on 14 July 1943.
- PWC minutes, Melbourne, 14 July 1943** [A5954, 2312/5](#)
This item deals with Prime Minister Curtin's meeting with state premiers.
- Australian-American relations - visit of Mrs Roosevelt to Australia, September 1943** [A5954, 293/8](#)
- Political - the Second Curtin Ministry, September 1943** [A5954, 602/9](#)
This item includes press conjecture concerning the composition of the Second Curtin Ministry and press comment about the ministers appointed to the ministry.

Prime Minister's visit to Perth, 1943	A5954, 1945/22
Policy speech by Prime Minister, election August 1943, 1943-44 This item includes election speeches and statements made between 26 June 1943 and 21 November 1944.	A5954, 601/1
'Government by Regulation' - criticism of the Curtin Administration by the Opposition, 1943-44	A5954, 2225/4
Australian-New Zealand Agreement (1944), 1943-44	A5954, 652/1
Australian/New Zealand Conference (January 1944), 1943-45	A5954, 294/1
Coalmining industry - statement by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives (1943), 1943-45	A5954, 454/4
Cabinet and departmental organisation - Second Curtin Government formed in September 1943, 1943-45	A5954, 462/12
National planning revision of Commonwealth and departmental war books - Prime Minister's instruction of May 1943, 1943-46	A5954, 1468/2
Governor-General - appointment of HRH the Duke of Gloucester (1943), 1943-47	A5954, 398/11
Royal commission relating to 'Brisbane Line' statements (1943), 1943-60 This item deals with the Royal Commission into Alleged Missing Documents relating to Defence Plans (also known as the 'Brisbane Line' Royal Commission).	A5954, 568/2
Australian war effort and British Commonwealth forces for the Far East - discussions in Washington, 1944	A5954, 5/6
Personal correspondence with Rt Hon. John Curtin, 1944	A5954, 49/20
Australian war effort review following Prime Minister's visit abroad, 1944 This item is concerned with discussions between General MacArthur, the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council.	A5954, 310/1
Prime Minister - engagements in Washington, April 1944	A5954, 645/1
Prime Minister's visit to USA and UK - programme and itinerary, 1944 This item contains material for Curtin's trip to the USA, the UK and Canada.	A5954, 646/10
Prime Minister's visit abroad - visit to Canada, 1944	A5954, 660/4
Prime Minister's review of defence to premiers, 1944	A5954, 2400/19
Army - policy - employment of AIF and CMF [Commonwealth/Citizen Military Forces] units in New Guinea campaign...[etc], 1944 This item includes representations to Prime Minister Curtin about relief for the AIF in New Guinea, along with his request to, and the subsequent report by, the C-in-C (MacArthur) about this matter in February 1944.	A5954, 1630/1
Master sheets - review of the war situation by Prime Minister in the House of Representatives, February 1944	A5954, 2386/23

Prime Minister's visit abroad – extracts from US press, April 1944 This item contains press articles about Prime Minister Curtin's visit to the US, including social news and engagements.	A5954, 661/5
Meeting of Prime Ministers, London, May 1944 – review by the Rt Hon. John Curtin ... [etc], 1944 This item also contains a speech by Curtin in House of Representatives on 21 July 1944.	A5954, 2387/10
Prime Minister's press conference on return to Australia, Brisbane, 26 June 1944	A5954, 662/5
Prime Minister's visit abroad – public statements in Canada, 31 May to 1 June 1944	A5954, 667/1
Meeting of Prime Ministers – machinery for Empire cooperation – improvements desired by Australian Government, 1944–45	A5954, 6/2
Constitutional referendum – August 1944 – results of the referendum and press commentary thereon, 1944–45	A5954, 596/3
Indisposition of Prime Minister, November 1944–45 This item mainly contains press cuttings.	A5954, 2207/1
Higher defence organisation – statement by Prime Minister and advices to ministers and departments, 1945	A5954, 1600/2
Special correspondence with General MacArthur on operations in neutralised areas, 1945–57	A5954, 1133/12
Book (Original) Book 4 – 'Victory under the Curtin and Chifley Governments – Introduction', 1970	A5954, 768/2
Book (Original) Chapter 10 – 'Curtin's initial appeal to the United States – December 1941', c1970	A5954, 768/15
Book 4 – (Original) part 6 – 'The danger of invasion recedes...' – Chapter 27 – 'The changed strategical situation...', c1970	A5954, 769/13
Book 4 – (Original) part 10 – 'Strengthening the Allied forces...' – Chapter 42 – 'The persistence of Curtin and MacArthur...', c1970	A5954, 770/13
Book (Original) Chapter 47 – 'British and World Co-operation – Curtin's proposal in 1943–44', c1970	A5954, 771/2
WAR CABINET MINUTES (CARBON COPIES), 1939–46 Recorded by: War Cabinet Secretariat (CA 1468) Quantity: 0.72 metres (Canberra); 0.36 metres (Sydney); 0.36 metres (Melbourne) This series consists of 16 volumes of carbon copies of War Cabinet minutes. The originals are in the Shedden Collection. They have been digitised and can be viewed online on RecordSearch (see items A5954, 803/1 to A5954, 811/2). John Curtin was a member of the Advisory War Council from its inauguration in 1940 until his death in 1945.	A2673

ADVISORY WAR COUNCIL MINUTES (CARBON COPIES), 1940–45**A2682**

Recorded by: Advisory War Council (CA 495)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra); 0.18 metres (Sydney)
0.18 metres (Melbourne)

Please see series description on p. 39.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1940–57**A663**Recorded by: 1940–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
1942–57 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 33.21 metres (Canberra); 0.05 metres (Darwin)

Please see series description on p. 39.

**Prime Ministers' Conference – statements by Australian
Prime Minister overseas and press accounts of visit,
April 1944****A663, O50/1/233A**This file consists of press cuttings, speeches and press
statements.**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1920–68****A2908**

Recorded by: Australian High Commission, UK (London) (CA 241)

Quantity: 27.18 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the classified correspondence files of the
Australian High Commission, UK. It includes items dealing
with Prime Minister Curtin's visit to London in 1944.**Visit of the Hon. J Curtin, 1944****A2908, V26****Visit of the Prime Minister (1944) – finance, 1944–45****A2908, V26/3**This item includes correspondence regarding the payment
of an allowance to staff at the Savoy Hotel in London for
extra work undertaken while Prime Minister Curtin and
his party stayed there, an itinerary for the forward journey
to London for the Prime Minister's party and information
about salaries and allowances paid to staff accompanying
Mr Curtin.**The Rt Hon. J Curtin MP – Freedom of the City of London,
1945****A2908, V26/4****OFFICIAL PAPERS AND CORRESPONDENCE MAINTAINED BY STANLEY
MELBOURNE BRUCE IN LONDON, 1932–45****M2236**Recorded by: 1932–45 The Rt Hon. Viscount Stanley Melbourne Bruce
PC, CH, MC (CP 23)1933–45 Australian High Commission, UK – Office of the
High Commissioner (CA 241)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of seven folders of official papers and
correspondence maintained by Stanley Melbourne Bruce
in London. Most items relate to his position as Australian
High Commissioner to Great Britain (1933–45). The series
largely consists of inwards and outwards correspondence,

primarily cablegrams. The subject matter covered includes monetary problems, defence and World War II matters, external affairs and the exchange of such information between the UK and Dominion governments, trade and business, air communications and transport, arrangements for Prime Minister Curtin's visit to the UK in 1944 and personal representations to Bruce as Australian High Commissioner. Records in this series have been digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Bruce] Article VII discussions, 1943–44

M2236, 5

This item comprises discussions between the UK, the Dominions and the US concerning monetary, commercial and employment policy. It consists primarily of telegrams from Stanley Melbourne Bruce to Prime Minister Curtin.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Bruce] Prime Minister's visit to the UK, 1944

M2236, 6

This item concerns arrangements for Prime Minister Curtin's attendance at the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers in London in 1944.

CABLES FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS, 1939–43

CP290/7

Recorded by: Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra)

This series consists mainly of circular cables relating to international affairs. Records in this series are digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

War Section – 'W' series (SOS) – 'W' No. 1 (1941) to 'WH1' (1942), 1941

CP290/7, 15

War Section (1939) – 'Z' series, 1941–43

CP290/7, 6

War Section – 'W' series – No. 1, 1943

CP290/7, 16

CABLES TO AND FROM SIR EARLE PAGE DURING HIS VISIT TO LONDON, 1941

CP290/8

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. Sir Earle Christmas Grafton Page PC, GCMG, CH (CP 715)

Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 0.09 metres (Canberra)

This series consist of two files, one of inward cables and one of outward cables, relating to Sir Earle Page's visit to London in September-December 1941. In September 1941, the Fadden Government appointed Page as its Special Envoy to the British War Cabinet. However, Curtin's Labor Government came into office before Page arrived in London. Curtin retained Page's appointment, and he stayed in the UK until mid-1942.

The cables include Page's reports of his attendance at meetings of the British War Cabinet, discussions about the situation in the Far East, Japanese aggression, the

appointment of Mr Vivian Gordon Bowden as the Official Representative of the Commonwealth in Singapore and Fadden's election as Leader of the Opposition. Records in this series are digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

'MOST SECRET'/'TOP SECRET' CABLES RECEIVED FROM THE COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE, 1941-45

A11780

Recorded by: Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 0.9 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the master sheets (used stencils) of 'Most Secret'/'Top Secret' circular cables received from the Commonwealth Relations Office in London from July 1941 to September 1945, with gaps. The cables carried news of what was happening in all theatres of war for the information of Dominion prime ministers. The items in this series are not yet listed individually on [RecordSearch](#).

'TOP SECRET' INWARD AND OUTWARD CABLES, FOR PRIME MINISTER, 1941-45

A12728

Recorded by: 1941-43 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1943-45 Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 0.09 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises master sheet stencils (known as 'sticky blues') in two folders. One folder contains inward wartime cables from the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill ('WINCH'), to the Australian Prime Minister, dated December 1941 to April 1945. The other folder holds outward cables from John Curtin ('JOHCU') sent in response, dated December 1941 to January 1945. This folder also contains a cable dated 4 October 1941 from Arthur Fadden ('ARDEN') to Prime Minister Churchill. Almost all these cables are classified 'Most Secret and Personal' ('Top Secret' from September 1944). These records are digitised and can be viewed online on [RecordSearch](#).

PERSONAL AND SEMI-OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1941-49

MP288/12

Recorded by: Hon. Arthur Samuel Drakeford (CP 139)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Melbourne)

This series includes representations, notices of social occasions, covering letters, despatches from the Australian RAAF Representative in Washington, letters from Prime Minister Curtin and other ministers, and condolences. Much of it is concerned with official matters but is written on a person-to-person basis.

OUTWARD CABLES BELONGING TO 'SPECIAL' CABLES SERIES (VARIOUS ALPHABETICAL PREFIXES), 1942-44**A11778**

Recorded by: 1942-43 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1942-44 Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra)

This 'Special' cable series was introduced in 1942 by the Department of External Affairs for particularly important or secret messages to and from its overseas posts in unoccupied territories. These posts included London, Washington, Chungking, Ottawa, Noumea and Kubyshev.

Out 'S' ['Special'] cables file copies 1942 [London, Washington, Chungking, Ottawa and Noumea], 26 February to 29 December 1942**A11778, 3**

The title of this item has been edited for brevity. This item consists of master copies of outwards special cables. It has been digitised and can be viewed on [RecordSearch](#).

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1942-45**A989**

Recorded by: Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 30.69 metres (Canberra); 0.05 metres (Darwin)

This series is concerned with a wide range of matters relating to Australia's relations with other countries, specifically in the context of World War II, and to defence, both external and internal. Subjects covered include international conferences, refugees, treaties, censorship and enlistment. The series contains considerable material on postwar reconstruction, mostly relating to international economic and industrial reconstruction, relief and rehabilitation, and international relations.

Items relating to Curtin in this series concern his visit to the UK and USA in 1944, his proposals for an Empire council and his views on British Commonwealth relations in the postwar era.

Mr Curtin's proposal for an Empire council and discussion in Australia of British Commonwealth relations, 1943-44**A989, 1943/735/150/2****Visit of Mr Curtin to USA and UK, 1943-44****A989, 1944/80/1/67/1****Visit of Mr Curtin to USA and UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference, London, May 1944****A989, 1944/80/1/67**

This item includes a report on John Curtin's visit to Canada by the Australian High Commissioner in Ottawa, a transcript of Curtin's press conference at the House of Commons, Ottawa and a copy of his address to the House.

Visit of Mr Curtin to USA and UK in connection with Prime Ministers' Conference, London, 1944**A989, 1944/80/1/67/2**

This item includes press clippings and cablegrams, agenda and minutes of the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers in London; a letter from Dr Herbert Evatt to Prime Minister Curtin; and a schedule of papers prepared for the Prime Minister for the conference.

SECRET AND TOP SECRET CABLES TO AND FROM DR H V EVATT OVERSEAS AS MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, 1942–45[A4764](#)

Recorded by: 1942–43 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1942–44 Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 0.36 metres (Canberra)

This series mainly contains cables to and from Dr Evatt while he was on overseas missions during and after World War II. It also contains cables to and from Prime Minister Curtin and ministers such as Frank Forde and Norman Makin.

Cables [to and] from Dr Evatt, 1943 mission[A4764, 4](#)

This item includes some 'PW' ('Personal Washington') cables from Curtin.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1945[A1066](#)

Recorded by: Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 31.5 metres (Canberra)

This series contains correspondence files dealing with a range of issues, including Australia's relations with overseas governments; the protection of Australian interests and nationals abroad; treaties and international agreements; immigration, emigration and economic relations; Australian missions abroad and foreign diplomatic missions and consulates within Australia; international conferences; and Australian policy towards international organisations. Material in this series dates from 1919 to 1965.

Press statement by the Prime Minister, 1945[A1066, PI45/75](#)

This item includes a statement made by Prime Minister Curtin in House of Representatives on postwar policy on national security (28 February 1945).

LEGISLATION**ASSENT COPIES OF ACTS OF PARLIAMENT, 1901–**[A1559](#)

Recorded by: 1901–70 Attorney-General's Department (CA 5)
1970– Office of Parliamentary Counsel (CA 2965)

Quantity: 24.66 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of a master set of signed Acts of Parliament. It includes a copy of the Statute of Westminster Adoption Act ratified by the Curtin Government in 1942. The adoption of this Act by the Curtin Government meant that Australia declared the independence of its Parliament under the British Crown, rather than the British Government. The Australian Government thus achieved free and equal status with the British Government.

Statute of Westminster Adoption Act – Curtin Government, 1942[A1559, 1942/56](#)

With this document Australia adopted an Act of the British Parliament that set out as law the independence of the governments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Eire and Newfoundland. This legislation is available for viewing

online through the [National Archives' Documenting a Democracy](#) website (see www.foundingdocs.gov.au/places/cth/cth12.htm).

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, ANNUAL SINGLE NUMBER SERIES, 1929–

A432

Recorded by: 1929– Attorney-General's Department (CA 5)
1958 Deputy Crown Solicitor's Office – portion relating to Deputy Crown Solicitor's matters, ACT (CA 832)

Quantity: 2021.79 metres (Canberra); 352.62 metres (Sydney); 0.56 metres (Darwin)

Please see series description on p. 34.

Legislative and administrative record of Curtin and Chifley governments, 1948

A432, 1948/25

This item contains correspondence relating to the work of the Legal Services Bureau and the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration provided as background for a proposed radio broadcast along with a copy of a 12-page document entitled 'Legislative and administrative record of the Curtin and Chifley Governments'.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, SINGLE NUMBER SERIES WITH 'W' (WAR) PREFIX, 1939–49

A472

Recorded by: Attorney-General's Department (CA 5)

Quantity: 25.92 metres (Canberra); 0.05 metres (Darwin)

This series consists of files arising from wartime legislation, including opinions on it and prosecution under it, particularly in relation to the National Security Regulations. The files also relate to censorship, conscription, seizure of enemy vessels and patents.

Report to the Prime Minister (Hon. J Curtin, MP) on allegations concerning the Commonwealth, 1941–42

A472, W5740

This report relates to allegations concerning the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Engine Factory at Lidcombe, NSW.

INVITATIONS, HONOURS AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

'BIRTHDAY HONOURS' FILES (OCCASIONALLY 'CORONATION AND BIRTHDAY HONOURS'), 1921–

A2924

Recorded by: Governor-General (CA 1)

Quantity: 3.6 metres (Canberra)

This series contains correspondence relating to, and details of, the recommendation and conferment of various honours for the Birthday Honours lists. The series includes files of correspondence with Curtin for each year of his prime ministership.

Birthday Honours – correspondence with Prime Minister, 1942

A2924, 1942/5

'NEW YEAR HONOURS' FILES, 1921–**A2925**

Recorded by: Governor-General (CA 1)

Quantity: 3.42 metres (Canberra)

This series contains correspondence relating to, and details of, the recommendation and conferment of various honours for the New Year Honours lists. It includes files of correspondence with Curtin for each year of his prime ministership.

New Year Honours 1942 – correspondence with Prime Minister, 1941–42

A2925, 1942/5**FOLDERS OF OFFICIAL INVITATIONS, MENUS AND SEATING PLANS, 1927–88****A10711**

Recorded by: 1927–71 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1971–88 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (CA 1401)

Quantity: 1.26 metres (Canberra)

This series contains official invitations, menus and seating plans for various functions held by prime ministers, governors-general and ministers of state or senior officers of the Commonwealth (now Australian) Public Service. Items from this series are not yet listed individually on [RecordSearch](#).

THE ECONOMY**RECORDS OF THE ECONOMIC CONSULTANT TO THE PRIME MINISTER (MISCELLANEOUS), 1929–45****CP13/1**

Recorded by: Sir Douglas Berry Copland KBE, CMG (CP 167)

Quantity: 0.9 metres (Canberra)

This series contains miscellaneous records of Professor Douglas Copland in his capacity as the Economic Consultant to, and a key adviser of, the Prime Minister (1940–45). The papers are mainly reports and reference material, but some correspondence and newspaper cuttings are included. They mostly relate to various aspects of economic policy and development, taxation, import and export policy, the Mutual Aid Agreement and so on. Several items reflect the work of the Financial and Economic Committee. A set of the agenda and decisions of the Production Executive of Cabinet, which date from 1941–42, are also included.

Miscellaneous papers, 1942–44**CP13/1, 57**

This item contains papers on a variety of subjects, including postwar economic and social policy, international trade and the Mutual Aid Agreement. It also contains an original letter from John Curtin to Copland about the Australian war effort; a letter from Copland to Curtin enclosing his paper, 'Post-war economic and social policy'; and copies of two statements made by Curtin.

Commercial policy, 1943–44**CP13/1, 79**

This item includes statements by Prime Minister John Curtin on the constitutional referendum and a copy of Curtin's statement on the British white paper on employment policy.

RECORDS OF THE ECONOMIC CONSULTANT (RECONSTRUCTION), 1940–45**CP6/1**

Recorded by: Sir Douglas Berry Copland KBE, CMG (CP 167)

Quantity: 0.9 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the records of Professor Douglas Copeland, the Economic Consultant to the Prime Minister. The series contains substantial material from the period of the Curtin Government, including both correspondence and reference material.

International policy – relief and requirements, 1942–43**CP6/1, 59****Reconstruction Australia – referendum, 1944****CP6/1, 18****RECORDS OF THE ECONOMIC CONSULTANT (WARTIME – GENERAL FILES), 1940–45****CP6/2**

Recorded by: Sir Douglas Berry Copland KBE, CMG (CP 167)

Quantity: 1.62 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the records of Professor Douglas Copland in his capacity as the Economic Consultant to the Prime Minister. The records deal with correspondence and reference material relating to the wartime development of Australia. Topics include uniform taxation, social security and social services, rationing, wages, population, the Universities Commission and lend-lease.

Curtin, Honourable J, 1940–45**CP6/2, 68**

This item includes a policy speech made by Curtin (28 August 1940), newspaper cuttings (29–30 December 1941), a copy of 'Twelve months of Labour rule' and copies of Copland's memos and letters to Curtin in his capacity as the Economic Consultant to the Prime Minister. The item includes replies to this correspondence, including a letter signed by Curtin.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FILES, 1942–52**MT105/8**

Recorded by: 1942–43 Department of War Organisation of Industry (CA 45)

1943–48 Department of Post-War Reconstruction (also Secondary Industries Division, c1945–48), Melbourne (CA 1715)

1943–48 Secondary Industries Commission (CA 271)

1948–52 Division of Industrial Development, Department of Post-War Reconstruction [from 1950–52, Department of National Development (I)] (CA 776)

Quantity: 16.02 metres (Melbourne)

This series deals with government relations, activities and policies concerning Australian secondary industry. It contains correspondence at a high level, including for Prime

Minister Curtin, Chifley (Treasurer, 1942–45; Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, 1942–45; and Prime Minister and Treasurer, 1945–49); John Dedman (Minister for War Organisation of Industry, 1942–45; Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, 1945; Minister for Aircraft Production, 1946; and Minister for Defence, 1946–49); and senior public servants.

Subjects covered in this series include bank rationalisation, Commonwealth war loans, decentralisation, standardisation, manufacturing regulations, materials supply, assistance to industry via sponsorship and research, import and export control, fisheries, and general technical matters and production data.

Organisation of the labour market, 1940–42

[MT105/8, 13](#)

Rationalisation of banking, 1942

[MT105/8, 2/37/385](#)

[The university in governmental policy], 1942

[MT105/8, 5/29/10](#)

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1943–50

[A9816](#)

Recorded by: 1943–50 Department of Post-War Reconstruction (CA 49)
1950 Department of National Development (I) (CA 56)

Quantity: 32.4 metres (Canberra)

This series is concerned with the operational aspects of the department's business. The subjects covered include commodities and rationing, development of secondary industry, transport, housing, new works, and the rehabilitation and resettlement of service personnel.

Items relating to the 1944 'White Paper on Full Employment' are included in this series (see A9816, 1945/627 to A9816, 1945/647). After returning from his overseas trip in 1944, Curtin had directed that this White Paper be written.

Full employment – White Paper transition from draft 'D' to draft 'E', 1945

[A9816, 1945/639](#)

This item includes a copy of the draft paper with title page inscribed 'Copy used by D-G [Coombs] at Expert Committee (meeting 4 April 1945) carrying PM's comments and amendments to "D"'.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1949

[A9790](#)

Recorded by: Department of Post-War Reconstruction (CA 49)

Quantity: 8.28 metres (Canberra)

This series contains correspondence, research papers, processed papers, minutes and memoranda for the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction and for Cabinet. It also holds a wide variety of other documents dealing with all subjects of relevance to the Division of Economic Policy, including policy and planning, primary and secondary production, trade, employment and overseas trade and finance. Material in the series dates from 1941 to 1954.

Items from the period of Curtin's prime ministership cover a wide range of topics.

Discussions on postwar prices policy (original file), 1942–47	A9790, 1423
Russia – General, 1942–48	A9790, 8236
International coordination of employment policies, 1944–49	A9790, 1321

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

SPECIAL NEWS COVERAGES, 1936–46

[SP286/16](#)

Recorded by: Australian Broadcasting Commission (CA 251)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Sydney)

This series documents a number of special news broadcasts organised by the ABC. Items in this series contain a large amount of administrative detail but also often contain internal policy minutes, records of ABC discussion of the stories, telegrams relating to new developments in the stories and copies of completed news reports.

Many items in this series deal with stories relevant to Prime Minister Curtin, including reports about the federal elections of 1940 and 1943 and the 1944 referendum.

Personal file – Mr Dixon – background information, 1942–44

[SP286/16, 8](#)

This item contains details of press conferences held by Prime Minister Curtin. It includes details of Curtin's 'off the record' discussions about the war situation.

***Advance Australia Fair*, 1943**

[SP286/16, 6](#)

This item contains newspaper clippings and ABC correspondence about the status of the song *Advance Australia Fair*. It includes comments from Prime Minister Curtin.

PM's attack on the *Daily Mirror* (6–13 July 1944), 1944

[SP286/16, 10](#)

This item contains ABC correspondence about Prime Minister Curtin's allegations about the *Daily Mirror* newspaper.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1939–45

[SP195/1](#)

Recorded by: Department of Information (CA 34)

Quantity: 1.26 metres (Canberra)

This series mainly consists of files relating to the history of the Department of Information. The following items contain correspondence between the department and the Prime Minister, and departmental reports submitted to the Prime Minister.

Progress reports of Department of Information activities – to the Prime Minister, 1941

[SP195/1, 3/1/17 part 2](#)

Miscellaneous correspondence – Prime Minister, 1941–42

[SP195/1, 71/1/10](#)

General – duplicates of letters written to the Prime Minister since 30 June 1942, 1942–44

[SP195/1, 71/1/15](#)

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1941–46**SP107/1**

Recorded by: Department of Information (CA 34)

Quantity: 9.9 metres (Canberra)

The Department of Information was set up in 1939 to undertake the large publicity program necessary to support the war effort and to promote Australia's interests both nationally and internationally. This series consists of correspondence; press cuttings and statements; material concerned with broadcasts, exhibitions, migration, public relations and the press; and copies of department publications such as the *Overseas Weekly Newsletter*.

Many items in this series relate to John Curtin and his Government during the war years.

'Australian Newsletter' – [memoranda...cables...] and Australian News and Information Bureau news sheets, 1940–45

SP107/1, bundle 1

Press statements, weekly newsletters, articles, public relations and publications, 1943–46

SP107/1, bundle 41

Overseas newsletters, 1944–45

SP107/1, bundle 19**RADIO ARCHIVES MASTER AUDIO TAPES, SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM, 1970–71****C102**

Recorded by: Australian Broadcasting Commission – Radio Archives (CA 251)

Quantity: 47.52 metres (Sydney)

This series contains copies of master and working tapes of gramophone discs in the ABC's sound library. The discs are spoken word recordings and cover a wide variety of subjects. Items in this series date from 1933 to 1971.

Curtin, John – speech on death of PM Lyons, 1939

C102, POL10

John Curtin – declaration of war on Japan, 1941

C102, POL18

Curtin, John – opening of Liberty Loan, 1942

C102, POL19

Curtin, John – speech to US, 1942

C102, POL20

Curtin, John – talk – *Austerity Loan for War Effort* – Sydney, 3 October 1942

C102, POL21

Curtin, John – PM – speech in honour of Mrs Roosevelt, 1943

C102, POL24

Curtin, John – receiving the Freedom of the City of London, 1944

C102, POL27

ANZAC Day message by Hon. John Curtin, 1945

C102, WRP5 part 2

Features – John Curtin – *Portrait of a Prime Minister*, 1959

C102, FD37

Features – John Curtin – *Portrait of a Prime Minister*, 1959

C102, FD37 part 2

Rodgers, Don – regarding Curtin and Chifley, 1966

C102, POL105

EDUCATION

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES, 1943–44

SP433/3

Recorded by: Universities Commission (I) (CA 274)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)

This series contains papers from the Inter-Departmental Committee on Commonwealth Educational Activities. This committee was charged with reviewing the Commonwealth's responsibilities in the field of education – past, present and future – for the information of the government, and proposing machinery to assist the government in the discharge of these responsibilities during and after the war. The papers contain valuable information on the origin, organisation and functional activities of most Australian educational bodies. The series also contains reports, memoranda and some letters, including copies of letters to prime ministers Curtin and Chifley from the Australian Council of Educational Research.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

FOLDERS OF SUBJECT BASED CORRESPONDENCE, 1964–91

M4289

Recorded by: Hon. Kim Edward Beazley AO (CP 107)

Quantity: 4.86 metres (Perth)

Please see series description on p. 40.

Minutes of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party – period of John Curtin's leadership, 1935–45

M4289, 42

Death and memorials, 1945–82

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, MULTIPLE NUMBER SERIES, 1901–50

A461

Recorded by: 1934–35 Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)
1934–50 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 145.98 metres (Canberra); 0.29 metres (Darwin)

Please see series description on p. 40.

Memorials – Rt Hon. John Curtin, 1945–48

A461, Z370/1/6

This item contains correspondence on possible memorials to Curtin, including the naming of the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the Australian National University.

CORRESPONDENCE, 1912–64**SP459/1**

Recorded by: 1912–21 2 Military District, NSW (I) (CA 6335)
1921–39 2 District Base, Australian Military Forces (AMF),
NSW Headquarters (CA 4334)
1939–42 Headquarters, Eastern Command (I), AMF
(CA 1876)
1942–46 Headquarters, NSW Lines of Communication
Area, AMF (CA 1877)
1946–64 Headquarters, Eastern Command (II), AMF
(CA 1878)

Quantity: 64.65 metres (Sydney)

This series consists of registered files containing correspondence relating to the administration, function and policy of the Eastern Command, including accounts, allowances, ammunition, Victoria Barracks, camps, casualties, ceremonies, compensation, clothing, deaths, war medals, offences, stores, and transfers and releases.

Sympathy card acknowledgement from Mrs E Curtin, 1945

SP459/1, 445/1/7001

Telegram – the death and funeral of the late Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. John Curtin MP, PC, 1945

SP459/1, 445/1/7005**SPECIAL NEWS COVERAGES, 1936–46****SP286/16**

Recorded by: Australian Broadcasting Commission (CA 251)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Sydney)

Please see series description on p. 65.

The passing of John Curtin, 1945

SP286/16, 13

This item contains transcripts of ABC news broadcasts reporting on the death of Prime Minister Curtin.

‘THE SHEDDEN COLLECTION’, 1937–71**A5954**

Recorded by: 1937–71 Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden KCMG, OBE
(CP 320)
1937–39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)
1939–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
1942–71 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 200.98 metres (Canberra), smaller quantities in other offices of the [National Archives](#)

Please see series description on p. 36. This series contains several items relating to the death of John Curtin.

Messages of condolence and tributes on the death of Prime Minister (Mr Curtin) July, 1945

A5954, 1945/25

[Press cuttings] Death of the Prime Minister Mr John Curtin, 1945–47

A5954, 2207/2

Book (Original) Chapter 57 – ‘The death of the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin’, 1970

A5954, 771/12

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1940–55**A6445**

Recorded by: 1940–45 Official Representative's Office, Noumea
(New Caledonia) (CA 1870)
1945–55 Australian Consulate-General, Noumea
(New Caledonia) (CA 1871)

Quantity: 1.62 metres (Canberra)

This series contains files of correspondence on various subjects including deportees, finances, personal files, immigration and trade.

Rt Hon. John Curtin, 1945**A6445, 68/1946**

This item includes various messages of condolence relating to death of Prime Minister Curtin.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1945**A1066**

Recorded by: Department of External Affairs (II) (CA 18)

Quantity: 31.5 metres (Canberra)

Please see series description on p. 60.

Death of the Rt Hon. John Curtin PC MP, 1945**A1066, PI45/88**

This item comprises correspondence between the Department of External Affairs and various individuals, organisations and embassies relating to messages of condolence and regret on death of Prime Minister John Curtin.

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOSEPH CHIFLEY AS PRIME MINISTER, 1945–49**M1455**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. Joseph Benedict Chifley PC (CP 268)
Prime Minister's Department – Prime Minister's Office
(CA 12)

Quantity: 12.6 metres (Canberra)

Please see series description on p. 46.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'A', part 2, 1943–45**M1455, 2**

This item includes representations from Wallace Anderson relating to a bust of John Curtin for the Prime Ministers' Avenue in Ballarat.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'H', part 3, 1945**M1455, 23**

This item includes the order of service for John Curtin's memorial service in Westminster Abbey, London, which was held on 18 July 1945.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'C', part 3, 1945–46**M1455, 12**

This item contains telegrams from Acting Prime Minister Frank Forde to members of the Curtin family on the death of John Curtin.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1945–82**A2880**

Recorded by: Governor-General (CA 1)

Quantity: 83.9 metres (Canberra)

This series contains the general correspondence files of the Governor-General's Office, which cover matters such as memorials, decorations, overseas visitors, royal favours, balls, dinners and court mourning.

Ceremonial policy and procedural – death of Australian prime ministers – death of Rt Hon. J Curtin, 1945

A2880, 6/17/2**Portraits and photographs, 1885–1945****MILDENHALL COLLECTION OF GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES, 1921–35****A3560**

Recorded by: 1921–35 William James Mildenhall (CP 491)
1921–24 Department of Works and Railways, Federal Capital Territory (CA 14)
1925–30 Federal Capital Commission (CA 226)
1930–31 Federal Capital Territory Branch, Department of Home Affairs (CA 756)
1932–35 Australian Capital Territory Administration Branch, Department of the Interior (CA 757)

Quantity: 94.88 metres (Canberra); 0.36 metres (Sydney)

This series consists of over 7000 glass-plate negatives, mainly of Canberra and the surrounding area. Most of them were taken by William James Mildenhall, who was employed in the Federal Capital Territory from 1921 in various capacities.

Newly-elected Labour [sic] members of the 16th Parliament, Scullin Ministry with Lyons, Chifley and Curtin, 1929

A3560, 6120**'THE SHEDDEN COLLECTION', 1937–71****A5954**

Recorded by: 1937–71 Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden KCMG, OBE (CP 320)
1937–39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)
1939–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
1942–71 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 200.98 metres (Canberra), smaller quantities in other offices of the [National Archives](#)

Please see series description on p. 36. This series includes several items containing photographs of Prime Minister Curtin.

PM's photograph, 1937–50**A5954, 41/2**

This item contains two newspaper cartoons and eight black-and-white photographs. Subjects include the Lyons Cabinet, John Curtin and the members of the Defence Committee.

Photographs – War Cabinet, 1940–43**A5954, 53/1**

Prime Minister's visit abroad – press extracts and photographs, 1944**A5954, 661/12**

Photographs from this item appear on p. 9 and p. 181 of this guide.

COPIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN CURTIN, 1938–45**M1422**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin (CP 258)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Perth)

This series consists of 25 black-and-white photographs of John Curtin, taken mainly between 1938 and early 1945. The photographs are of Curtin with other political figures or at official functions.

The photographs capture aspects of Curtin's visit to Washington, London (for the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers) and Canada from April to June 1944. Images include photographs of Curtin and the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Peter Fraser, after their conferral as Honorary Doctors of Law at Cambridge University, England; Curtin addressing a combined session of the Houses of Parliament in Ottawa, Canada; a parliamentary dinner in honour of General Douglas MacArthur in 1942; and Curtin with William Morris Hughes and HRH the Duke of Gloucester shortly after the latter took up his appointment as Governor-General of Australia in January 1945. The series also includes some photographs, one of which appears to date from about 1920, of Curtin before he became Prime Minister.

COPIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS RELATING TO JOHN CURTIN'S TERM AS PRIME MINISTER, 1941–45**M1218**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of 13 black-and-white photographic prints. The photographs are mostly of Prime Minister John Curtin with other political figures or at official functions, taken between 1943 and early 1945. Several images are of Curtin's visit to Washington, London (for the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers) and Ottawa from April to June 1944. Curtin addressed a combined session of the Houses of Parliament in Ottawa. Three photographs were presentation items and have personal inscriptions from President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States of America, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King of Canada and the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Frank Beaurepaire. These photographs can be viewed online on the National Archives' [PhotoSearch](#) database.

Photograph of William Morris Hughes, HRH the Duke of Gloucester and John Curtin, 1945**M1218, 9**

This photograph is of John Curtin, William Morris Hughes and HRH the Duke of Gloucester, shortly after the latter took up his appointment as Governor-General in January 1945. A copy of this image appears on p. 34 of this guide.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1956–**A463**

Recorded by: 1956–71 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)
1971– Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
(CA 1401)
1971 Department of the Vice-President of the Executive
Council (CA 1402); and subsequently by other
agencies

Quantity: 542.81 metres (Canberra); 183.96 metres (Sydney);
0.18 metres (Darwin)

Files in this series deal with general and policy matters. The subjects covered vary considerably, reflecting the coordinating function of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Political, social, cultural, economic, industrial and defence matters are all dealt with. Other matters include government administration, immigration, honours, international conferences and diplomatic relations with other countries.

Portrait of Right Honourable John Curtin by Cav A Dattilo-Rubbo, 1941–47**A463, 1965/1998**

This item contains correspondence relating to the commissioning of a portrait of John Curtin. It includes a photograph of the Prime Minister.

Note

⁶⁰ In 1941 President Franklin Roosevelt had signed 'lend-lease' legislation that enabled the US to provide aid to nations at war with Germany and Italy.

3

Records in the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

The [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#) (JCPML) holds significant records relating to John Curtin. Most of these records have been digitised and are available for viewing online through the JCPML's Electronic Research Archive (ERA). Photographs are also available through PictureAustralia. The record listings in this guide are representative rather than comprehensive and researchers are referred to ERA for a complete view of the records held in the JCPML. For website addresses of the [JCPML](#) and PictureAustralia, see Appendix 5.

The records are arranged under the following headings and then alphabetically within each section by the agency or person who created the records:

- Early life and career to 1917
- Editor of the *Westralian Worker*, 1917–28
- On the backbenches and out of Federal Parliament, 1928–35
- Leader of the Opposition, 1935–41
- Prime Minister, 1941–45
- Death and memorials, 1945–2003
- Portraits and photographs, 1885–1945
- Personal possessions and library
- Oral history interviews

Early life and career to 1917

BESSANT, BOB. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906–10

SER0307

Quantity: 5 items

This series comprises four postcards and a commemorative bookmark. The postcards were sent sometime in 1907–09 from John Curtin to Gertrude and Jessie Gunn. The bookmark was created by the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP) to commemorate the death of Annie (Nancy) Gunn in 1906. Nancy Gunn joined the newly formed VSP (probably in 1905–06) and she and John Curtin were believed to have been sweethearts.

After the death of Nancy, John Curtin and Jessie Gunn corresponded for some years. Curtin was very close to the Gunn family and maintained connections with them all his life.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906–88**SER0207**

Quantity: 245 items

This series contains a wide range of records, including:

- cuttings from various newspapers and magazines (eg the *Socialist*, the *West Australian*, the *Daily News*, *Cavalcade*, the *Labor Digest* and the *Herald*;
- World War I anti-conscription campaign material;
- correspondence, including letters to John Curtin from John Willcock, Tom Mann, Mary Gilmore, William Morris ('Billy') Hughes, E G Theodore, Lord Gowrie, Walter Murdoch and Harold Butler (of the International Labour Office); and letters to Elsie Curtin from Mary Gilmore, Katherine Susannah Throssell, Gough Whitlam, Irene Dowsing, Reverend Jim Payne, Irene Greenwood, Alan Chester, Ben Chifley and Tom Fitzgerald;
- letters from John Curtin to his daughter Elsie and to Robert Menzies, Abraham Needham and Henry Boote;
- documents and correspondence relating to the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA), including information about a course of study at the University of Western Australia (UWA) c1920;
- testimonials and references relating to John Curtin;
- conference reports, including the 1927 Special Conference of Unions to Consider Child Endowment;
- ALP election material;
- biographical notes written by Elsie Macleod (nee Curtin) about John Curtin; and
- articles written by John Curtin.

Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd**JCPML00399/18**

This item comprises eight typed pages of biographical information about John Curtin written by Elsie Macleod.

Reference regarding John Curtin, Titan Manufacturing Co., 23 February 1911**JCPML00401/3**

Curtin received this reference after seven-and-a-half years with Titan as a costing clerk.

Flyer advertising talk by John Curtin, 6 July 1913**JCPML00398/3**

Flyer promoting 'A sensational deliverance! Hear Jack Curtin, Federated Timber Workers, at Gaiety Theatre – The right to loaf'. A copy of this flyer appears on p. 78.

Flyer advertising anti-conscription newspaper *The Echo*, October 1916[JCPML00398/5](#)

Curtin wrote a note on the back of this flyer – ‘Police just raided two printers and are on their way here. We are off.’

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1912–44[SER0206](#)

Quantity: 44 items

This series mainly comprises correspondence from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin (nee Needham).

Entries by John Curtin in Elsie Needham’s autograph book, May 1912[JCPML00402/1](#)**Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Needham, 24 August 1914**[JCPML00402/5](#)

Curtin writes to Elsie, who was then in South Africa, of his campaign for election to the Victorian State seat of Balaclava (‘Town Hall to Street-corner, to Sunday School Rooms and Cottage meetings’).

Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Needham, 14 October 1916[JCPML00402/13](#)

Curtin writes of the ‘stupendous task’ of organising the anti-conscription campaign and of sleeping in a different place each night to avoid arrest.



John Curtin in his early twenties, c1908.

[JCPML00689/3](#)

CURTIN FAMILY. CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING TIMBER WORKERS' UNION, 1915-77**SER0204**

Quantity: 14 items

This series mainly comprises correspondence relating to the controversy over Lloyd Ross's interpretation of John Curtin's resignation in 1915 from the position of General Secretary of the Victorian Timber Workers' Union. Some Timber Workers' Union material from the period is also included.

Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union, Victorian Branch, General Secretary's Report, August 1915

JCPML00400/1

Copy - reference and tribute to John Curtin by Australian Timber Workers' Union [Victoria], 17 November 1915

JCPML00400/12

Declaration by M Fennell, Australian Timber Workers' Union, 23 October 1958

JCPML00400/2**FITZGERALD, TOM. RESEARCH NOTES FOR A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN CURTIN - LOOSE PAPERS, c1952-92****SER0472**

Quantity: 15 files

This series contains original and copied material collected by Tom Fitzgerald, a respected economist and journalist. Fitzgerald planned to write a biography of John Curtin, but this work was still in progress when he died in 1993.

Among the items in this series are extracts from books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, reports, papers, Commonwealth Hansard, articles and book reviews from newspapers and journals. Other items include a photograph of John Curtin, a set of index cards created by Fitzgerald that provide references and information on specific people and events, and anti-conscription postcards from 1916. These items, which include a large number of book extracts on topics as varied as women, feminism, war, politics, philosophy, language, socialism, theology, science, histories, nationalism and culture, are generally not duplicated elsewhere in the Fitzgerald records.

This series also contains loose notes bundled together under titles such as 'General notes re Curtin 1907-1979'. The research material includes information that dates from as early as 1789.

United Women's 'No-conscription' pageant and procession, Melbourne, 21 October 1916

JCPML00687/15

This item contains seven postcards of scenes from this anti-conscription rally with inscriptions on the backs by both John Curtin and his daughter.

FITZGERALD, TOM. RESEARCH NOTES – BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN CURTIN – FILES, c1952–92**SER0546**

Quantity: 524 files

This series contains material collected by Tom Fitzgerald, a respected economist and journalist. Fitzgerald planned to write a biography of John Curtin, but this work was still in progress when he died in 1993.

Material in this series dates from as early as 1789 and consists primarily of photocopied material, most of which was annotated by Fitzgerald. The annotated photocopied material is often accompanied by Fitzgerald's own notes, illustrating his thoughts about particular issues, his evaluation of sources, matters to be clarified and so on.

There is much duplication since Fitzgerald would create files containing material from a particular source and then distribute duplicate copies of relevant material to files dealing with particular topics.

Among the subjects covered are individuals (eg Frank Anstey and William Morris Hughes), events, organisations and issues (eg World War I, compulsory military training, education and self-education, Curtin and economics, the *Socialist* newspaper and the VSP).

The range and volume of photocopied material is large. It includes extracts from books, theses, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and Commonwealth Hansard reports. It also contains minutes of meetings and copies of items from manuscript and archival collections. The research material covers the origin and history of political terms, philosophies and movements.

This series also contains Fitzgerald's correspondence with Curtin's contemporaries and others about sources and information relevant to Curtin. It includes notes of interviews and conversations with people such as Sir Paul Hasluck, Peter Ryan (of the Melbourne University Press), Geoffrey Serle and Sir Percy Spender.

The most significant correspondence consists of original letters to Fitzgerald from Curtin's daughter Elsie Macleod, along with copies of Fitzgerald's letters to Mrs Macleod and copies of material in Mrs Macleod's possession relating to Curtin and his family, and to issues arising in the letters (eg the television program *Hellfire Jack*, Curtin's reading choices and the memorial service for Curtin at Westminster Abbey, London).

These letters date from 1975 to 1992 and include the exchange of personal and family information between Elsie Macleod and Tom Fitzgerald and his wife, Margaret.

John Curtin – the opening, 1911–88**JCPML00653/280**

This item contains Fitzgerald's draft of the opening for his biography on Curtin. In it, Fitzgerald notes that Curtin's

writings under pen names in the *Socialist* and the *Westralian Worker* reveal 'unexpected, hitherto unknown qualities' in Curtin.

Notes regarding 'The man on the job' and 'The right to loaf' and the *Argus*, July-August 1912

JCPML00653/27/25

These notes relate to the furore created when Curtin advocated that workers had a right to loaf in a 1912 lecture 'The man on the job' (includes text of lecture).

Curtin, J – *The Independent Workers' Federation with its clothes off!*, c1912

JCPML00653/101/30

This item contains an impassioned attack by Curtin on the Independent Workers' Federation, which he brands as a bogus union run by big money and employers' groups.

Notes regarding Curtin's arrest and imprisonment, December 1916

JCPML00653/28/16

This item comprises cuttings from the *Socialist*.



Flyer for a speech by 'Jack' Curtin at the Gaiety Theatre, 1913.

JCPML00398/3

GLENIE, ROBIN. CORRESPONDENCE, ETC., OF THE BRUCE AND GLENIE FAMILIES, 1906-36**SER0361**

Quantity: 19 items

This series includes letters and postcards from John Curtin and Tom Mann to members of the Bruce and Glenie families. John Curtin was a friend of the Bruce family, members of which were active in the VSP in the early years of the twentieth century. The series also contains the booklet *How I became a Socialist* and a set of Socialist Party postcards.

Postcard from John Curtin to Yatala Bruce, date unknown (early 1900s)

[JCPML00510/3](#)

Postcard - 'The Socialist Rebels who went to Gaol', c1906

[JCPML00510/9](#)**TIMBER WORKERS' UNION. 'TIMBER WORKER' ARTICLES BY OR RELATING TO JOHN CURTIN, 1913-15****SER0542**

Quantity: 56 articles

This series comprises typescript copies of articles and notices by, or relating to, John Curtin from the *Timber Worker* newspaper, a monthly paper he established in 1913 while Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union in Victoria (1911-15). Curtin was editor of the paper and wrote much of its content. The articles include annual reports and information about wages and conditions as well as many editorials on socialist, union, national, state or local issues.

'Ourselves' - *Timber Worker*, February 1913

[JCPML00615/1](#)

'Women at work' - *Timber Worker*, 9 August 1913

[JCPML00615/15](#)

'Makers of misery' - *Timber Worker*, 10 August 1914

[JCPML00615/28](#)

'General Secretary's report' - *Timber Worker*, 14 September 1915

[JCPML00615/52](#)**VICTORIAN SOCIALIST PARTY. ARTICLES AND NOTICES IN THE 'SOCIALIST' WRITTEN BY OR RELATING TO JOHN CURTIN, 1906-17****SER0566**

Quantity: 113 articles

This series comprises typescript copies of articles and notices by, or relating to, John Curtin from the *Socialist* newspaper, which was published fortnightly by the VSP from 1906 to 1920.

John Curtin was an active member of the VSP and many articles in this series relate to lectures he presented on a range of topics at venues such as the Bijou and Gaiety theatres in Melbourne. Notices of VSP meetings, lectures and other events and items from the *Party Chronicles* are also in the series.

'Speakers' Class - Revolutionary and International Socialism', the *Socialist*, p. 7, 5 May 1906

[JCPML00819/001](#)

'Party Chronicles', 'Propaganda Meetings', the *Socialist*, 19 February 1909

[JCPML00819/018](#)

'At The Bijou – The Labour [sic] Party and the Socialist Party – Mr Jack Curtin in Criticism of Labor Platforms and Policy', the *Socialist*, p. 1, 10 December 1909

[JCPML00819/038](#)

'At The Gaiety – Comrade Curtin Lectures', the *Socialist*, p. 1, 10 November 1911

[JCPML00819/069](#)

'Jack Curtin leaves us – Appointed Editor [of the] *Westralian Worker*', p. 4, the *Socialist*, 9 February 1917

[JCPML00819/113](#)

Editor of the *Westralian Worker*, 1917–28

'AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS'. VIDEOS COMMEMORATING THE END OF WORLD WAR II, 1995

[SER0048](#)

Quantity: 2 video recordings

This series contains a video recording produced as part of the commemorations associated with the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II and a shorter version of the same video tailored for use with schools and students.

Paul Hasluck – war historian, 1995

[JCPML00061/1](#)

Former journalist, public servant, parliamentarian and Governor-General, Paul Hasluck is interviewed by his son Nicholas about his life and work. The item includes Paul Hasluck's recollections of John Curtin. They first met in Perth in the 1920s, when Curtin was President of the WA District Council of the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) and Hasluck represented the cadet journalists on the council.

Hasluck also recalls Curtin's involvement with journalism courses at UWA at this time, the role Curtin played in preparing WA's case for the Commonwealth Grants Commission in 1933–34, Curtin as Leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister, and a moving speech to Australian Labor Party (ALP) members in Melbourne in 1943 on the need for conscription.

AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION. ANNUAL REPORTS, 1922–84

[SER0277](#)

Quantity: 2 files

This series contains digitised annual reports of the WA District of the AJA from 1922 to 1945. These reports were copied from original records held by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance. The series also contains a copy of the AJA's 1984–85 annual report, which featured a commemorative cover showing John Curtin's photograph and his 1917 application for membership of the union.

AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION. MEMORABILIA, 1960**SER0280**

Quantity: 1 item

This series consists of a copy of the menu for the fiftieth anniversary dinner of the WA District of the AJA. Past presidents and secretaries of the association are listed on the back, including John Curtin, who was president of the WA District of the AJA from 1920 to 1925.

AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION. MEMBERSHIP REGISTERS, 1917-18**SER0281**

Quantity: 1 item

This series comprises a digital copy of the 1917-18 membership roll of the WA District of the AJA, which was copied from the register held by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance. John Curtin is listed as a member.

AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION. THE 'AUSTRALASIAN JOURNALIST' MAGAZINE, 1920-25**SER0282**

Quantity: 4 items

This series comprises digital copies of the *Australasian Journalist* for the period when John Curtin was President of the WA District of the AJA (copied from volumes held by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance and the Noel Butlin Archives Centre).

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY - WA BRANCH. 'WESTRALIAN WORKER' NEWSPAPER, 1914-49**SER0004**

Quantity: 55 volumes

This series comprises bound volumes of the *Westralian Worker*, the WA Labor newspaper, from 1914 to 1949 and microfilm copies of the paper from 1915 to 1929. Volumes from the years of John Curtin's editorship of the paper contain markings and some annotations, which he is believed to have made.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY - WA BRANCH. 'WESTRALIAN WORKER' NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS BY JOHN CURTIN, 1917-28**SER0195**

Quantity: 613 articles

This series comprises transcripts of all editorials published in the *Westralian Worker* during John Curtin's editorship of the paper, including some from 1920 and 1921 that Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod, attributed to Abraham Needham, Curtin's father-in-law. The editorials often express Curtin's personal opinions, in contrast to the rest of the paper, which was normally devoted to local news and reports of union activities.

Although Curtin began his career at the *Westralian Worker* as a radical socialist preoccupied with socialist principles and doctrine, he was gradually drawn into practical politics through his work with the WA Branch of the Labor Party. The editorials reflect this change in Curtin's thinking as

he moves away from militant socialism to moderate ALP politics, and provide insight into his beliefs on a wide range of matters.

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 23 February 1917**

[JCPML00302/1](#)

This item consists of Curtin's first editorial for the *Westralian Worker*, in which he attacks Prime Minister William Morris ('Billy') Hughes – 'Hughes goes to the Tory Camp: Cabinet of six liberals governs Australia'. The editorial espouses the belief that 'the bowed back of Labor can now expect to have the stinging lash of unemployment and sweated industry applied unrelentingly'.

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 22 August 1919**

[JCPML00302/129](#)

In this editorial – 'A Treaty based on militarism' – Curtin unequivocally condemns the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 17 March 1922**

[JCPML00302/263](#)

In this editorial Curtin discusses the press and its significance to the Labour Movement ('The Editor writes a message').

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 27 April 1923**

[JCPML00302/321](#)

In this editorial, titled 'ANZAC – and since!', Curtin writes of his disillusionment with the postwar world:

Unemployment! Class distinction!
These are the outstanding features of
the postwar era in every country.

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 3 April 1925**

[JCPML00302/422](#)

In an editorial entitled 'Western Australia and the Federation', Curtin writes about federal-state relations, including the need for tariff protection:

...it would be sheer suicide for the country
to be dependent on the resources of
even the most powerful of allies.

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 1 April 1927**

[JCPML00302/525](#)

Writing in this editorial about 'The shorter working week', Curtin argued that:

[The] universal adoption of the 44-hour week
will place Australia once more in the forefront
of those nations which have for their objective:
Better conditions for the working class.

***Westralian Worker* editorial, 5 August 1927**

[JCPML00302/543](#)

In this editorial – 'Pay for child endowment out of land values taxation' – Curtin argues that it is the nation's responsibility to assist 'over-burdened mothers in the proper rearing of their children.'

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. 'DIGESTS OF DECISIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT SPEECHES BY THE PRIME MINISTER (THE HON JOHN CURTIN)', 1941-45**SER0066**

Quantity: 5 bound volumes and duplicate booklets

The digests of decisions and announcements and important speeches by Prime Minister Curtin held in this series provide a summary of key Australian government policy statements and activities, commencing in October 1941 when the Curtin Government took office and continuing into the years of Chifley's prime ministership.

During the Curtin period the digests mainly deal with the state of the war and aspects of Australia's war effort, including administrative arrangements, war casualties, honours and awards, industries, loans, prisoners-of-war, air-raid precautions, enemy attacks, National Security regulations and visits abroad. The digests include speeches and statements made by John Curtin, Ben Chifley and several other ministers, particularly Frank Forde, Dr Herbert Evatt and John Dedman. Many of these speeches were made in Parliament and will also appear in the *Hansard*, while others were probably obtained from various government sources or media reports.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906-88**SER0207**

Quantity: 245 items

Please see series description on p. 74.

Application by John Curtin for membership of the AJA, 22 February 1917

[JCPML00398/10](#)

Letter from D Watson (*Westralian Worker*) to John Curtin, 5 January 1918

[JCPML00398/11](#)

The writer of this letter congratulates John Curtin as Editor of the *Westralian Worker* on his handling of the anti-conscription issue.

Letter from John Willcock to John Curtin, 12 April 1924

[JCPML00398/16](#)

This is a letter of thanks for the manner in which the *Westralian Worker* supported Labor in the 1924 election campaign.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1912-44**SER0206**

Quantity: 44 items

Please see series description on p. 75.

Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Needham, 2 February 1917

[JCPML00402/19](#)

In this letter, Curtin writes of his appointment as editor of the *Westralian Worker* and that he will be sailing for Western Australia on 'Wednesday by the *Katoomba*'. He also writes of his plans to save the money necessary to bring Elsie to Perth.

Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, 16 June 1924[JCPML00402/27](#)

In this letter Curtin writes to Elsie from the Grand Hotel de la Paix, Geneva, where he was attending the International Labour Organisation Conference as the Australian workers' representative. A copy of this letter appears on p. 88.

CURTIN FAMILY. SCRAPBOOKS, 1941-95[SER0191](#)

Quantity: 9 volumes

Three of these scrapbooks of press clippings were wholly compiled by the Curtin family (volumes 1A, 2A and 4A) and cover the years between 1918 and 1993. The remainder were originally compiled by the Prime Minister's Office and presented to the Curtin family on John Curtin's death in July 1945. These originally covered the years from 1941 to 1945 but the family added entries after July 1945.

Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd[JCPML00399/18](#)

This item comprises eight typed pages of biographical information about John Curtin written by Elsie Macleod.

Course of study at UWA, AJA, 1922[JCPML00401/6](#)

This item includes a foreword by John Curtin in his capacity as President of WA Branch of the AJA.

Testimonial regarding John Curtin, Australian Workers' Union, 15 May 1924[JCPML00401/14](#)**CURTIN, JOHN. CORRESPONDENCE [WITH] FRANK ANSTEY, 1917-25**[SER0543](#)

Quantity: 41 items

Frank Anstey, friend and political mentor of John Curtin, was a foundation member of the Victorian Labor Federation and the Victorian Socialist Party. He contributed articles to Curtin's *Timber Worker* paper from 1913 to 1915 and continued to send articles, often written on the back of Hansard proofs, to John Curtin after Curtin moved to WA to be the editor of the Labor paper, the *Westralian Worker*. This surviving correspondence spans the years 1917 to 1925.

Anstey to Curtin, c18 October 1920[JCPML00787/2](#)

In this letter, written in Kalgoorlie, WA following his address to a meeting the previous night in Albany, Anstey encourages Curtin to stand for the Senate, while still retaining his valuable role as the editor of *Westralian Worker*.

Curtin to Anstey, 2 January 1925[JCPML00787/14](#)

In this letter, Curtin acknowledges Scullin's work, which 'he will go through in detail', and reveals his feelings about the personal nature of his blacklisting by the Seamens' Union.

CURTIN, JOHN. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1924–45**SER0017**

Quantity: 6 items

This series comprises personal papers of John Curtin, including presentation items, press clippings, copies of speeches and a copy of his passport.

John Curtin's passport, 1924–26

JCPML00684/1**FAIRFAX – JOHN FAIRFAX AND SONS PTY LTD. INDEXES TO THE 'SYDNEY MORNING HERALD', 1924–79****SER0533**

Quantity: 1 file

This series comprises a card index copied from original records held by John Fairfax and Sons, to John Curtin-related articles published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Index to John Curtin-related items in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1924–79

JCPML00776/1

The subject headings for the index cards in this item include 'Curtin, J. – Editor of the *Westralian Worker*' and various other headings such as 'Member of Parliament (Fremantle) Labor'; 'Leader of the Federal Labor Party/Leader of the Opposition'; 'Prime Minister elect'; 'Prime Minister and Minister for Defence'; 'Late Prime Minister and Minister for Defence'; and 'West [sic] Australia (Overseas Visits)'.

FINCH, MARJORIE. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1924–45**SER0087**

Quantity: 3 items

This series comprises the personal papers of Marjorie Finch, whose mother, Kate Lindley, worked with John Curtin at the *Westralian Worker*. The papers include a postcard and newspaper cuttings.

Postcard sent from Geneva from John Curtin to Miss Lindley at the *Westralian Worker*, 1924

JCPML00131/1**FITZGERALD, TOM. RESEARCH NOTES – BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN CURTIN – FILES, c1952–92****SER0546**

Quantity: 524 files

Please see series description on p. 77.

Notes regarding Curtin as journalist, nd

JCPML00653/28/20

This item contains Fitzgerald's notes on this subject.

John Curtin – the opening, 1911–88

JCPML00653/280

AJA course of study at UWA for 1922

JCPML00653/231/22

This item includes course booklet with a foreword by John Curtin, then President of the AJA in WA, encouraging journalists to participate in the course.

SHOLL, DIANNE. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1975**SER0061**

Quantity: 1 volume

This series consists of an honours thesis examining the development of Curtin's political philosophy as reflected in his editorials.

'John Curtin at the *Westralian Worker* 1917-1928',
dissertation, 1975

JCPML00102/1**On the backbenches and out of Federal Parliament, 1928-35****'AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS'. VIDEOS COMMEMORATING THE END OF
WORLD WAR II, 1995****SER0048**

Quantity: 2 video recordings

Please see series description on p. 80.

Paul Hasluck - war historian, 1995**JCPML00061/1**

Former journalist, public servant, parliamentarian and Governor-General, Paul Hasluck is interviewed by his son Nicholas about his life and work. The item includes Paul Hasluck's recollections of John Curtin. They first met in Perth in the 1920s, when Curtin was President of the WA District Council of the AJA and Hasluck represented the cadet journalists on the council.

Hasluck also recalls Curtin's involvement with journalism courses at UWA at this time, the role Curtin played in preparing WA's case for the Commonwealth Grants Commission in 1933-34, Curtin as Leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister, and a moving speech to ALP members in Melbourne in 1943 on the need for conscription.

**AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY - WA BRANCH. ALP ADVERTISING MATERIAL,
1934-71****SER0160**

Quantity: 8 items

This series includes election and other promotional material such as 'How-to-Vote' flyers and pamphlets containing ALP policy statements.

'Candidature of Mr John Curtin: a Personal Statement',
federal elections, 1934

JCPML00187/4**AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY - WA BRANCH. 'WESTRALIAN WORKER'
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES BY JOHN CURTIN, 1930-31****SER0459**

Quantity: 6 articles

This series comprises typescripts of articles by Curtin published in the *Westralian Worker*, often on the theme of monetary control and economic policies to deal with the problems of the Depression years.

Banking control and Australian credit, 14 February 1930

JCPML00673/2

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906-88**SER0207**

Quantity: 245 items

Please see series description on p. 74.

Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd**JCPML00399/18**

This item comprises eight typed pages of biographical information about John Curtin written by Elsie Macleod.

Letter from Allen Thomas, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Geneva to John Curtin, 1 October 1930**JCPML00398/24**

This is a letter of thanks for Curtin's support for the ILO in his speech to parliament on 4 August 1930.

Letter from AJA to John Curtin, 11 December 1933**JCPML00398/25**

This letter expresses appreciation of Curtin as the 'outstanding member' at a conference of newspaper proprietors held in Melbourne. Curtin was one of three AJA representatives at the conference.

Letter from E G Theodore to John Curtin, 14 October 1932**JCPML00399/4**

In this letter to Curtin, Edward Theodore discusses unemployment as 'the outstanding question', along with other issues such as the Premiers' Plan, the Langites in NSW and other matters.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1912-44**SER0206**

Quantity: 44 items

Please see series description on p. 75.

Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, 2 August 1930**JCPML00402/29**

In this letter, Curtin writes of walking with Prime Minister Scullin arguing fruitlessly for 'an attack on the banking control, a reduction in the interest rate and the credit of the nation being made the monopoly of the nation', and of a 'great ball at the Kurrajong.'

CURTIN FAMILY. SCRAPBOOKS, 1941-95**SER0191**

Quantity: 9 volumes

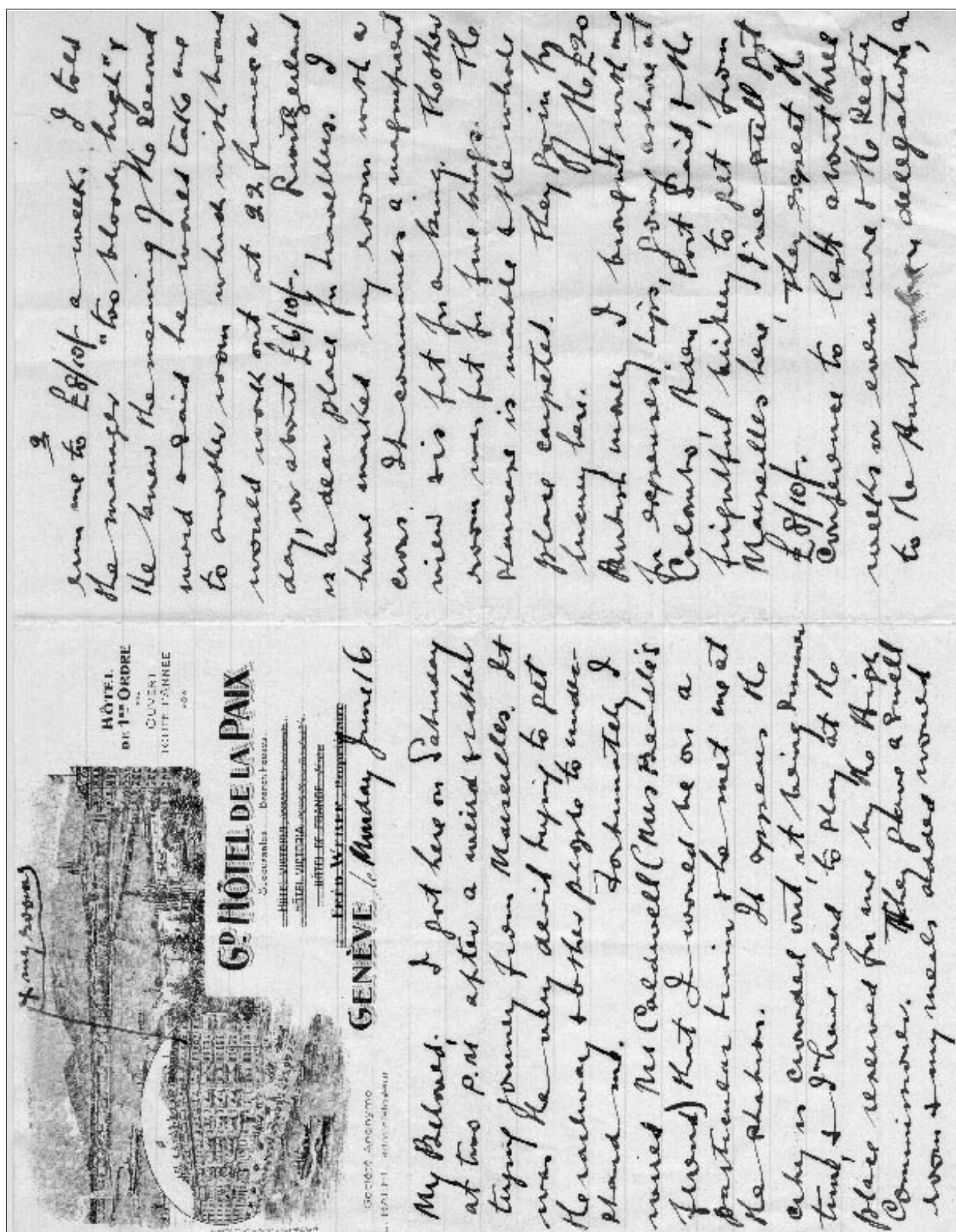
Please see series description on p. 84.

CURTIN, JOHN. ARTICLES AND PAPERS, 1930-41**SER0325**

Quantity: 4 articles

This series comprises a few published articles by John Curtin.

'Australia's economic crisis and the £55 000 000 interest bill', by John Curtin, c1930**JCPML00593/1**



From the Grand Hôtel de la Paix in Geneva where he was attending the International Labour Organisation Conference in 1924, Curtin wrote this letter to his 'beloved' Elsie. JCPML00402/27

'DAILY NEWS'. ARTICLES BY JOHN CURTIN, 1931-33**SER0404**

Quantity: 71 articles

This series comprises transcripts of articles written by John Curtin between 1931 and 1933 when he was out of parliament. These weekly articles about 'Labor news and views' covered a variety of themes and included many that addressed the problems of the Depression. The *Daily News* published the column with the rider that 'The matter is supplied officially and can be taken as the voice of the Labor [sic] movement in Western Australia.'

Daily News*, 'Labor News and Views', 31 May 1932*JCPML00578/10**

Curtin writes on the economic crisis, war reparations and overseas debts repayments and the need for reassessment.

Daily News*, 'The Views of Labor', 27 September 1932*JCPML00578/27**

Curtin writes on the economic crisis and the need for total reconstruction of the national and international economies:

My own view is that two guiding principles should be invoked, namely, the nation as planner for the internal economy of each country, and international organisation for external exchanges.

Daily News*, 'Labor's View', 7 December 1932*JCPML00578/36**

Under the heading 'Profits from gold not shared by miners', Curtin writes that '...although the gold industry is deriving unprecedented returns for its product, wages have not risen at all.'

In the same article, under the heading 'Banks: the loan', Curtin writes about the £8 million public loan floated by the government and concludes that 'Loan flotation is a costly process for governments and a lucrative one for banks.'

Daily News*, 'Labor Views', 28 March 1933*JCPML00578/52**

Under the heading 'Dealing with the Depression: monetary reform', Curtin attacks the deflationary policies of the anti-Labor forces, writing that:

...by these devices depression is not lessened but is intensified, and will, when production is further restricted, be further increased; that values diminish as the result; and that just as the foreign market for butter, for example, wilts, so will the home market further slacken by the growing impoverishment of the masses.

FAIRFAX – JOHN FAIRFAX AND SONS PTY LTD. INDEXES TO THE 'SYDNEY MORNING HERALD', 1924-79**SER0533**

Quantity: 1 file

Please see series description on p. 85.

Index to John Curtin-related items in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1924-79**JCPML00776/1**

The subject headings for the index cards in this item include 'Curtin, J. - Editor of the *Westralian Worker*' and various other headings such as 'Member of Parliament (Fremantle)

Labor'; 'Leader of the Federal Labor Party/Leader of the Opposition'; 'Prime Minister elect'; 'Prime Minister and Minister for Defence'; 'Late Prime Minister and Minister for Defence'; and 'West [sic] Australia (Overseas Visits)'.

FITZGERALD, TOM. RESEARCH NOTES – BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN CURTIN – FILES, c1952–92

SER0546

Quantity: 524 files

Please see series description on p. 77.

Notes regarding Curtin's progress in economics, 1928–30

JCPML00653/131/11

This item includes Fitzgerald's analysis of Curtin's speech in the House of Representatives on the Central Reserve Bank Bill.

Curtin, J. – 'Civilisation and the Crisis' – *The New Era*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 30 March 1933

JCPML00653/226/45

In this article Curtin writes of the need for monetary and credit reform to pull Australia and the world out of the Depression.

SHEA, FRANCES. CORRESPONDENCE, 1931

SER0024

Quantity: 1 item

This series consists of a short letter from John Curtin to Frances Gray on the occasion of her marriage. Mrs Shea, nee Gray, worked at the *Westralian Worker* with John Curtin, who was also a friend to the Gray family.

WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWS LTD. 'WEST AUSTRALIAN' ARTICLES BY JOHN CURTIN, 1932–33

SER0425

Quantity: 84 articles

This series comprises transcripts of articles written by John Curtin in 1932 and 1933 when he was out of parliament. These weekly articles about 'The Views of Labour' covered a variety of themes and often addressed the problems of the Depression. The column was published by the *West Australian* at the request of the WA Branch of the Australian Labor Party, as a 'Column weekly for the publication of views of the responsible body of Labour.'

The West Australian, 'The Views of Labour', 20 February 1932

JCPML00610/4

In this article Curtin writes with approval of moves in America to combat the Depression. He writes that the US is:

...deliberately using the national credit to artificially simulate industry; improve stocks; banish the fears that lead to the hoarding of private credit, raise prices; ease the strain on debtors and revitalise the securities of creditors; and promote that industrial activity which will mean the re-employment of large numbers of those whom the depression has deprived of the means of life.

The West Australian, 'The Views of Labour', 20 May 1933[JCPML00610/63](#)

In this article Curtin comments on the likely outcomes of an armaments conference at Geneva and the World Economic Conference in London, and states that:

Armaments are instruments of capitalist policy. While profound differences of policy exist between the capitalist powers, it is folly to expect disarmament to emerge from Geneva or anywhere else. A Disarmament Conference could only be effective after a World Economic Conference, and then only if the World Economic Conference could succeed in reconciling the antagonism of national capitalist systems.'

He further warns that 'The danger of war in circumstances like these cannot be exaggerated.'

The West Australian, 'The Views of Labour', 23 July 1932[JCPML00610/26](#)

In this article Curtin quotes from the historical works of Archibald Alison and from the more recent works of John Maynard Keynes, Professor Karl Gustav Cassel and Sir Henry Strakosch in explaining the roots of the Depression, noting the damaging impact of contraction of currency and 'the slave chain of gold'.

Leader of the Opposition, 1935–41**AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION. RADIO ARCHIVES, 1939–95**[SER0298](#)

Quantity: 36 sound recordings

This series comprises Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), now the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, radio programs, interviews and other sound recordings copied from original material held by the ABC Radio Archives. It includes recordings of speeches by John Curtin, episodes of the programs *Mr Prime Minister* and *The Prime Ministers*, and other sound recordings relating to John Curtin.

Tributes to Late Prime Minister Joseph A Lyons, 7 April 1939[JCPML00408/11](#)

This recording contains tributes to Prime Minister Lyons by William Morris Hughes, Sir Earle Page and John Curtin.

AUSTRALIAN CONSOLIDATED PRESS (ACP) PTY LTD. CUTTINGS RELATING TO JOHN CURTIN. 1939–50[SER0306](#)

Quantity: 11 files

This series consists of files of newspaper articles relating to John Curtin published in the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *The Sun*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sun Herald*.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY WA BRANCH. ALP ADVERTISING MATERIAL, 1934-71**SER0160**

Quantity: 8 items

Please see series description on p. 86.

Federal elections – Labor 'How-to-Vote' pamphlet, 1940

JCPML00187/5**AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY – WA BRANCH. CORRESPONDENCE OF THE 'WESTRALIAN WORKER' NEWSPAPER, 1939-46****SER0038**

Quantity: 2 items

This series comprises two letters to the Editor of the *Westralian Worker*, one concerning a broadcast by John Curtin and the other relating to statistics on motor vehicles in WA.

Letter to the Editor from [the] Department of Information, 1939**JCPML00313/1**

This item includes a copy of a speech titled 'Australian Labour and the War', broadcast by John Curtin, then Leader of the Opposition, on 31 December 1939.

CURTIN FAMILY. SCRAPBOOKS, 1941-95**SER0191**

Quantity: 9 volumes

Please see series description on p. 84.

CURTIN, JOHN. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1924-45**SER0017**

Quantity: 6 items

Please see series description on p. 85.

Australian defence speech by John Curtin, 21 October 1938**JCPML00465/1****CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1912-44****SER0206**

Quantity: 44 items

Please see series description on p. 75.

Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, 21 April 1937**JCPML00402/32**

Curtin wrote this letter to his wife on their twentieth wedding anniversary.

Telegram from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, 4 October 1940**JCPML00402/35**

John Curtin sent this telegram from Zanthus on the Trans-Australia railway to Elsie on her fiftieth birthday.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906-88**SER0207**

Quantity: 245 items

Please see series description on p. 74.

Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd**JCPML00399/18**

This item comprises eight typed pages of biographical information about John Curtin written by Elsie Macleod.

Letter from Tom Mann to John Curtin, 23 September 1937 This item consists of a letter of congratulations and support for Curtin on becoming Leader of the Opposition.	JCPML00398/28
<i>Australia and the War: Labor's Standpoint</i>, 15 September 1939 This item consists of an ALP booklet with transcript of a speech broadcast by John Curtin on 10 September 1939.	JCPML00401/24
Letter from Walter Murdoch to John Curtin, 1 October 1940 This item is a letter from Walter Murdoch offering Curtin congratulations on retaining his seat of Fremantle in the 1940 election.	JCPML00401/26
CURTIN, JOHN. ARTICLES AND PAPERS, 1930–41 Quantity: 4 articles Please see series description on p. 87. 'The Census and the Social Service State', by John Curtin, 1936 'The decline of parliamentary government: a protest', <i>Australian Quarterly</i>, Vol. X, No. 2, June 1938	SER0325 JCPML00444/1 JCPML00843/1
FAIRFAX – JOHN FAIRFAX AND SONS PTY LTD. INDEXES TO THE 'SYDNEY MORNING HERALD', 1924–79 Quantity: 1 file Please see series description on p. 85. Index to John Curtin-related items in the <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>, 1924–79 The subject headings for the index cards in this item include 'Curtin, J. – Editor of the <i>Westralian Worker</i> ' and various other headings such as 'Member of Parliament (Fremantle) Labor'; 'Leader of the Federal Labor Party/Leader of the Opposition'; 'Prime Minister elect'; 'Prime Minister and Minister for Defence'; 'Late Prime Minister and Minister for Defence'; and 'West [sic] Australia (Overseas Visits)'.	SER0533 JCPML00776/1
HODGES, ADELE. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1940–45 Quantity: 6 items This series includes newspaper cuttings, a photograph and several letters from John Curtin to Adele Mildenhall (later, Hodges). Miss Mildenhall was Curtin's secretary from 1935 to 1941. Letter from John Curtin to Adele Mildenhall, 27 July 1940 In this item Curtin expresses his regret that Adele is transferring to another appointment: Your work has been so faithfully done and the way you have done it has so charmed your colleagues and myself... The letter was so effective that Miss Mildenhall stayed on as Curtin's secretary for a further year until she married and had to leave the position.	SER0180 JCPML00703/1

Cutting from the *Australian Women's Weekly*, 18 October 1941**JCPML00217/5**

This item contains the article 'John Curtin was my boss for five years: Secretary's story of a kindly, able man who is now Prime Minister.'

RALSTON, HELEN. ELECTION SPEECHES OF CURTIN AND SCULLIN, 1937**SER0072**

Quantity: 5 items

Helen Ralston was a long-time supporter of the ALP who arranged for the 1937 election speeches by John Curtin and James Scullin to be transferred from acetate disc to audio tape for the [JCPML](#) collection. This series includes speeches by Curtin on various topics, including national defence; employment and banking policy; malnutrition and the birth rate; national control of the Commonwealth Bank and banking policy; and social services, health, defence, poverty and war. There is one speech by Scullin on policy reform in economic matters and national defence.

Prime Minister, 1941–45**'AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS'. VIDEOS COMMEMORATING THE END OF WORLD WAR II, 1995****SER0048**

Quantity: 2 video recordings

Please see series description on p. 80.

Paul Hasluck – war historian, 1995**JCPML00061/1**

Former journalist, public servant, parliamentarian and Governor-General, Paul Hasluck is interviewed by his son Nicholas about his life and work. The item includes Paul Hasluck's recollections of John Curtin. They first met in Perth in the 1920s, when Curtin was President of the WA District Council of the AJA and Hasluck represented the cadet journalists on the council.

Hasluck also recalls Curtin's involvement with journalism courses at UWA at this time, the role Curtin played in preparing WA's case for the Commonwealth Grants Commission in 1933-34, Curtin as Leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister, and a moving speech to ALP members in Melbourne in 1943 on the need for conscription.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION. RADIO BROADCASTS OF JOHN CURTIN'S SPEECHES, 1941–42**SER0094**

Quantity: 2 sound recordings

This series comprises radio broadcasts of speeches by John Curtin, copied from original material held by the ABC.

John Curtin announcing the declaration of war on Japan, 1941

JCPML00137/1/1

John Curtin opening the Second Liberty Loan, 1942

JCPML00137/1/2

**AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION. 'MR PRIME MINISTER',
ABC TV SERIES, 1966****SER0285**

Quantity: 3 video recordings

This series comprises ABC television programs about Australian prime ministers copied from original material held by the ABC.

John Curtin, 1966

[JCPML00377/2](#)**AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION. RADIO ARCHIVES, 1939-95****SER0298**

Quantity: 36 sound recordings

Please see series description on p. 91. Please note that the following items are listed chronologically.

**Opening of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra,
11 November 1941**[JCPML00408/16](#)

This recording covers the opening ceremony, including addresses by Lord Gowrie and Prime Minister Curtin and the reading of messages from overseas.

Dr Herbert Vere Evatt speaking in the USA, 1942[JCPML00408/4](#)

This item is a recording of a speech by Dr Evatt regarding the war situation in Pacific, General MacArthur's appointment as the Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area and Curtin's belief in a common council based in Washington.

John Curtin's speech to America, 14 March 1942[JCPML00434/1](#)**Laying of foundation stone at the American Legation,
Canberra, 4 July 1942**[JCPML00408/13](#)

This recording includes a speech by Prime Minister Curtin regarding the importance of the occasion and its historical significance, the links between Australia and America in a common history, the two countries' ways of life and ideals, and good wishes for the American Legation in its new home.

Centenary of the City of Sydney, 20 July 1942[JCPML00408/17](#)

This recording covers the meeting of the Sydney City Council on the occasion of the Centenary of the City of Sydney. It includes speeches by various prominent people, including Prime Minister John Curtin.

Centenary of the City of Melbourne, 12 August 1942[JCPML00408/18](#)

This recording covers the meeting of the Melbourne City Council on the occasion of the Centenary of the City of Melbourne. It includes addresses by various prominent people, including Prime Minister John Curtin.

Austerity speech by John Curtin, 3 October 1942[JCPML00408/10](#)**John Curtin speaking at luncheon in honour of Mrs
Eleanor Roosevelt, 4 September 1943**[JCPML00408/12](#)**John Curtin speaking to House of Commons, Ottawa, 1944**[JCPML00408/9](#)

John Curtin receiving the Freedom of the City of London, 11 May 1944[JCPML00408/14](#)

This recording covers the whole event, including Prime Minister Curtin's speech.

ANZAC Day messages, 25 April 1945[JCPML00408/15](#)

This recording consists of messages from General Sir Thomas Blamey (Melbourne, 9 April 1945), John Curtin (Canberra, 10 April 1945) and Lord Birdwood (London, 28 March 1945).

Tribute to John Curtin by Dame Mary Gilmore, 6 July 1945[JCPML00408/2](#)***Mr Prime Minister*, interview of Sir Thomas Playford, 1 January 1966**[JCPML00408/29](#)

In this item Sir Thomas Playford talks about his relationship as the Premier of South Australia with prime ministers Lyons, Curtin and Chifley, particularly in regard to federal-state relations. Playford recalls that Curtin's focus was on fighting the war and that he made good use of the states to help in the war effort and on the home front, using state authorities and offices to good effect (eg in road works and administering rationing) and maintaining good communication with state premiers.

***Mr Prime Minister*, interview of Murray Tyrrell, 7 February 1966**[JCPML00408/23](#)

This is a recording of Professor Colin Hughes interviewing Murray Tyrrell, private secretary to Ben Chifley from 1943 to 1947, about Chifley and the relationship between Chifley and Prime Minister Curtin, for the ABC TV program *Mr Prime Minister*.

***Mr Prime Minister*, interview of John J Dedman, 7 February 1966**[JCPML00408/31](#)

In this recording Professor Colin Hughes interviews John Dedman, an ALP MP and former minister in the Curtin Ministry, about the ALP, Curtin's relationship with Cabinet and the war effort.

***Mr Prime Minister*, interview of Reginald Pollard, 8 February 1966**[JCPML00408/26](#)

In this recording Professor Colin Hughes interviews Reginald Pollard, an ALP MP, about prime ministers Curtin and Chifley.

***Mr Prime Minister*, interview of John McEwen, 8 February 1966**[JCPML00408/34](#)

This is a recording of Professor Colin Hughes interviewing John McEwen about prime ministers Lyons, Menzies, Curtin and Chifley. McEwen describes Curtin as a man of great capacity and courage because Curtin became Prime Minister in a time of great stress without having been a minister before.

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Sir Robert Menzies,
9 February 1966**

[JCPML00408/24](#)

In this recording Professor Colin Hughes interviews Sir Robert Menzies about former prime ministers Deakin, Bruce, Lyons, Curtin and Chifley.

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Frank Green,
10 February 1966**

[JCPML00408/25](#)

In this recording Professor Colin Hughes interviews Frank Green, Clerk of the House of Representatives from 1937–55, about the various prime ministers who held office during his time in Parliament (Hughes, Bruce, Lyons, Curtin, Chifley and Menzies).

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Edward Holloway,
10 February 1966**

[JCPML00408/28](#)

In this item Edward Holloway talks about his long career in the Labour Movement and in the ALP. The recording includes comments on Curtin's style in Cabinet and the Labor Caucus, and why Curtin was chosen ahead of Frank Forde to be prime minister.

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Donald Horne,
12 February 1966**

[JCPML00408/27](#)

This recording is an unedited interview with Donald Horne about Sir Robert Menzies. The recording includes mention of Curtin as a wartime prime minister.

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Don Rodgers, 12 February
1966**

[JCPML00408/33](#)

This is a recording of Professor Colin Hughes interviewing Don Rodgers, Press Secretary to both Curtin and Chifley, about prime ministers Curtin and Chifley. Rodgers relates how Curtin as leader united the ALP and comments on Curtin as an orator, his rather withdrawn and reserved character, his skill in handling the press, his good relations with public servants and his style of handling Cabinet.

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Allan Fraser, 14 February
1966**

[JCPML00408/30](#)

This is a recording of Professor Colin Hughes interviewing Allan Fraser, an ALP MP, about prime ministers Hughes, Lyons, Curtin and Chifley. Fraser recalls Curtin as being one of the top four orators since Federation – Curtin chose his words carefully and delivered with fire and passion, spoke without notes, but could also carefully prepare. Curtin's speech after the battle of the Coral Sea thrilled the House; it was, he said, 'pure English.'

**Mr Prime Minister, interview of Frank Forde, 19 February
1966**

[JCPML00408/32](#)

This is a recording of Frank Forde, Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Capricornia (1932–46) and Prime Minister (1945), being interviewed by Professor Colin Hughes about prime ministers Lyons, Curtin and Chifley and about General MacArthur in Australia. Forde recalls how Curtin as leader firmly put his views before the party and Cabinet, and how he had a wide knowledge of party policy and was a great reader. Forde discusses Curtin's

reasons for not agreeing to join a national government with the United Australia Party (UAP) and Country Party; the war and the civil construction force; conscription; and Curtin's New Year message of 1942.

John Tonkin, 'Sunday Supplement', 14 March 1976

[JCPML00408/1](#)

In this sound recording John Tonkin, Curtin's election campaign manager, says Curtin was good, but lacked experience.

***The Prime Ministers*, episode 2, 'Labor Leaders', 16 September 1980**

[JCPML00408/19](#)

The ABC television program *The Prime Ministers* investigates the office of prime ministers from Curtin to Fraser. Episode 2 looks at Labor leaders, including John Curtin.

***The Prime Ministers*, episode 3, 'The Power Levers', 23 September 1980**

[JCPML00408/20](#)

Episode 3 of *The Prime Ministers* examines the ways in which Australian prime ministers from Curtin to Fraser wielded influence in governing the nation.

***The Prime Ministers*, episode 4, 'Travelling Prime Ministers', 30 September 1980**

[JCPML00408/21](#)

Episode 4 of *The Prime Ministers* examines how Australian prime ministers from Curtin to Fraser performed on the world stage.

***The Prime Ministers*, episode 5, 'Prime Ministers and the Media', 7 October 1980**

[JCPML00408/22](#)

Episode 5 of *The Prime Ministers* examines how Australian prime ministers from Curtin to Fraser handled relations with the media.

Sir Charles Moses on the ABC in wartime, 27 May 1982

[JCPML00408/3](#)

This item is an unedited interview with Sir Charles Moses, former ABC general manager, about the ABC in wartime.

'Industry at War', *The Home Front*, episode 9, 24 September 1986

[JCPML00408/8](#)

This recording relates the experiences of people living in Australia during World War II. Speakers include Bob Wells, the former National President of the Miners' Federation, speaking about meeting with John Curtin in order to control industrial conflict.

John Curtin's grandson, John Curtin, on PM [ABC radio program], 5 July 1995

[JCPML00408/5](#)

This item also includes interviews with David Black and John Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod.

Bob Hawke on AM [ABC radio program], 5 July 1995

[JCPML00408/6](#)

In this recording former Prime Minister Bob Hawke speaks about former Prime Minister John Curtin on the fiftieth anniversary of Curtin's death.

Fiftieth anniversary of the first Commonwealth-State Housing Bill, PM [ABC radio program], 3 October 1995

[JCPML00408/7](#)

This recording includes Dr John Mendelson, Brian Howe, H C Coombs and others commenting on the Curtin Government's postwar reconstruction and housing plans.

AUSTRALIAN CONSOLIDATED PRESS PTY LTD. CUTTINGS RELATING TO JOHN CURTIN. 1939–50

SER0306

Quantity: 11 files

Please see series description on p. 91.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY WA BRANCH. ALP ADVERTISING MATERIAL, 1934–71

SER0160

Quantity: 8 items

Please see series description on p. 86.

Federal elections – Labor ‘How-to-Vote’ flyer, 1943,

JCPML00750/1

CURTIN, JOHN. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1924–45

SER0017

Quantity: 6 items

Please see series description on p. 85.

Resolution from foremen of Australian industries
pledging support to the Allied nations’ war effort,
30 November 1942

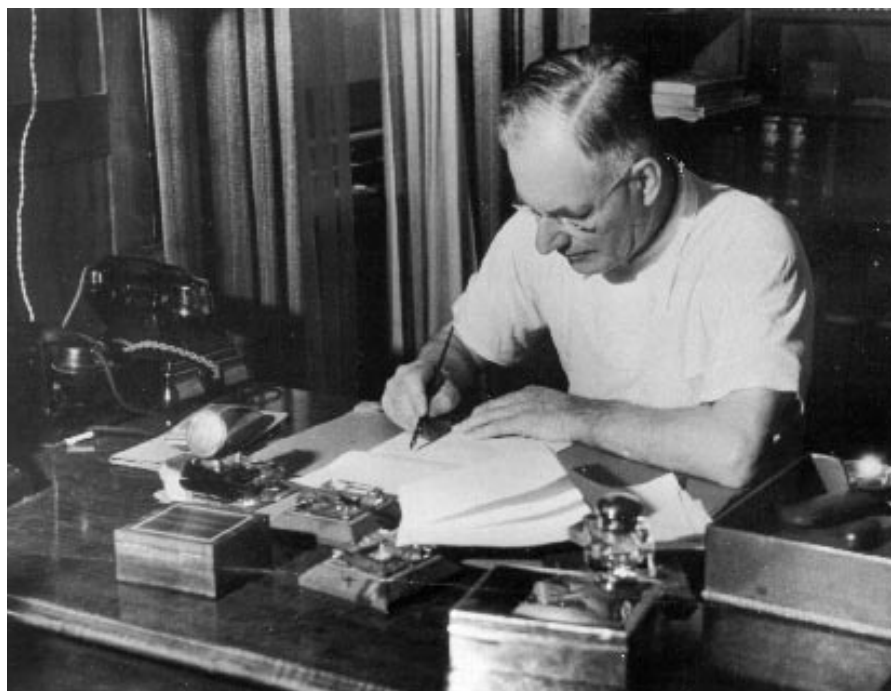
JCPML00006/1

CURTIN FAMILY. MEMORABILIA, 1916–91

SER0203

Quantity: 34 items

This series contains a wide variety of memorabilia, including drawings made by Elsie Needham, programs for official dinners and other functions, memorial services for John Curtin, speeches made at the opening of the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the Australian National University, sketches and paintings of John Curtin, poems and memorial lectures.



John Curtin working on a Sunday morning in his study at The Lodge, 1942. JCPML00376/6

Document wallet – Prime Minister and Minister for
Defence Co-ordination, the Hon. J Curtin MP,
7 October 1941

[JCPML00403/3](#)

Visit to Australia of Mrs Franklin D Roosevelt – official
luncheon program, 4 September 1943

[JCPML00403/7](#)

'The Four Freedoms', presented by the *Saturday Evening
Post* to John Curtin, 1944

[JCPML00403/8](#)

Oration conferring Honorary Degree of Doctor of Law on
John Curtin, Cambridge [plus translation], 19 May 1944

[JCPML00403/11](#)

CURTIN FAMILY. SCRAPBOOKS, 1941–95

SER0191

Quantity: 9 volumes

Please see series description on p. 84.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1912–44

SER0206

Quantity: 44 items

Please see series description on p. 75.

**Letter from John Curtin to his children, John and Elsie,
4 April 1944**

[JCPML00402/43](#)

This item consists of a short note written by John Curtin to
his son and daughter before his departure overseas.

Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, 30 April 1944

[JCPML00402/44](#)

This item consists of a letter written by John Curtin from
the Savoy Hotel, London to Elsie Curtin, who had remained
in America while he proceeded to the UK for the Imperial
Conference of Empire Prime Ministers.

CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906–88

SER0207

Quantity: 245 items

Please see series description on p. 74.

**Note to John Curtin and poem *No Foe Shall Gather
Our Harvest* by Dame Mary Gilmore, 31 December 1942**

[JCPML00398/45](#)

**Letter from President F D Roosevelt to John Curtin,
2 March 1943**

[JCPML00401/40](#)

This item is a letter from Roosevelt to Curtin, in which
he extends a welcome to Dr Evatt and comments on the
worldwide supply of food.

**Telegram from General MacArthur to John Curtin
regarding victory, c1943**

[JCPML00401/38](#)

**Letter from John Curtin to his daughter Elsie, 26 January
1945**

[JCPML00399/9](#)

This item is a letter written by Curtin to his daughter
expressing his appreciation of the time she spent with
him during his hospitalisation and subsequent return to
The Lodge in January 1945. He writes, 'Your coming to
Melbourne and the hospital was the beginning of my return
to a normal life.'

COFFEY, EUNICE. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1942–45**SER0176**

Quantity: 5 items

This series mainly comprises records relating to the Moral Rearmament Association (MRA) revue, *You Can Defend Australia*. It includes correspondence from John Curtin, who wrote in support and recognition of the revue.

FAIRFAX – JOHN FAIRFAX AND SONS PTY LTD. INDEXES TO THE ‘SYDNEY MORNING HERALD’, 1924–79**SER0533**

Quantity: 1 file

Please see series description on p. 85.

Index to John Curtin-related items in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1924–79**JCPML00776/1**

The subject headings for the index cards in this item include ‘Curtin, J. – Editor of the *Westralian Worker*’ and various other headings such as ‘Member of Parliament (Fremantle) Labor’; ‘Leader of the Federal Labor Party/Leader of the Opposition’; ‘Prime Minister elect’; ‘Prime Minister and Minister for Defence’; ‘Late Prime Minister and Minister for Defence’; and ‘West [sic] Australia (Overseas Visits)’.

FITZGERALD, TOM. RESEARCH NOTES – BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN CURTIN – FILES, c1952–92**SER0546**

Quantity: 524 files

Please see series description on p. 77.

Notes regarding the Churchill versus Australia clash, 1939–40**JCPML00653/520/21**

This item consists of Fitzgerald’s notes on this subject.

Periods John Curtin was in hospital or ill during his prime ministership, 1941–45**JCPML00653/28/35**

This item contains Fitzgerald’s notes on this topic.

Speech by Mr Curtin at the formation of the Gowrie Scholarship Trust Fund Committee, 8 March 1944**JCPML00653/220/4**

In this item Curtin speaks of the death of Lord Gowrie’s son, Patrick Hore-Ruthven, and of the ‘frightful loss of irreplaceable human quality that the god of war has demanded.’

Muriel Heagney – on John Curtin’s death, 1945**JCPML00653/165**

This item contains an article from *Labor Digest* titled ‘John Curtin Passes’, which relates Muriel Heagney’s personal reflections about Curtin.

FITZGERALD, TOM. CORRESPONDENCE AND CONVERSATION NOTES, TOM FITZGERALD AND ELSIE MACLEOD, 1975–92**SER0482**

Quantity: 1 file

This series consists of copies of letters and conversation notes exchanged between Fitzgerald and John Curtin’s daughter, Elsie Macleod, relating to Tom Fitzgerald’s proposed biography of Curtin. As far as possible, the material is arranged chronologically. Items in this series

were selected by the [JCPML](#) from originals contained in Fitzgerald's series 'Research notes for a biography of John Curtin – Files.'

**Letter, Elsie Macleod to Margaret and Tom Fitzgerald,
19 December 1984**

[JCPML00705/1/84](#)

This item includes an account of the family's use of nicknames and how her father worried when she was out late.

**Letter, Elsie Macleod to Margaret and Tom Fitzgerald,
24 February 1986**

[JCPML00705/1/62](#)

This item includes an account of how her father dressed, including his preference for cream suits on casual occasions.

**Letter, Elsie Macleod to Margaret and Tom Fitzgerald,
20 September 1989**

[JCPML00705/1/27](#)

This item includes an account of how Curtin refused a job offer for his daughter at the ABC so that he could still be free to be critical of the broadcaster when required.

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF. HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS PROJECT.
[WORKING PAPERS – COMPILATION OF DOCUMENTS ON AUSTRALIAN
FOREIGN POLICY, 1937–1949], 1919–58**

[SER0589](#)

Quantity: 1391 files

Items in this series contain copies, some with accompanying notes, of original records considered for inclusion in the 16-volume publication *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937–1949*. As each volume contains only a few hundred documents, very few of the thousands of documents copied were published.

This series contains a wide variety of items, including significant World War II documents (eg War Cabinet agenda and minutes from 1939–44). Among the subjects it deals with are major world events such as Hitler's peace offensive; the fall of France in May 1940; appeals to US President Roosevelt; war crimes; refugees; imperial defence; the League of Nations; postwar planning; Pacific Rim events concerning Japan, New Guinea and Timor; and US interests in the Pacific.

The original records held as copies in this series came from various sources, predominantly the [National Archives of Australia](#), but including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Defence, the National Library of Australia, the Public Record Office (London), the Roosevelt Library (US) and other institutions.

This series is a useful research resource for this important period because it contains all the cables that relate to Australian foreign policy, culled from the entire run of Australian government cable traffic, much of which consists of routine administrative messages from all departments. The material has been arranged by subject, with notes explaining the significance of the documents as necessary.

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF. HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS PROJECT.
[WORKING PAPERS – COMPILATION OF SELECTED DOCUMENTS ON
AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1937–1949], 1935–78****SER0590**

Quantity: 56 files

This series contains selected documents short-listed from records in SER0589, which comprises records accumulated in the course of preparing the 16-volume publication *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937–1949*. This series also contains documents from other sources and drafts of some of the published volumes.

GRAY, SYDNEY. ANECDOTES, 1999**SER0263**

Quantity: 2 items

This series comprises two short anecdotal memories of John Curtin, who was a friend of the Gray family.

**The Prime Minister of Australia, Mr John Curtin, and
Elsie Curtin attend the wedding of Sydney Gray and
Roma Milbourne, 24 January 1942**

JCPML00346/2

My Memories of John Curtin, by Sydney Gray, 1999

JCPML00346/1**FAIRFAX. JOHN FAIRFAX AND SONS PTY LTD. 'SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD' ARTICLES BY ROSS GOLLAN, 1941–45****SER0470**

Quantity: 196 items

This series comprises typescript copies of weekly columns written by Ross Gollan, Canberra correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The columns cover a wide range of topics and provide contemporary political commentary on the Curtin Government's handling of the war, international affairs and domestic matters.

[The Labor] Caucus and banks, 3 November 1941**JCPML00683/12**

In this article, Gollan writes of the pensions 'barney' and of how Curtin and his Cabinet dealt with unrest in the Labor Caucus over the Budget. Gollan also comments on the way the Liberal and Country parties were performing in their new opposition role.

The stand on coal, 20 April 1942**JCPML00683/36**

In this article Gollan writes about the:

...bestowal on General MacArthur, as from
midnight on Saturday of power to issue orders that
are to be taken by Australian forces as emanating
from the Commonwealth Government...

He also discusses the need for the Curtin Government to stand firm on implementing new coal regulations and the likely negative reaction of some states to the proposed uniform taxation scheme.

Mr Curtin's problems, 12 April 1943**JCPML00683/87**

Gollan writes of the problems he believes are facing the Curtin Government. These include industrial unrest in the form of the Sydney waterfront dispute, the lag in filling the

Third Liberty Loan, Treasurer Chifley's failings and the possible loss of support from Independent MP Mr Wilson.

Curtin Government showing disregard of public opinion, 9 April 1945

[JCPML00683/179](#)

In this article Gollan comments on what he sees as the Curtin Government's failure to provide timely answers to the question of whether the Australian Imperial Force had adequate equipment for its campaigns in the islands. He also criticises the government for its failure to respond to the changing situation of the war – 'On man-power and cognate key aspects of the nation's war-time mobilisation, the Government approaches the problems of 1945 with the formulae of 1942'.

JOYCE, GLADYS. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1942-45

[SER0179](#)

Quantity: 8 items

Gladys Joyce worked as John Curtin's personal secretary from 1941 until his death in 1945. This series includes a letter of condolence to Mr Joyce (Gladys' father) from John Curtin and copies of the 'Orders of Service' for Curtin's memorial services in Canberra and the UK. The series also contains a number of photographs of John Curtin and staff taken during the period Miss Joyce worked as Curtin's secretary, including some taken aboard the *Prince of Wales* railway carriage.

Typed copy of letter from John Curtin to Mr Joyce, 16 March 1944

[JCPML00216/6](#)

In this letter to Mr Joyce, Prime Minister Curtin writes:

War is a frightful calamity. Its general tragedy sweeps into the homes of so many and when its cost includes a loved son the general becomes so personal that it borders on intrusion to just proffer sentiments of grief for those who grieve.

MacKINNON, THELMA. CORRESPONDENCE, 1942

[SER0547](#)

Quantity: 2 items

This series comprises two letters from John Curtin, one to Thelma MacKinnon (nee Southwell) and one to her parents, on the occasion of Thelma's wedding in 1942.

McCARTHY, THELMA. ANECDOTES, 2002

[SER0464](#)

Quantity: 1 item

This series contains Thelma McCarthy's anecdotal memory of being invited to dinner at The Lodge, along with three other 'lowly-ranking WAAF' [sic] (Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force), by Prime Minister Curtin.

Anecdotal memory of meeting John Curtin in 1943, 2002

[JCPML00682/1](#)

In this item Mrs McCarthy recounts:

John Curtin was so informal, [he] ushered us into a small sitting room and offered us all a cool drink. He asked us about our families and

the work we were currently doing in the WAAF. We then went into the dining room and had Sunday tea, cold meat and salad followed by stewed fruit and custard. So homely and we all relaxed as we talked and laughed together.

McLAUGHLIN, FREDERICK. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1940-95**SER0084**

Quantity: 20 items

Frederick McLaughlin was the departmental Private Secretary to Prime Minister Curtin from 1941 to 1945 and accompanied him overseas in 1944. This series mainly comprises records related to Curtin's trip to the US, the UK and Canada, and includes correspondence, itineraries, speeches, official papers and financial statements. The series also includes press clippings (1944-95) that relate to John Curtin.

Prime Minister's visit to England via USA - itinerary and engagements 1944**JCPML00129/1****Description of a visit to bomber station with Prime Minister Curtin, England, 1944****JCPML00129/8**

This item includes a description of how Curtin 'farewelled the members of the crews with the "V" sign and was obviously moved by the experience and insisted on staying on the field until the last Lancaster Bomber departed.'

Letter of appreciation from John Curtin to F A McLaughlin regarding trip to USA and UK, 1 July 1944**JCPML00129/18****MAHER, JAMES. ANECDOTES, 1995****SER0037**

Quantity: 1 item

This series comprises an anecdotal memory of John Curtin and of his Cabinet written by James Maher who was on the staff of the Minister for Munitions and the Navy, Norman Makin, from 1943 to 1946.

Anecdotal memory of John Curtin and his Cabinet, 1995**JCPML00046/1**

Mr Maher recalls John Curtin and the tension of the War Cabinet room and how the Prime Minister took a personal interest in him, taking him to football matches when Curtin was in Canberra, saying 'Jim, it will keep you out of trouble.'

MENZIES, ROBERT. CORRESPONDENCE, 1940-41**SER0401**

Quantity: 4 files

This series contains a file of correspondence with John Curtin, John Beasley and Arthur Fadden; press statements and other records relating to the desirability of forming a national government; the composition of the Australian Advisory War Council; and the Opposition's rejection of the proposal for an all-party government. The series also includes several letters of a more personal nature between Curtin and Menzies.

MORAL RE-ARMAMENT ASSOCIATION. CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS, 1942-43**SER0067**

Quantity: 10 items

This series contains a report of the MRA revue *You Can Defend Australia*, which was performed in Canberra in 1942 as a contribution to national morale, and correspondence of the association, including letters of support for the production of the revue from John Curtin. The MRA grew out of the 'Oxford Group', which started among Oxford University students in the late 1920s. In 1938, as nations re-armed for war, its originator, Frank Buchman, called for a 'moral and spiritual rearmament' to work towards a 'hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world.'

Letter from John Curtin to R Abel, 2 September 1942**JCPML00111/1**

This item consists of a letter in which Curtin wrote:

The Revue 'You Can Defend Australia' which I have had the pleasure of witnessing impressed me very favourably. It not only entertains but it conveys a vital message. I believe that the Revue is a valuable contribution towards the raising of the morale of the nation which is of paramount importance.

ROSS, LLOYD. PUBLICATIONS, 1958-77**SER0246**

Quantity: 15 items

This series comprises copies of Lloyd Ross's biography of John Curtin and numerous newspaper articles about him that were published before the biography was printed. Among the articles is a ten-part series, 'The story of John Curtin', which was published in 1958, and three articles from 1972 - 'The Curtin papers: The war years told from our side', 'John Curtin's year of reckoning' and 'Behind the Curtin mask.'

SALISBURY, ALAN [AND JEAN]. ANECDOTES, 1993-95**SER0045**

Quantity: 1 item

This series contains anecdotes about John Curtin's War Cabinet written by Alan and Jean Salisbury. The Salisburys were on the staff of Sir Frederick Shedden and were involved in work for both the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council.

'WOMAN' MAGAZINE. 'THE CURTIN STORY', 1951**SER0403**

Quantity: 5 articles

This series contains five articles by Elsie Curtin published in *Woman* magazine in 1951 as the 'Candid life story, with all his faults and virtues, of John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, 1941-45, by the woman who knew him best.'

Death and memorials, 1945–2003**AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION. RADIO ARCHIVES, 1939–95****SER0298**

Quantity: 36 sound recordings

Please see series description on p. 91.

**Memorial service for John Curtin, Parliament House,
Canberra, 6 July 1945**

JCPML00525/1**AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY – WA BRANCH. JOHN CURTIN MEMORIAL LECTURES, 1960–97****SER0092**

Quantity: 26 lectures

The Inaugural John Curtin Memorial Lecture was held at the University of Western Australia (UWA) Branch of the ALP in 1960. Although the lectures were originally conceived as an annual commemoration of Prime Minister John Curtin, there were years when no lecture took place, while in a few cases no copies of presented lectures were obtained.

The annual presentation of the John Curtin Memorial Lecture at UWA ceased in 1992 and was replaced by the John Curtin Memorial Breakfasts.

Past lecturers include Gough Whitlam ('Socialism within the Australian Constitution', 1961), Bill Hayden ('ALP – The Party of Idealism and Reform', 1978), Bob Hawke ('The course of reform in the 1980s', 1980), Neville Wran ('The Australian Federal System: Post-Whitlam, Post-Fraser', 1981) and Barry Jones ('Labor in the 1990s – Where to?', 1992).

CURTIN FAMILY. CONDOLENCES ON DEATH OF JOHN CURTIN, 1945–95**SER0193**

Quantity: 67 items

This series comprises letters and telegrams of condolences sent to Mrs Elsie Curtin and her family on the death of John Curtin. Correspondents include Bessie Rischbieth; Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester; Harry S Truman; Dame Mary Gilmore; Winston Churchill; General Douglas MacArthur; Robert Menzies; the Brunswick Football Club; the Australian Journalists' Association; Sir Earle Page; the Australian Railways Union; and the City of Sydney.

CURTIN FAMILY. MEMORABILIA, 1916–91**SER0203**

Quantity: 34 items

Please see series description on p. 99.

John Curtin, a poem by J Preston, nd

JCPML00403/34

**Order of service – 'Memorial Service for John Curtin,
Parliament House', 6 July 1945**

JCPML00403/13

**Order of service – 'Westminster Abbey Memorial Service
for John Curtin', 18 July 1945**

JCPML00403/14

'A Tribute to the Memory of The Right Honourable John Curtin MP, Prime Minister, 1945'[JCPML00403/16](#)

This item consists of a bound copy of *Resolutions and Speeches relating to the Death of The Right Honourable John Curtin MP, Prime Minister, 1945*.

Program [of the] foundation stone ceremony, John Curtin School of Medical Research, ANU, 24 October 1949[JCPML00403/24](#)**CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906–88**[SER0207](#)

Quantity: 245 items

Please see series description on p. 74.

Notes by F A McLaughlin on John Curtin's wishes regarding funeral, 23 June 1945[JCPML00398/62](#)**Radio (ABC) talk and poem by Dame Mary Gilmore, 5 July 1945**[JCPML00401/54](#)**'John Curtin, An Appreciation' by William McKell, *Sunday Times*, London, 8 July 1945**[JCPML00401/56](#)

This item contains the text of an article published in the London *Sunday Times* on the death of John Curtin. It was written by William McKell, then NSW Premier.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY – VICTORIA BRANCH. CRESWICK ALP – JOHN CURTIN ORATIONS, 1984–2000[SER0209](#)

Quantity: 5 lectures

This item contains commemorative lectures presented by Kim E Beazley, Tom Uren, John Cain, Barry Jones and Bob Hawke at Creswick, the town where John Curtin was born in 1885.

HARRISON, HECTOR. EULOGIES BY THE VERY REVEREND HECTOR HARRISON, 1945[SER0018](#)

Quantity: 1 item

This series contains the eulogy given by Reverend Harrison, a friend of John Curtin, at Curtin's funeral service in Perth. Harrison was the incumbent minister at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Canberra.

JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY. JCPML PUBLIC LECTURES, 1997–[SER0114](#)

Quantity: 15 lectures

This series comprises the [JCPML](#) public lectures. Dr Geoffrey Serle gave the inaugural lecture in 1997 and speakers since include Gough Whitlam, Dr David Day and Paul Keating.

'Gallipoli, embezzlement and a death in the bush: John Curtin's first war', by David Day, 1998[JCPML00271/1](#)**'In search of the Light on the Hill', by Hazel Hawke, 5 July 1999**[JCPML00371/1](#)

Portraits and photographs, 1885–1945

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY – WA BRANCH. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1920–41

SER0149

Quantity: 6 photographs

Among the photographs in this series are images of Curtin at the International Labour Organisation Conference in Geneva, with staff of the *Westralian Worker* in the 1920s, with the inaugural Labor Cabinet in 1941 and with Eleanor Roosevelt during her 1943 visit to Australia.

CURTIN FAMILY. MEMORABILIA, 1916–91

SER0203

Quantity: 34 items

Please see series description on p. 99.

Sketch of John Curtin by Roy Dalgarno, 1942

[JCPML00403/6](#)

Poster depicting John Curtin with quote, distributed in *Man Magazine*, c1942

[JCPML00403/32](#)

Collectors' card depicting John Curtin, issued by Linfords Custard Powder, 1950

[JCPML00403/26](#)

Print of sketch of John Curtin, commemorating the centenary of his birth, 1985

[JCPML00403/30](#)

CURTIN FAMILY. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1885–1979

SER0128

Quantity: 430 photographs

Among the images in this series are photographs of members of the Curtin family and of John Curtin in the course of his private and parliamentary lives. The latter include photographs of Curtin as Leader of the Opposition and as Prime Minister, and include other significant people such as Ben Chifley, Winston Churchill, Philip Collier, Eleanor Roosevelt, General MacArthur and Lord Gowrie.

John and Kate Curtin with son John, taken in Melbourne, 1885

[JCPML00004/1](#)

Election pamphlet, Balaclava, 1914

[JCPML00376/62](#)

Elsie and John Curtin, October 1917

[JCPML00004/4](#)

Australian Journalists' Association, Western Australian District Committee, 1921–22

[JCPML00376/4](#)

International Labour Organisation dinner, Geneva, 1924

[JCPML00376/5](#)

The Curtin family, 1929

[JCPML00004/14](#)

The Curtin house, Cottesloe, 1939

[JCPML00004/22](#)

Five Australian prime ministers dining together (Hughes, Menzies, Fadden, Curtin and Chifley), 1942

[JCPML00376/90](#)

PM John Curtin shaking hands with General Douglas MacArthur, Sydney, 8 June 1943

[JCPML00376/69](#)

This image appears on p. 22 of this guide.

Elsie and John Curtin with Mrs Franklin D Roosevelt, USA, 1944	JCPML00004/34
Empire Conference, London, UK, 1944	JCPML00376/77
John Curtin (Australian Prime Minister) and Peter Fraser (New Zealand Prime Minister), Cambridge, 1944	JCPML00004/33
The Governor-General and His Royal Highness (HRH) the Duke of Gloucester with John Curtin, 1945	JCPML00376/46
CURTIN, PETER. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1930-87	SER0181
Quantity: 5 items	
This series comprises personal papers of Peter Curtin, a nephew of John Curtin. The papers include photographs and press clippings relating to the Curtin family.	
Peter Curtin with John Curtin, nd	JCPML00225/1
John Curtin at the beach, nd	JCPML00225/2
DAY, DAVID. PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN CURTIN LANDMARKS, BRUNSWICK, VICTORIA, 1999	SER0201
Quantity: 16 photographs	
This series contains photographs of buildings in Brunswick, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, where John Curtin lived from 1899 to early 1917. The images include houses in which the Curtin family lived and community landmarks such as St Ambrose's Church.	
HODGES, ADELE. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1940-45	SER0180
Quantity: 6 items	
Please see series description on p. 93.	
John Curtin and Adele Mildenhall, 1940	JCPML00217/1
In this photograph Adele is pictured passing John Curtin a cup of tea.	
JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY. JOHN CURTIN'S HOUSE, 24 JARRAD STREET, COTTESLOE, WA, 1998	SER0436
Quantity: 37 items	
This series contains video footage and a series of 35 colour photographs of the interior, exterior and grounds of the Curtin family home in Cottesloe, WA, as it was in 1998.	
JOYCE, GLADYS. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1942-45	SER0179
Quantity: 8 items	
Please see series description on p. 104.	
John and Elsie Curtin on a train, c1942	JCPML00216/1
Tennis party at The Lodge, c1942	JCPML00216/4

MacKINNON, THELMA. SCRAPBOOKS, 1886–1961**SER0492**

Quantity: 1 file

This series comprises a scrapbook of items relating to Isabella Eliza Southwell (1886–1946), manageress of the Hotel Kurrajong, Canberra from 1926 to 1946. Items include photographs, letters, postcards, references and testimonials, newspaper cuttings and other memorabilia.

Isabella Southwell and John Curtin, Hotel Kurrajong, before 1940

[JCPML00721/1/114](#)

John Curtin, St Ninian's Church, 15 February 1942

[JCPML00721/1/10](#)

This photograph was taken at the reopening of St Ninian's Presbyterian Church, Canberra

McLAUGHLIN, FREDERICK. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1941–45**SER0085**

Quantity: 48 photographs

Frederick McLaughlin was the departmental Private Secretary to Prime Minister John Curtin from 1941 to 1945 and accompanied him overseas in 1944. This series comprises photographs mainly related to Prime Minister Curtin's trip to the US, Canada and the UK. Included in this series are photographs of Curtin at Lords Cricket Ground, meeting with Churchill and other Dominion prime ministers in London, visiting a bomber station in England and with the Mayor of New York, Fiorello La Guardia.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION – GREAT BRITAIN – ORIGINAL ARTWORKS – NINE COLOUR PORTRAITS, 1939–46**SER0539**

This series consists of a copy of an item held by the National Archives in the UK (as INF 3/78). It consists of a board with nine colour portraits, including one of Mr Curtin. The portraits are signed 'Tim'.

Mr Curtin, c1944

[JCPML00782/1](#)**MUNSIE, SELBY. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1925–30****SER0294**

Quantity: 2 photographs

This series contains group photographs that include John Curtin as a member of the Gold Bonus Delegation in Canberra in 1930 and as a delegate to the ALP (WA Branch) Triennial Congress in 1925.

RAFTY, TONY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1942**SER0385**

Quantity: 1 photograph

This series contains a photograph of John Curtin speaking at a Journalists' Club luncheon in November 1942.

SHEA, FRANCES. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1942**SER0134**

Quantity: 1 photograph

This series contains a photograph of John and Elsie Curtin at the wedding of Frances Shea's brother, Mr Sydney Gray.

WATERHOUSE, LEONIE. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1943**SER0431**

Quantity: 1 photograph

This series contains a photograph of John Curtin with his cousin, also John Curtin, taken at Adelaide Railway Station.

WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWS LTD. WORLD WAR II PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, 1942–45**SER0145**

Quantity: 6 photographs

This series contains photographs from the paper's World War II collection that relate to John Curtin. The images include photographs of Curtin speaking at the Capitol Theatre in Perth to launch the Austerity Loan in 1942 and at the Perth Town Hall to promote the Second Victory Loan in 1944.

WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWS LTD. PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN CURTIN'S FUNERAL, 1945**SER0265**

Quantity: 73 photographs

This series comprises photographs from the *West Australian* newspaper that document the arrival of John Curtin's coffin at Perth Airport and its placement on a gun carriage, servicemen escorting the carriage, the arrival of Mrs Elsie Curtin and other dignitaries at the airport, the funeral procession through Perth and Cottesloe to Karrakatta Cemetery, the funeral service and the headstone over Curtin's grave.

WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWS LTD. PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, c1903–45**SER0299**

Quantity: 22 photographs

This series contains photographs that relate to John Curtin. These include a staff photograph taken at the Titan Manufacturing Company; Curtin with various people, including Frank Anstey, Eleanor Roosevelt, Ben Chifley and HRH the Duke of Gloucester; and Curtin during his 1944 overseas trip.

John Curtin with Frank Anstey in the Depression years, nd

JCPML00409/4

John Curtin at [the] 100th Anniversary [of the] City of Sydney, 1942

JCPML00442/1

John Curtin addressing pupils at Kent Street State School, Victoria Park, October 1944

JCPML00409/16

Personal possessions and library

CURTIN FAMILY. JOHN CURTIN FAMILY LIBRARY, NINETEENTH CENTURY TO 1969

SER0001

Quantity: 604 volumes

The library of the John Curtin family is a composite collection that not only contains books that belonged to John and Elsie Curtin and their children, but also those that belonged to Abraham Needham and his family. The books were kept together and where there are no inscriptions, it is not always possible to determine individual ownership. A small number of the books listed remain in private hands.

CURTIN, JOHN. HANSARDS – PERSONAL SET, 1927–44

SER0002

Quantity: 53 volumes

This series contains Curtin's personal set of Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates. It contains volume nos 116 to 132 (1927–31) and volume nos 145 to 180 (1934–44).

CURTIN, JOHN. PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, 1924–45

SER0156

Quantity: 14 objects

This series contains some of John Curtin's personal possessions, including items presented to him in the course of his career and official life as well as more personal items such as his briefcase and lapel badges.



Prime Minister John Curtin (second from right) and New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser after being conferred as Honorary Doctors of Laws, Cambridge University, May 1944. NAA: M1218, 6

- Gold pocket-watch presented to John Curtin by 'Labour Friends' (engraved), 1924** [JCPML00287/4](#)
- Prime Minister John Curtin's briefcase, c1930-45** [JCPML00288/1](#)
- Lapel badge - 'Sth Fremantle FC No. 101', 1934** [JCPML00287/9](#)
This badge is Curtin's membership badge for the South Fremantle Football Club.
- Silver box and illuminated address conferring the Freedom of the City of London, 10 May 1944** [JCPML00287/2](#)

Oral history interviews

JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED FOR J S BATTYE LIBRARY AND JCPML, 1994-95

[SER0014](#)

Quantity: 2 oral histories

This series includes oral history interviews with John Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod, and with Frances Shea, a family friend and colleague of John Curtin at the *Westralian Worker*.

Interview of Elsie Macleod, 10 May 1994 to 20 February 1995

[JCPML00012/1](#)

In this interview, John Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod, shares her memories of a happy and close family upbringing, providing many insights into life in the Curtin household and the personality and character of both her parents.

Interview of Frances Shea, 12 June 1995

[JCPML00013/1](#)

Frances Shea was a family friend and colleague of John Curtin from his time with the Labour Movement in Western Australia. Mrs Shea worked at the *Westralian Worker* from 1926 to 1931 and she recalls Curtin as the Editor of the paper. Her oral history covers many events and impressions, including an account of playing the piano before Curtin spoke in the 1928 Fremantle election campaign and her opinion of him as prime minister.

JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED FOR JCPML, 1995-

[SER0093](#)

Quantity: 53 oral histories

This series includes oral history interviews of family, friends, acquaintances and colleagues of John Curtin. Please note that the following items are listed alphabetically by name of interviewee.

Brocklebank, Mary. Interview, 1995

[JCPML00014/1](#)

In this interview, Mary Brocklebank talks about her work in the War Cabinet Secretariat during World War II in both Canberra and Melbourne. She recounts several amusing incidents to do with her work and discusses her favourable impressions of John Curtin.

Buckley, John. Interview, 1995[JCPML00122/1](#)

John Buckley first met John Curtin at the Victoria Hotel in Melbourne, late in 1938 and the then Opposition Leader talked with him about the looming war. The two men met again on several occasions when Curtin was in the UK in 1944. Mr Buckley recalls his impressions of Curtin as a person, a public speaker and as wartime leader.

Burton, Douglas. Interview by Bill Bunbury, 1999[JCPML00492/3](#)

Douglas Burton was a photographer with the *West Australian* newspaper during the 1930s until the beginning of World War II. He recalls that as a cadet photographer he met John Curtin at the train station returning from Canberra to Perth (c1936). Mr Burton discusses Elsie Curtin as a supportive wife and public opinion about Curtin's decision to look to the US for support and about Curtin's wartime austerity measures.

Cleaver, Horace. Interview, 30 June 1997[JCPML00207/1](#)

Horace Cleaver ran a hire car business in the Canberra area and often drove for prime ministers. On many occasions he was hired by John Curtin to take Curtin and members of his staff on weekend pleasure trips and picnics.

Coffey, Eunice. Interview, 2 July 1997[JCPML00208/1](#)

Eunice Coffey was involved with the MRA. John Curtin was instrumental in arranging for Mrs Coffey and her husband to go to the USA during the war to work for a year with Mr Frank Buchman, the founder of the MRA. Mrs Coffey was also one of the cast of *You Can Defend Australia*, the revue performed at Parliament House, and she recounts her recollections of the revue and John Curtin's support for it.

Coulter, James. Interview, 1995[JCPML00123/1](#)

As a young Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) officer, James Coulter met John Curtin in London in 1944. He recalls their discussion about the effectiveness of the Austerity Campaign in Australia and his impressions of Curtin as a man who had gained a depth of knowledge and intuition through self-education and who was a sincere and passionate public speaker. Mr Coulter also comments on Curtin as a wartime prime minister.

Court, Sir Charles. Interview, 22 November 1997[JCPML00251/1](#)

Sir Charles Court, Premier of Western Australia from 1974 to 1982, discusses the establishment of, and fund-raising for, the John Curtin Centre as a patron and member of the Executive Board and his involvement with Curtin University of Technology. He recalls John Curtin as a man and as a wartime prime minister, and discusses the present and future role of the John Curtin Centre in foreign relations, particularly with the US.

Craig, Hazel. Interview, 1 July 1997[JCPML00209/1](#)

Hazel Craig recalls her time as a stenographer with the Prime Minister's Department from 1934, when she worked for various parliamentarians including prime ministers Joseph Lyons, Robert Menzies, John Curtin and Ben Chifley.

Miss Craig describes aspects of the running of the Prime Minister's Office and her impressions of various prime ministers.

She describes travelling with Prime Minister Curtin by train and in a Lancaster Bomber across the continent to Perth in 1943. Miss Craig also recounts her impressions of Curtin's relationships with his Press Secretary Don Rodgers, Treasurer Ben Chifley, General Douglas MacArthur, members of the press and others.

Curtin, John Francis. Interview, March-April 2004

[JCPML00855/1](#)

John Francis Curtin, son of wartime Prime Minister John Curtin, speaks about the Curtin family home at 24 Jarrad Street, Cottesloe, WA. John Francis Curtin lived in the house from the age of three until he left to join the RAAF in 1941 at the age of twenty. His parents, Elsie and John Curtin, built the house and moved there from Napier Street, also in Cottesloe, in 1923.

The house remained the family home throughout the years John Curtin senior was in Parliament and consequently spent considerable periods of time in Canberra. Additions to the house are discussed as are the decor, furniture and varied use of each room. The garden and outhouses are described, as are family activities in the house and garden area. John Francis Curtin has given insights into life in Cottesloe during the pre-war period and into family life in the Curtin household. He also comments on the personality and character of his Needham grandparents, and more particularly on his parents and his sister.



Curtin family home, Jarrad Street, Cottesloe, 1943. JCPM:00376/36

- Davidson, Frank. Interview, 1996** [JCPML00127/1](#)
Journalist, editor and Officer-in-Charge of the wartime Department of Information in WA, Frank Davidson recalls John Curtin from the 1920s as a Labor man and editor and then as wartime prime minister.
- Ewing, Peter. Interview by Bill Bunbury, 1999** [JCPML00492/2](#)
Peter Ewing was a journalist with the *West Australian* newspaper who met John Curtin in the late 1930s when Curtin attended AJA functions in Perth. Mr Ewing comments on Curtin as a person, a journalist and as a prime minister.
- Hanlon, Owen. Interview, 1995** [JCPML00120/1](#)
Owen Hanlon joined the ALP when he was 20 years old and for over 40 years he was almost continually an office-holder of the party in WA. He met John Curtin in the 1930s and attended numerous meetings, functions and conferences at which Curtin was present. Mr Hanlon recalls John Curtin as an impressive public speaker and gives his impressions of him as a party leader and prime minister.
- Heenan, Joan. Interview, 1995** [JCPML00015/1](#)
Joan Heenan recalls her memories of John Curtin and his family at their home in Cottesloe, WA and his visits to Kalgoorlie before and during World War II. She comments on the difficult decisions that John Curtin had to make as Prime Minister during the war and the effect that it had on his health.
- Hewitt, Sir Cyrus Lenox. Interview, 16 January 1998** [JCPML00255/1](#)
From 1939 to 1946, Lenox Hewitt was Assistant Secretary to Professor Douglas Copland who held the position of Commonwealth Prices Commissioner and was the Special Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister.
This interview deals with Hewitt's role in the Commonwealth Public Service and his contact with Curtin. He discusses Curtin as a leader and passionate speaker and his vision for the future of postwar Australia. He compares Curtin with other Australian prime ministers and discusses Curtin's suggestion about establishing a Commonwealth Secretariat and the hostile press coverage of Curtin during the 1943 election. This interview has restricted access at the time of the printing of this guide (2004).
- Hodges, Adele. Interview, 2 July 1997** [JCPML00211/1](#)
Adele Hodges (nee Mildenhall) worked as John Curtin's secretary from 1936 to 1941. She recounts her impressions of Curtin as a person and as an employer, and describes the daily running of the office of the Leader of the Opposition. She recounts her first meeting with Curtin when she was being interviewed for the typist position and how Curtin came to regard her with 'friendly affection as a workmate and collaborator in matters of great moment to our country' (a quote from a letter Curtin wrote on the occasion of Adele's marriage in 1941).

Hughes, Morris John. Interview, 13 January 1998[JCPML00254/1](#)

John Hughes recounts his early family life and his involvement in the New South Wales ALP in the 1920s. He recalls how members of the Clerks Union in Canberra in the early 1930s considered that listening to Curtin speak in Parliament was 'the only thing that is worthwhile in Canberra.'

Mr Hughes relates meeting Prime Minister Curtin in the war years on train journeys when Hughes was travelling in his role as President of the NSW Labour Council between Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney and having unplanned talks on mainly personal matters. Mr Hughes speaks of his opposition to the idea of a national government and also recalls an occasion when he approached Curtin as Prime Minister for help in resolving a union matter. He recalls union and ALP politics and John Curtin as a person, as party leader and as a wartime prime minister.

Joyce, Gladys. Interview, 3 July 1997[JCPML00210/1](#)

Miss Joyce worked as John Curtin's personal secretary from 1941 until his death in 1945. She recalls the day-to-day running of the Prime Minister's Office, travelling with the Prime Minister by train and a memorable flight to Perth in a Lancaster Bomber, and Curtin as an employer and as prime minister.

Krantz, Harry. Interview, 28 October 1996[JCPML00186/1](#)

Harry Krantz recounts hearing Curtin speak in Adelaide in support of the Labor candidate in the 1941 by-election for the South Australian State seat of Boothby and of meeting Curtin on the tram journey home afterwards.

Mr Krantz recalls that troops in Darwin (c1942), after viewing a Department of Information film, were impressed by Curtin as a man who had no pretensions or airs. He also refers to seeing Curtin again at an all-unions conference held at Trades Hall Melbourne in 1943.

Lane, Beverley. Interview, 1998[JCPML00306/1](#)

Beverley Lane is the daughter of Elsie Macleod and granddaughter of John Curtin. The interview concerns the Curtin family home at 24 Jarrad Street, Cottesloe.

Leckie, Rena. Interview, 21 October 1998[JCPML00308/1](#)

Rena Leckie worked as a cashier at the Boans cafeteria in Perth and remembers John Curtin lunching there regularly while he was Leader of the Opposition. She recalls meeting with Curtin at Parliament House, Canberra in 1944 and being invited to The Lodge next day for lunch and having 'roast lamb and mint sauce - which was lovely - and apple pie and cream.'

Lewington, Len. Interview, 16 June 2000[JCPML00524/1](#)

South Fremantle identity, Len Lewington, recalls John Curtin as a visitor to his family home in the 1920s. He remembers that as a young lad he helped with election campaigns for the seat of Fremantle, and recalls enjoying an old-fashioned picnic at Rockingham for the workers to celebrate Curtin's electoral win in 1928 and other events.

Mackay, Malcolm. Interview, 1995[JCPML00126/1](#)

Dr Malcolm Mackay met John Curtin in 1943 when Mackay came to Canberra to take part in a musical revue organised by the MRA (*You Can Defend Australia*), which aimed to strengthen the morale of Australians in the face of the trials and tribulations of the war. Dr Mackay relates how Curtin invited Ivan Menzies and himself into his private office for a talk and shared some of his concerns on personal matters and on the war and home fronts.

MacKinnon, Thelma. Interview, 30 May to 4 June 2002[JCPML00739/1](#)

Thelma MacKinnon (nee Southwell) recalls her childhood and school days at Fern Hill near Canberra and remembers John Curtin as a friend to her family and, in particular, to her father, Fred, his brother Jack and sister Belle. Mrs MacKinnon recounts how she met Mr Curtin in 1940 when he was staying at the Kurrajong Hotel in Canberra, where her Aunt Isabella ('Belle') Southwell worked as manageress. She discusses her marriage to Owen MacKinnon in 1942 (Curtin attended her wedding) and recalls the time she worked in the office at the Kurrajong from 1942–43. Mrs MacKinnon relates details of the life of her Aunt Belle, in particular her time as manageress of various Canberra hotels.

McLaughlin–Ross family. Interview, 26 October 1996[JCPML00185/1](#)

Members of the family of Frederick McLaughlin, who was John Curtin's Principal Private Secretary, recall their memories and impressions of John Curtin and recount information about Curtin related to them by Mr McLaughlin. Interviewees are Mr McLaughlin's wife, Hilda, his daughters, Hilda 'Maurine' Fraser and Barbara Ross, and his son-in-law Charles 'Bill' Ross.

McNamara, John. Interview, 1995[JCPML00125/1](#)

John McNamara recalls Curtin from the 1920s as a good friend of his father, Dinny McNamara, a long-time Federal Secretary for the ALP, for whom Curtin had been best man. Mr McNamara recalls chatting to Curtin after the Prime Minister had picked up the phone at the Victoria Coffee Palace in Melbourne when he called to contact his father. He relates how Curtin sent a letter of congratulations and cheque on the occasion of his marriage in late 1944, at a time when Curtin was ill in Mercy Hospital in East Melbourne and his general impressions of Curtin as a person and as prime minister.

Mann, Frederick. Interview, 29 November 1997[JCPML00250/1](#)

Frederick Mann knew John Curtin through his father, a staunch Labor supporter and Curtin's campaign manager for the 1934 election. Curtin was a frequent visitor to the Mann family home and Mr Mann recalls helping with election campaigns as a young lad and attending many of Curtin's campaign meetings. He recalls two of Curtin's favourite terms – 'fiduciary issue' and 'troglodytes'. Mr Mann also recounts how in 1927 he played cricket for

Cottesloe Beach against 'Jack' Curtin who was playing for Cottesloe Cricket Club.

Mayor, Chris. Interview, 1995

[JCPML00124/1](#)

Chris Mayor's mother Beryl Bryant was involved in the production of the MRA musical revue *You Can Defend Australia*, which was performed in 1944 with the aim of helping Australians find greater moral strength, courage and backbone. Mr Mayor recalls seeing John Curtin watch the revue in Melbourne and Curtin's support for the revue being performed before parliamentarians in Canberra.

Paul, George. Interview, 1995

[JCPML00121/1](#)

George Paul describes meeting John Curtin in the early 1930s. He talks about Curtin's patriotism, his wartime leadership, conscription and the US alliance. He suggests that Curtin was an early republican and describes the day of John Curtin's funeral.

Prickett, Arthur. Interview, 1998

[JCPML00291/1](#)

Arthur Prickett commenced work with the *Westralian Worker* in 1928 as an apprentice compositor, under John Curtin's sponsorship. Mr Prickett's sister, Florence, also worked for the newspaper and John Curtin attended Mr Prickett's wedding in 1937. Mr Prickett remembers working at the *Westralian Worker* and John Curtin as a person.

Richards, Griff. Interview by Bill Bunbury, 1999

[JCPML00492/1](#)

Griff Richards worked as a journalist with the *West Australian* newspaper from 1926. He met John Curtin through his involvement with the Australian Journalists' Association and recalls Curtin's character, his battle with alcohol, his stand on conscription during the two world wars and his role as prime minister.

Salisbury, Alan and Jean. Interview, 6 July 1997

[JCPML00206/1](#)

Alan and Jean Salisbury met John Curtin during their work with the Department of Defence during World War II. The Salisburys were on the staff of Sir Frederick Shedden and were involved in work for both the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council. They recount details of the day-to-day workings of the Cabinet and the War Council, their memories of Shedden and their impressions of Curtin as a person and as prime minister.

Spence, Anne. Interview, 24 August 1997

[JCPML00228/1](#)

Anne Spence knew Curtin through her father, George Edinger, who was a member of the ALP and assisted Curtin in his election campaign in Fremantle. She recalls attending football matches on Saturday afternoons with her father and John Curtin, who was a great supporter of South Fremantle Football Club. Mrs Spence also recounts meeting Curtin on the Trans-Australia train at Cook on the Nullabor c1942.

Wise, Gordon. Interview, 1 March 1999

[JCPML00329/1](#)

Gordon Wise met John Curtin through his father, Frank Wise, a WA Labor parliamentarian and premier (1945–51) and friend and colleague of Curtin. As an RAAF pilot in Britain during World War II, Gordon Wise met Curtin

again and talked with him at the Savoy Hotel. Mr Wise also recalls Curtin's support of the MRA revue *You Can Defend Australia*, which was performed at Parliament House in Canberra, and speaks of his impressions of Curtin as a prime minister and a person.

McLAUGHLIN, FREDERICK. INTERVIEWS, 1974

SER0111

Quantity: 1 oral history

This series contains an oral history interview of Frederick McLaughlin recorded on his eightieth birthday. Frederick McLaughlin was the departmental Private Secretary to Mr Curtin from 1941 to 1945 and accompanied the Prime Minister overseas in 1944.

Interview with Frederick McLaughlin on his eightieth birthday, 1974

JCPML00163/1

This item includes a discussion of Mr McLaughlin's experiences as Private Secretary to a succession of Defence ministers and as departmental Private Secretary to several prime ministers, including John Curtin.

4

Records in Other Collections

Records relating to John Curtin are also held in the National Library of Australia (NLA), ScreenSound Australia, the Australian War Memorial (AWM), various state libraries and other Australian institutions, and in archives and libraries in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). Website and other addresses for these institutions can be found in Appendix 5 of this guide.

Records held in the NLA, AWM and ScreenSound Australia are listed first followed by other national collections, collections held elsewhere in Australia by state, and then by records held in overseas institutions.

Australian Capital Territory

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

The NLA holds manuscripts, films, oral history recordings and pictures relating to John Curtin. The manuscripts include small collections of John Curtin's papers received from various sources. In addition, a number of other manuscript collections contain letters or other materials relating to Curtin. The oral history recordings include a speech by Curtin and interviews that relate to him.

Some material related to John Curtin in the manuscript collections listed below is also available through the [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library's](#) Electronic Research Archive (JCPML ERA) and can be found online (dtl.lis.curtin.edu.au). Digitised transcripts of many of the oral history interviews that include references to John Curtin are also available through JCPML ERA.

Manuscripts

In this section Curtin's records are listed first, followed by other collections arranged alphabetically. Many of the following collections have descriptive lists of their contents, which can be viewed online at www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids plus the manuscript number (eg www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/8083.html).



John Curtin at a garden party for the Canberra Hospital Auxilliary, 29 November 1941. JCPML00376/133

CURTIN, JOHN – LETTERS, 1907–10**MS 889**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

This collection contains 15 letters to Jessie Gunn from John ('Jack') Curtin. Curtin was very close to the Gunn family who were associated with the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP) and he maintained connections with the family throughout his life. Curtin and Nancy Gunn were believed to have been sweethearts and after Nancy's death John Curtin corresponded with her sister Jessie for some years.

CURTIN, JOHN – ADDRESS TO CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, 1944**MS 1258**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

In May 1944 John Curtin received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Cambridge University, UK. This collection consists of a copy of his oration, which was delivered in Latin. A translation of the oration is also included.

CURTIN, JOHN – PAPERS, 1942**MS 5213**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

Items in this collection consist of minutes from meetings of the Melbourne City Council and the Sydney City Council relating to the 100th anniversary celebrations of both cities. Other items include letters and clippings concerning John Curtin and Elsie Curtin.

CURTIN, JOHN – DOCUMENT, 1938**MS 1257**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

This document consists of a speech broadcast by John Curtin on Australia's defence. It is dated 21 October 1938.

AVIATION RECORDS, 1928–53**MS 220**

Quantity: 9 folders

This collection consists of items relating to the aviation industry. It contains letters from Prime Minister Robert Menzies to Richard Gardiner Casey in Washington, sent by the first regular airmail between Australia, New Zealand and the USA; and a letter from the directors and staff of A V Roe and Company to John Curtin. A Lancaster Bomber carried Curtin's letter to Australia on 21 May 1943.

AUSTRALIA. PARLIAMENT – PAPERS, 1943–44**MS 6923**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

This collection consists of items about the 1943 visit of Eleanor Roosevelt to Australia and includes documents, photographs and printed speeches. Two photographs were taken at a luncheon held at Parliament House on 4 September 1943, at which Mrs Roosevelt was presented with a photostat copy of Captain Cook's journal of the

voyage of His Majesty's Bark (HMB) *Endeavour*. The collection also contains a bound copy of speeches made at the luncheon by John Curtin, William ('Billy') Morris Hughes and Mrs Roosevelt, a press release and a letter of appreciation from President Roosevelt. In addition, it holds two letters signed by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Curtin respectively.

BALE, WILLIAM HENRY – PAPERS, 1915–73**MS 4842**

Quantity: 2.5 cm

Henry Bale was Private Secretary to James Scullin during his prime ministership (1929–32). This collection includes photographs, press cuttings and an autograph album containing signatures of Scullin, John Curtin and others.

BOOTE, HENRY ERNEST – PAPERS, 1894–1949**MS 2070**

Quantity: 0.34 metres

Henry Boote was a journalist and editor of publications such as the *Queensland Worker* and the *Australian Worker* (1911–49). Boote's papers include articles, illustrations and correspondence (c1916–49). Correspondence is mainly concerned with the *Australian Worker* but also includes four letters from John Curtin.

BRADY, EDWIN JOHN – PAPERS, 1890–1952**MS 206**

Quantity: 9 metres

Edwin Brady was a journalist, author and editor. The papers in this collection include literary manuscripts, notes, press cuttings, business documents and correspondence. The correspondence includes seventeen letters to, and two letters from, John Curtin.

'BRIEF WINTER'S END' – MANUSCRIPT, 1945**MS 625**

Quantity: 3 pages

This manuscript is of a typescript article, 'Brief Winter's End', that appeared in the *Canberra Times* the day after Curtin's death (6 July 1945).

BROOKES, HERBERT AND IVY – PAPERS, 1869–1970**MS 1924**

Quantity: 25.6 metres

Herbert Brookes was a businessman and political activist and his wife, Ivy, was Alfred Deakin's daughter. The papers in this collection include notes, diaries, minute books, photographs and cuttings, which cover every phase of the careers of Herbert and Ivy Brookes. Correspondents include political figures such as Alfred Deakin, William Morris Hughes, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Joseph Aloysius Lyons and Robert Gordon Menzies. The collection includes four letters to, and one letter from, John Curtin, dating from around 1942.

BUCHANAN, ALFRED – ‘THE PRIME MINISTERS OF AUSTRALIA’, 1940**MS 3034**

Quantity: 0.06 metres

Alfred Buchanan’s ‘The Prime Ministers of Australia’ is an unpublished manuscript comprising biographies of all Australian prime ministers from Edmund Barton to Robert Menzies, including John Curtin.

CALWELL, ARTHUR AUGUSTUS – PAPERS, 1905–73**MS 4738**

Quantity: 48 metres

Arthur Calwell was a federal parliamentarian and leader of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) from 1960 to 1967. The papers in this collection cover Calwell’s entire career, including his early involvement in the Victorian Branch of the ALP, the Australian Public Service Association and the Melbourne City Council. The collection includes correspondence, reports, personal documents, minutes, press cuttings, family documents, photographs, subject files, biographical files, invitations, speeches and publications, with extensive papers relating to the Curtin and Chifley ministries, particularly the information and immigration portfolios.

CLAREY, PERCY JAMES – PAPERS, 1923–59**MS 2186**

Quantity: 1.22 metres

Percy James Clarey was the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) from 1943 to 1949 and the Labor Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Bendigo from 1949 to 1960. As well as general correspondence, the papers in this collection consist of subject files, most of which deal with federal politics and trade unionism, including periods when James Scullin, Joseph Benedict (‘Ben’) Chifley and John Curtin were prime ministers.

CLARK, JOSEPH JAMES – PAPERS, 1930–98**MS 2708**

Quantity: 1.54 metres

Most of the material in this collection dates from 1930 to 1969. Joseph Clark was Deputy Chairman of the Australian Meat Industry Commission (1942–43), a member of the Federal Meat Advisory Committee (1943–46) and the Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (1946–49). The majority of the papers in this collection comprise correspondence, circulars, speeches and clippings concerning elections and the ALP. Series 2 of the collection focuses on the ALP from 1931 to 1968 and includes a folder on John Curtin.

COOMBS, HERBERT COLE – PAPERS, 1918–96**MS 802**

Quantity: 15.25 metres

Herbert Cole ('Nugget') Coombs was an economist, public servant and human rights worker. He was Chairman of the Australian Council for Aboriginal Affairs (1968–76), Consultant to the Prime Minister (1972–75) and Governor of the Commonwealth Bank and the Reserve Bank of Australia (1968).

His papers include correspondence, personal documents, newspaper clippings, reports, photographs, files of biographical material, conference papers, research material, and newspaper and journal articles relating mainly to Coombs' involvement with the Indigenous Australian community. Among the material is an article by Coombs entitled, 'John Curtin – A consensus prime minister', which was given as part of the Fourteenth Annual John Curtin Memorial Lecture at the Australian National University (1984). Please note that this collection is partly closed.

CONELAN, WILLIAM – CORRESPONDENCE AND SCRAPBOOK, 1940–53**MS 2029**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

William Patrick Conelan held the Brisbane federal parliamentary seat of Griffith (1939–49) and was Government Whip in the Curtin Government. This collection includes a scrapbook with press cuttings, letters and invitations dating from 1940 to 1953.

COPLAND, SIR DOUGLAS BERRY – PAPERS, 1920–70**MS 3800**

Quantity: 16 metres

Sir Douglas Berry Copland was the Economic Consultant to Prime Minister Curtin, the first Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU) and Australian Minister to China. This collection includes photographs, press cuttings, diaries, research notes, articles, lectures, correspondence and important material on the economic and political situation in Australia between 1920 and 1965.

COX, HAROLD – PAPERS, 1944–64**MS 4554**

Quantity: 0.05 metres

Harold Cox was the Canberra representative of the *Melbourne Sun* (1940–44) and the *Melbourne Herald* (1944–69). Cox's reports were designed to provide descriptions of the Canberra parliamentary scene, including information about the Curtin, Chifley and Menzies governments, World War II and the Cold War.

CRISP, LESLIE FINLAY – PAPERS, 1878–1984**MS 5243**

Quantity: 20.8 metres

‘Fin’ Crisp was an academic, Commonwealth public servant, author of numerous publications on Federation and Australian politics, and the biographer of Ben Chifley. This collection includes correspondence, diaries, articles, lectures, manuscripts, minutes, newspaper cuttings, reports, conference papers, speeches, photographs and ephemera.

The bulk of the collection consists of subject files on a wide range of topics, which were mainly compiled from newspaper cuttings and journal articles. There are files on all Australian prime ministers from Sir Edmund Barton to Malcolm Fraser. The papers include drafts of speeches written for John Curtin.

CROWLE, PIGEON – PAPERS, 1822–1962**MS 2785**

Quantity: 0.10 metres

Pigeon Crowle was an illustrator and his papers contain publications, photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets and a letter from John Curtin’s widow, Elsie (1954).

CUSACK, DYMPHNA – PAPERS, 1937–83**MS 4621**

Quantity: 4.72 metres

Dymphna Cusack was one of Australia’s most prolific and translated writers. Her papers include drafts of novels, plays, poems, broadcasts, travel books, an autobiography, short stories, press cuttings, diaries, photographs, invitations, programs, notes and posters. Correspondence in this collection covers the period from 1936 to 1974 and includes three letters from, and one letter to, John Curtin.

DALY, FRED – PAPERS, 1938–95**MS 9300**

Quantity: 20 metres

Fred Daly was a federal ALP politician (1943–75), author and public speaker. A large part of this collection consists of Daly’s original chronological files and includes press cuttings, press releases, reports, campaign material, *Hansard* extracts, correspondence, notes and diaries. Series 5 of the collection consists of files on personalities, including John Curtin (in Box 96). Series 10 contains drafts, correspondence, reviews and cuttings on Daly’s books, including *From Curtin to Kerr* and *From Curtin to Hawke*. Most of the collection is available for reference, although some parts of it are closed.

DEDMAN, JOHN JOHNSON – PAPERS, 1930–54**MS 987**

Quantity: 3.52 metres

John Dedman was the MHR for Corio (1940–49) and Minister for War Organisation and Industry (1941–45) and Minister for Post-war Reconstruction (1945–49) in the Curtin and Chifley governments respectively. The papers in this

collection include official and semi-official correspondence, minutes, reports, speeches, pamphlets and press cuttings relating to his various Cabinet portfolios in the Curtin and Chifley governments.

DOWNS, IAN – PAPERS, 1935–94**MS 8254**

Quantity: 3.5 metres

Ian Downs was a prominent figure in Papua New Guinea in the last years of the Australian trusteeship and was a politician, planter and historian. Downs wrote an official history of the Australian administration of PNG entitled *The Australian Trusteeship: Papua New Guinea, 1945–75*.⁶¹

The collection includes correspondence, diaries, reports, research notes and original source material used in the preparation of his publication. The papers also include copies of policy documents from the Curtin era. The papers are restricted until Downs' death.

DUMAS, SIR LLOYD – PAPERS, 1929–71**MS 4849**

Quantity: 2.24 metres

Lloyd Dumas was a journalist and the Managing Editor (1929–38) and Managing Director (1938–61) of the *Adelaide Advertiser*. Series 2 of this collection contains correspondence on political subjects (1929–48) from prominent public figures, academics and federal and state ministers and politicians, including John Curtin (1942–43).

EGGLESTON, SIR FREDERIC – PAPERS, 1911–54**MS 423**

Quantity: 5.04 metres

The papers in this collection are mainly concerned with the official career and writings of Sir Frederic Eggleston. They relate to his activities as a minister in the Allan Government in Victoria (1924–27), Australian Minister to China (1941–44) and an advisor to the Department of External Affairs (1946–49). The collection consists of memoranda, notes, diaries, press cuttings and correspondence. Correspondence includes one letter from, and eight letters to, John Curtin.

FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY (CAUCUS) – RECORDS, 1906–90**MS 6852**

Quantity: 5.46 metres

These ALP records include Caucus minutes from 1906 to 1989 and cover Curtin's term as an ALP federal parliamentarian.

FISHER, ANDREW – PAPERS, 1855–1983**MS 2919**

Quantity: 2.36 metres

Andrew Fisher was Prime Minister of Australia three times (1908–09, 1910–13 and 1914–15). The papers in this collection include correspondence about family and official matters, and document Fisher's political career, especially his terms

as Prime Minister and his work as the Australian High Commissioner in London. The correspondence includes one letter from John Curtin and one letter from Curtin's wife, Elsie.

FITZPATRICK, BRIAN. PAPERS, 1925–65**MS 4965**

Quantity: 9.86 metres

Brian Fitzpatrick was an author, historian, journalist and one of the founders of the Australian Council for Civil Liberties (1936). The papers consist of newspaper cuttings, records, minutes (1935–37) and correspondence relating to the Australian Council for Civil Liberties. Among the correspondence in this series are 11 letters to, and one letter from, Curtin. A card index to the correspondence is available.

FRICKE, GRAHAM LEWIS – PAPERS RELATING TO 'PROFILES OF POWER: THE PRIME MINISTERS OF AUSTRALIA', [c1980s]–90**MS 8248**

Quantity: 0.42 metres

This collection consists of the papers of Graham Fricke, judge, Queen's Counsel, lecturer in law and author. It contains notes, manuscript and typescript drafts and the final version of *Profiles of Power: The Prime Ministers of Australia*.⁶²

GOWRIE, ALEXANDER GORE ARKWRIGHT HORE-RUTHVEN, EARL OF – PAPERS, 1835–1987**MS 2852**

Quantity: 8.54 metres

Alexander Gowrie was Governor of South Australia (1928–34), Governor of New South Wales (1935–36) and Governor-General of Australia (1936–44). Lord Gowrie's papers comprise official and private correspondence, cables, genealogical and biographical papers, speeches, broadcasts, photographs, newspaper cuttings and memorabilia relating to his personal life as well as his military and public career.

Gowrie was a close friend of John Curtin, which is reflected in his extensive correspondence with both John and Elsie Curtin. Series 5 of this collection includes a record of an interview as well as correspondence with Curtin (c1942–44). Other material in the collection includes Lady Gowrie's correspondence with Elsie Curtin and correspondence with her daughter, Elsie Macleod.

GREAT BRITAIN – FOREIGN OFFICE – PRIVATE SECRETARIES' PAPERS, 1941–45**MFM PRO 6333–6338**

Quantity: 6 microfilm reels

This collection consists of microfilm of the papers of private secretaries of various British foreign secretaries. Among the papers is a letter from Winston Churchill to John Curtin thanking him for congratulations on victory in Africa (1943), a letter from Churchill to Curtin concerning Mrs Roosevelt's visit to Australia (1943) and a

letter from Curtin to Churchill regarding the appointment of Richard Gardiner Casey as Governor of Bengal (1943). The Australian Joint Copying Project microfilmed papers in this collection from originals held at the Public Record Office, London (at FO 800/410–418).

HALL, CECIL RILEY – PAPERS, 1909–72**MS 8686**

Quantity: 3.2 metres

Cecil Hall was the Director of the NSW Chamber of Manufactures (1936–60), Acting Secretary of the Associated Chamber of Manufactures (1939) and author of *The Manufacturers: Australian Manufacturing Achievements to 1960*.⁶³ Hall's papers include correspondence, papers relating to the NSW Chamber of Manufactures, minutes, reports, speeches, research notes, scrapbooks, photographs and biographical files. Folder 17 of Sub-series 3 contains biographical information on Curtin.

HARRISON, HECTOR, REVEREND – PAPERS, 1915–78**MS 6277**

Quantity: 5.18 metres

Reverend Hector Harrison was the Minister at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Forrest in the Australian Capital Territory from 1940 to 1978; Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales from 1950 to 1951; and Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia from 1962 to 1964. Papers in this collection record Harrison's career and include personal and business correspondence, circulars, journal articles, brochures, leaflets, newspaper cuttings, newsletters, notes, pamphlets, sermons and service sheets.

Harrison was a close friend of John and Elsie Curtin. Series 1, folder 6 contains correspondence between Harrison and Elsie Curtin (1945–60). It also includes biographical notes on Curtin, a note containing instructions from Curtin about his funeral service, newspaper cuttings and other miscellaneous memorabilia. Series 4 also contains newspaper cuttings (1920–76), including cuttings on Curtin's death. Harrison conducted the Memorial Service for Curtin held at Parliament House, Canberra on 6 July 1945 and the burial service held in WA on 8 July 1945.

HUGHES, COLIN – PAPERS, 1966**MS 5963**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

This collection consists of research papers compiled by Professor Colin Hughes. Hughes was an adviser and co-ordinator of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's television series, *Mr Prime Minister* (1966), and his papers include material on Curtin.

HUGHES, WILLIAM MORRIS – PAPERS, c1875–1979**MS 1538**

Quantity: 1.21 metres

William Morris Hughes' papers include correspondence, diaries and notebooks, newspaper cuttings, photographs, and family and political papers. The political papers comprise official and personal records dating from his time as Prime Minister (1915–23). The collection also includes extensive correspondence with Curtin, including a significant amount of correspondence while Curtin was Prime Minister. It includes 23 letters from, and 27 letters to, Curtin. Two letters from Elsie Curtin are also included in the collection. A card index to correspondence is available.

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD – CORRESPONDENCE, 1897–1919**MS 3516**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

The Industrial Workers of the World was a socialist industrial group that originated in Chicago in 1905 and aimed to unite all workers into one industrial union. The correspondence consists of reports from Australian unions and other labour organisations, and includes letters from John Curtin.

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS (NSW) – RECORDS, 1943–68**MS 6590**

Quantity: 3.2 metres

The Institute of Public Affairs was officially formed in New South Wales on 18 February 1943 to act as a vehicle for informed public opinion on economic problems and the political and social welfare of Australia. As well as containing records about the early development and interests of the institute, the collection includes subject files (mainly of newspaper cuttings) on the proposed nationalisation of banks, state and federal elections and communism in Australia. The collection also contains biographical files (including some correspondence) on John Curtin, Arthur Fadden, Robert Menzies and Ben Chifley.

ISAACS, SIR ISAAC – PAPERS, 1883–1969**MS 2755**

Quantity: 1.30 metres

Sir Isaac Isaacs was a Federation Convention delegate; federal Attorney-General (1905–06); Governor-General (1931–36); a Justice, and later Chief Justice, of the High Court of Australia (1906–30 and 1930–31 respectively). This collection includes family papers, photographs, notebooks and correspondence. Among the correspondence is one letter to John Curtin.

KELLY, JOHN HENRY – PAPERS, 1924–83**MS 8083**

Quantity: 9.24 metres (66 boxes)

John Kelly was an agricultural economist. As well as being active in promoting the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, Kelly was involved in the War Service Land

Settlement Scheme (1945–47) and worked at the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (1948–60). The papers in this collection cover all aspects of Kelly's career and include photographs, newspaper cuttings, articles, interviews and writings on his life. A copy of a letter dated 21 December 1944 from General Thomas Blamey to Prime Minister John Curtin as Minister of Defence is also included in the collection.

LATHAM, SIR JOHN – PAPERS, 1868–1964**MS 1009**

Quantity: 18.4 metres

Sir John Latham was Deputy Prime Minister (1931–34), Attorney-General (1925–29 and 1931–34), Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Industry (1932–34), and Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia (1935–52). The papers include notes, speeches, diaries, minute books, account books, press cuttings, photographs, pamphlets, official publications, invitations, menus and other material relating to his career. Correspondence in this collection includes four letters to, and eleven letters from, John Curtin.

MAHON, HUGH – PAPERS, 1880–1936**MS 937**

Quantity: 0.60 metres

Hugh Mahon was an Irish-born journalist and politician. This collection consists of correspondence and press cuttings relating to Mahon's political career and his interest in Catholic and Irish affairs. Correspondents include Alfred Deakin, Andrew Fisher and John and Elsie Curtin.

MELVILLE, SIR LESLIE GOLFREID – PAPERS, 1932–93**MS 8671**

Quantity: 0.42 metres

Sir Leslie Melville was Chairman of the Australian delegation at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, Bretton Woods (1944); Economic Advisor, Commonwealth Bank (1931–49); and Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University (1953–60).

This collection consists of papers relating to the Bretton Woods Conference and other economic matters as well as articles and addresses given by Melville. It contains letters and reports by Melville to Prime Minister Curtin relating to the Bretton Woods Conference.

MENZIES, SIR ROBERT GORDON – PAPERS, 1905–78**MS 4936**

Quantity: 80.92 metres

Robert (later Sir Robert) Menzies was the Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Kooyong (1934–66), Leader of the Opposition (1943–49) and Prime Minister of Australia (1939–41 and 1949–66).

This extensive collection of personal papers includes correspondence, press cuttings, speeches, diaries and research material. The collection includes quite an extensive

correspondence with John Curtin, including seven letters from Curtin to Menzies and three letters to Curtin from Menzies (dating from around 1940 to 1945). The collection also contains correspondence about World War II, as well as eight letters to, and four letters from, Curtin (dating from 1941 to 1944). Correspondence from 1974 consists of twelve letters about John Curtin as well as a letter from Elsie Curtin. A card index to the correspondence is available.

MURDOCH, SIR KEITH ARTHUR – PAPERS, 1915–52**MS 2823**

Quantity: 1.75 metres

Keith (later, Sir Keith) Murdoch was a journalist and newspaper executive. Murdoch began his journalistic career with the *Melbourne Age*, was a war correspondent with the Australian military forces during World War I, was appointed Trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria (1933) and was Chairman of Directors, Herald and Weekly Times from 1942. The papers in this collection relate to the life and career of Sir Keith Murdoch and include correspondence, speeches, press clippings and photographs. Correspondents include John Curtin.

O'MALLEY, KING – PAPERS, 1888–1955**MS 460**

Quantity: 3.69 metres

A member of the ALP, King O'Malley was the MHR for the Tasmanian seat of Darwin (1901–17) and Minister for Home Affairs in the Second Fisher Ministry (1910–13) and the First Hughes Ministry (1915–16). The papers in this collection include diaries, notes and drafts of speeches, photographs, newspaper cuttings and invitations. O'Malley corresponded with numerous prime ministers, including John Curtin. A card index to this collection is available.

OVENDEN, RICHARD – PAPERS, 1925–68**MS 3792**

Quantity: 0.08 metres and three folio volumes

Richard Ovenden was an artist and caricaturist. His papers contain newspaper cuttings (some of which include examples of his cartoons and political caricatures), photographs and exhibition catalogues. Also included in this collection are letters from John Curtin (1941).

PAGE, SIR EARLE – PAPERS, 1908–61**MS 1633**

Quantity: 42.67 metres

Dr (later Sir) Earle Page founded and led the Country Party, and became Prime Minister (briefly) upon Lyons' death. His papers include subject files of correspondence, cables, press cuttings, personal documents, reports and speeches. They cover topics such as primary industry, taxation and banking, foreign affairs, national insurance, industrial relations, social services, immigration, trade, new state movements, the formation of the Bruce–Page Government and the Country Party. The correspondence includes one

letter to John Curtin and two letters from Curtin. A card index to correspondence and a chronological and subject file list are available.

PALMER, VANCE AND NETTIE – PAPERS, 1889–1964**MS 1174**

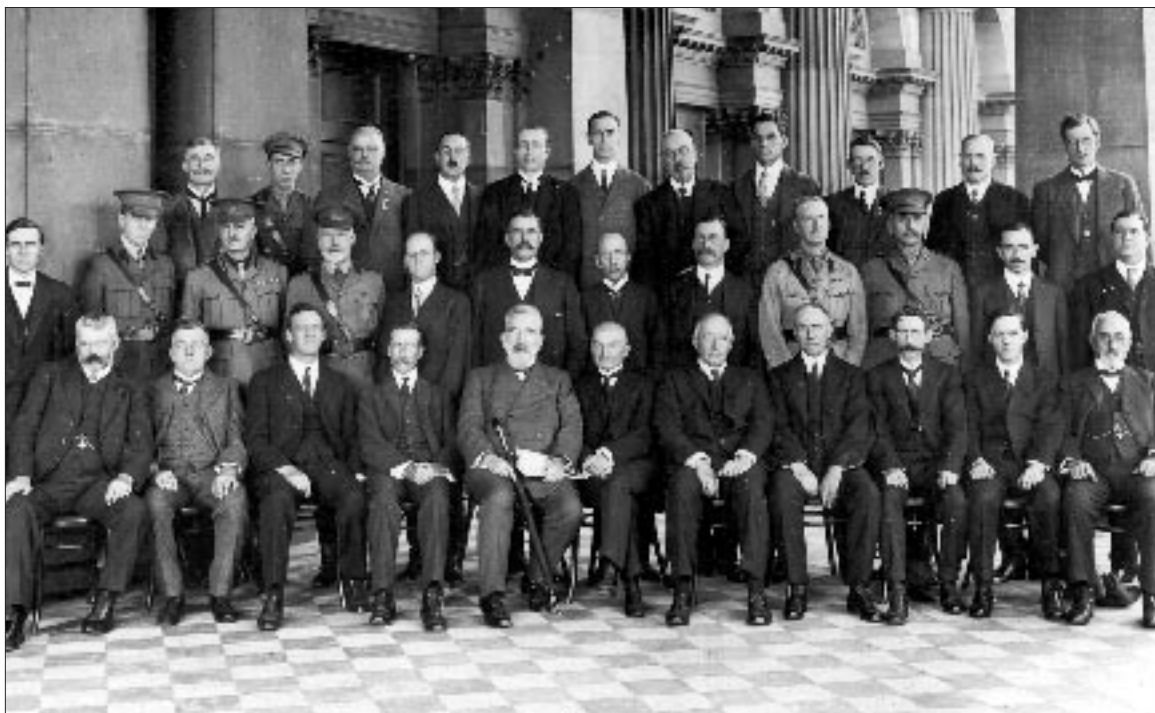
Quantity: 7.36 metres

Vance Palmer was a writer, editor and political commentator. His wife, Nettie, was also a writer, commentator and literary critic. Their papers chiefly consist of correspondence, but also include drafts, press cuttings, original manuscripts of other writers, photographs and material from various literary bodies such as the Australian Society of Authors and the Fellowship of Australian Authors. Correspondence in this collection includes three letters from, and two letters to, John Curtin.

PEARCE, SIR GEORGE FOSTER – PAPERS, 1909–52**MSs 213, 1827 and 1927**

Quantity: 1.5 metres

Sir George Pearce was a Western Australian senator from 1901–37. He was Minister of Defence (1932–34) and Minister for External Affairs (1934–37). MS 1827 includes correspondence, reports, memoranda and press cuttings relating to Australia's defence and politics (1929–37); correspondence about his political career in the late 1920s and 1930s; and personal papers. Series 3 of MS 1927 deals with the United Australia Party (UAP) and includes three letters from, and one letter to, John Curtin. MS 213 is partly restricted.



John Curtin (top row, last on right) at the Press Censorship Conference, Melbourne, April 1918.

Lloyd Ross Papers, MS 3939, series 15, folio box 67
(By permission of the National Library of Australia)

PERKINS, JOHN ARTHUR – PAPERS, 1891–1954**MS 936**

Quantity: 2.56 metres and microfilm (mfm G7685–7 and G24, 777–781)

John Perkins was the MHR for Eden-Monaro (1926–29 and 1931–43), Minister for Trade and Customs (1938–39) and Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security (1941–43). This collection includes diaries and political material consisting mainly of newspaper cuttings. Correspondence includes nine letters from John Curtin.

RISCHBIETH, BESSIE – PAPERS, 1900–67**MS 2004**

Quantity: 7.5 metres

Bessie Rischbieth was co-founder of the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia (1909) and co-founder and President of the Australian Federation of Women Voters (1921–42). This collection includes press cuttings, pamphlets, articles and correspondence. Correspondence includes 15 letters from, and 15 letters to, John Curtin.

RODGERS, DONALD K – PAPERS, 1941–49**MS 1536**

Quantity: 12 boxes

Don Rodgers was Press Secretary to John Curtin and Ben Chifley. The collection includes material relating to political figures of the 1930s and 1940s, most notably Curtin and Chifley. The papers consist of photographs, press cuttings and pamphlets, correspondence, press passes and menus. This collection is partly restricted.

ROSS, LLOYD MAXWELL – PAPERS, 1854–1986**MS 3939**

Quantity: 19.6 metres

Lloyd Ross was a teacher, trade unionist, journalist, historian and biographer of John Curtin. Ross was the State Secretary of the NSW Branch of the Australian Railways Union (1935–43 and 1952–59) and, on the recommendation of Prime Minister Chifley, was employed in the Department of Post-War Reconstruction as Director of Public Relations (1943–49).

As Curtin's biographer, Ross began collecting material on Curtin soon after Curtin's death in 1945. Series 11 consists of material (1907–85) relating to Ross' publication *John Curtin: A Biography*.⁶⁴ This series includes letters written by Curtin; telegrams received by, and sent to, Curtin (1941); correspondence with Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod; original letters written by Curtin; and photographs of Curtin depicting family and political life.

SCOTT, SIR ERNEST AND LADY EMILY – PAPERS, c1906–55**MS 703**

Quantity: 0.75 metres

Sir Ernest Scott was an historian and a writer, and his wife, Lady Emily, was a pianist, teacher and accompanist. This collection consists of letters, newspaper cuttings, handwritten drafts of lectures and articles, journals, photographs and books. Included in the collection is a letter of condolence from John Curtin, on behalf of the ALP, to Lady Scott on the death of Sir Ernest (1939).

SLESSOR, KENNETH – PAPERS, 1908–71**MS 3020**

Quantity: 3 metres

Kenneth Slessor was an author, journalist, poet and editor. His papers include literary manuscripts, notebooks, autobiographical notes, newspaper reviews by Slessor, reviews by others of his work, photographs and an extensive collection of correspondence, including two letters to John Curtin.

SMITH, FREDERICK T – PAPERS, 1942–45**MS 4675**

Quantity: 1 volume

Frederick Smith was a journalist and author. These papers consist of reports of confidential press conferences held by Prime Minister Curtin and cover the period 1942 to 1945. The National Library of Australia published these papers as *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's War*.⁶⁵

SOUTER, GAVIN – PAPERS, 1959–91**MS 8604**

Quantity: 9.94 metres

Gavin Souter was a journalist with the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1948–87); an historian and author of a number of books, including *New Guinea: The Last Unknown* (1963), *The Lion and the Kangaroo* (1976) and *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives, Commonwealth of Australia*.⁶⁶ Series 4 of this collection consists of correspondence, photographs and research material for 'Acts of Parliament' and includes a file on John Curtin.

SPENDER, SIR PERCY CLAUDE – PAPERS, 1937–78**MS 4875**

Quantity: 2.72 metres

Percy (later, Sir) Spender was MHR for Warringah, NSW (1937–51); Minister for External Affairs and External Territories (1949–51); Australian Ambassador to the US; (1951–58); and President, International Court of Justice, The Hague (1964–67). The papers in this collection document Spender's political, diplomatic and legal career, and include correspondence, speeches, press statements, cutting books, photographs of overseas trips and functions

attended, itineraries, invitations and printed material. The correspondence includes three letters from, and two letters to, John Curtin.

STEPHENS, DAVID – PAPERS, 1972**MS 4625**

Quantity: 1 folder

As part of the research for his Master of Arts thesis tentatively titled 'Federal Labor in Government and Opposition, 1945-1951', Stephens conducted interviews with John Dedman and Arthur Calwell. These interviews include references to John Curtin and Ben Chifley.

STREET, JESSIE – PAPERS, 1914-68**MS 2683**

Quantity: 4.18 metres

Jessie Street was a feminist and social activist. Street was the founder of the NSW Social Hygiene Association (1915) and co-founder (1928) and President of the United Associations of Women, which lobbied governments on equal pay and other women's issues. Her papers contain speeches, broadcasts, printed material, diaries, minutes of meetings, financial records, passports, photographs and correspondence, including four letters from John Curtin. A card index of correspondents is available.

THEODORE, EDWARD GRANVILLE – PAPERS, 1906-72**MS 7222**

Quantity: 0.28 metres, 19 folio items

Edward Theodore was the Premier and Treasurer of Queensland from 1919 to 1925. After entering Federal Parliament, he became Treasurer in the Scullin Government (1929-30 and 1931). Papers in this collection mostly relate to his business activities during the 1930s and 1940s. They include 19 volumes of newspaper cuttings, political pamphlets and correspondence. Correspondence in the collection includes four letters to Theodore from Curtin (1931-44).

TONKIN, ERIC W – PAPERS, 1922-58**MS 3668**

Quantity: 4 metres

Eric Tonkin was Private Secretary to prime ministers Curtin and Chifley from 1941 until 1949, when he was appointed a Commonwealth Conciliation Commissioner. Subject files consisting of newspaper cuttings (1939-45) make up the bulk of these papers. The files cover topics such as primary and secondary industries, social services, defence, the Labor Party's attitude to conscription, Commonwealth powers of deportation (1925) and the regulation of banking. Other material in the collection includes speeches, broadcasts, ALP newspapers and bulletins and ALP federal conference agenda (for 1940, 1943 and 1945). The collection includes some letters from Curtin, as well as the text of speeches given by Curtin (1939-41).

WARD, EDWARD JOHN – PAPERS, 1941–63**MS 2396**

Quantity: 7.62 metres

Edward ('Eddie') Ward was a member of the ALP and the MHR for East Sydney (1931–63). He was Minister for Labour and National Service (1941–43), and Minister for Transport and for External Territories (1943–49). This collection contains miscellaneous and confidential papers on a variety of subjects, including the ALP Hobart Conference in 1955 and Ward's bids for party leadership in 1959 and deputy leadership in 1960. The collection includes 19 letters to, and 22 letters from, John Curtin.

WHITINGTON, DON – PAPERS, 1957–76**MS 3810**

Quantity: 0.60 metres

Don Whittington was a journalist and the founder and Managing Director of Australian Press Services. Whittington's papers include book reviews, press cuttings, genealogical research material and correspondence. This collection also includes an extract from the proofs of *John Curtin – An Atypical Labor Leader* by Kim Beazley, which was presented as one of the John Curtin memorial lectures.⁶⁷

Oral histories and sound recordings

Material in this section is arranged alphabetically by the surname of the interviewee.

ALEXANDER, FREDERICK – INTERVIEW BY J D B MILLER, 1976**ORAL TRC 477**

Frederick Alexander discusses his life as an academic and historian and refers to Curtin.

ALEXANDER, JOSEPH ALOYSIUS – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971**ORAL TRC 121/10**

Joseph Alexander was a political journalist from 1929 to 1944. In this interview, Alexander discusses John Curtin, Robert Menzies, William Morris Hughes, Lloyd Dumas and other politicians.

ARMSTRONG, JOHN IGNATIUS – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1975**ORAL TRC 121/68**

John Armstrong, a diplomat and federal ALP senator for NSW (1938–51 and 1951–62), discusses his entrance into federal politics and comments on former prime ministers such as Earle Page, Robert Menzies, Arthur Fadden, John Curtin and Ben Chifley.

BRAY, SIR THEODORE CHARLES – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971**ORAL TRC 121/9**

Sir Theodore Bray was a journalist and editor of the *Brisbane Courier Mail*. In this recording he discusses topics such as wartime journalism, the foundation of the United Nations and the Korean War. References to politicians such as Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, Frank Forde and John Curtin are also made in the interview.

BRIDGMAN, WILLIAM JOHN – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1976**ORAL TRC 121/86**

John Bridgman joined the Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff in 1935 and became its Principal Parliamentary Reporter (1968–76). His interview with Mel Pratt centres on the Canberra parliamentary scene and includes comments on Arthur Calwell, Ben Chifley and John Curtin.

CHAMBERLAIN, FRANK – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1972–73**ORAL TRC 121/39**

Frank Chamberlain was one of Australia's foremost political journalists. In this interview, he comments on events such as the Munich Agreement, the Petrov Affair and Ben Chifley's death; and on personalities such as Robert Menzies, Arthur Calwell and John Curtin.

CLARK, JOSEPH JAMES – INTERVIEW BY GORDON MUNRO BRYANT, 1985**ORAL TRC 4900/51**

Joseph Clark held the federal seat of Darling in NSW for the ALP from September 1934 to September 1969. In this interview Clark discusses John Curtin and the success of the Curtin Government.

CLELAND, DAME RACHEL – INTERVIEW BY NANCY LUTTON, 1983–85**ORAL TRC 1871**

In the course of this interview, Dame Rachel, wife of the former Administrator of Papua New Guinea Sir Donald Cleland, discusses an afternoon tea she had with John Curtin in 1944 and comments on her impressions of him. Written permission is required for research and public use.

COLES, SIR ARTHUR – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971**ORAL TRC 121/17**

Sir Arthur Coles, one of Australia's leading businessmen, discusses his early life and the beginning of the Coles stores. He also offers his views on former politicians such as Arthur Calwell, Robert Menzies, Kim Beazley, Ben Chifley and John Curtin and on the Curtin Government.

COMMINS, JOHN BEDE – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971**ORAL TRC 121/13**

John Commins was a member of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery and was head of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federal Parliamentary Bureau. In this interview, Commins discusses the parliamentary scene and political identities such as Ben Chifley, Arthur Calwell, Robert Menzies, John Curtin and Edward ('Gough') Whitlam.

COOMBS, H C (NUGGET) – INTERVIEW BY HEATHER RUSDEN, 1989–90**TRC 2392**

Dr Coombs was Director of Rationing and later Director-General of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction during World War II. He relates how Curtin recommended that he head the Australian delegation to the 1943 Washington Food and Agricultural Conference at the suggestion of Maynard Keynes.

CURTIN, JOHN – SPEECH TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE AFTER JAPAN DECLARED WAR, 1941**ORAL TRC 71-37**

This sound recording, which was featured on radio 3DB/3LK news, consists of John Curtin's speech to the Australian people after Japan's declaration of war in 1941. The availability of this recording is conditional upon access restrictions and archival condition.

DALY, FRED – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1976**ORAL TRC 121/96**

Fred Daly was the Labor MHR for the NSW seats of Martin (1943–49) and Grayndler (1949–75). In this interview Daly discusses his political career and former prime ministers such as Frank Forde and Ben Chifley. In this interview Daly also comments on John Curtin's role as Prime Minister and Curtin's relationship with Winston Churchill.

DEDMAN, JOHN JOHNSTON – INTERVIEW BY HAZEL DE BERG, 1967**ORAL DEB 322-326**

John Dedman was the Labor MHR for the Victorian seat of Corio (1940–49), and Minister for War Organisation and Industry (1941–45) and Post-War Reconstruction (1945–49) in the Curtin and Chifley governments respectively. Dedman discusses topics such as his attempts to enter Parliament, World War II and working for John Curtin.

DOUGLAS, IRVINE – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1972**ORAL TRC 121/36**

Irvine Douglas was a journalist and Private Secretary to Joseph Lyons (1936–38). In this interview Douglas comments on former prime ministers and parliamentarians, including Robert Menzies, Dr Earle Page, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, Ben Chifley and John Curtin.

FITZGERALD, TOM – INTERVIEW BY KEN INGLIS, 1988**ORAL TRC 2247/1–17**

Tom Fitzgerald was a journalist and economic adviser to both federal and state governments. In this interview, Fitzgerald discusses his research work as well as his impressions of John Curtin.

FORDE, FRANCIS MICHAEL – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971**ORAL TRC 121/8**

Francis (Frank) Forde was the Labor MHR for the Queensland seat of Capricornia from 1922 to 1946 and briefly Prime Minister in 1945. During the interview, Forde discusses his political career and refers to former prime ministers, including Alfred Deakin, Andrew Fisher, Arthur Fadden, Robert Menzies and John Curtin.

FRASER, ALLAN – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1975**ORAL TRC 121/66**

Allan Fraser was the Labor MHR for the NSW seat of Eden-Monaro from 1943 to 1966 and from 1969 to 1972. In this interview, Fraser comments on individual politicians such as Robert Menzies, Arthur Fadden, Harold Holt, John

Gorton and Ben Chifley. His discussion also includes an assessment of John Curtin's character, as well as discussing Curtin as Leader of the Opposition and as a wartime leader.

FRITH, JOHN – INTERVIEW BY SHIRLEY McKECHNIE, 1994

ORAL TRC 3056

In this interview John Frith discusses his career as a cartoonist for the *Bulletin* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, part of which included meeting and drawing politicians such as William Morris Hughes, Robert Menzies, Ben Chifley and John Curtin.

HARRISON, REVEREND HECTOR – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1973

ORAL TRC 121/46

Reverend Hector Harrison, former Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church in Australia (1962–64) and the Minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Canberra, was a confidant of John Curtin. In this interview he discusses such topics as Curtin's role as Prime Minister, his relationship with colleagues and friends and his belief in God, as well as his death and funeral.

HASLUCK, SIR PAUL – INTERVIEW ON TV CHANNEL 7, 6 JANUARY 1968

ORAL TRC 503/21

Sir Paul Hasluck was the Minister for Territories (1951–63), Minister for Defence (1963–64), Minister for External Affairs (1964–69) and Governor-General of Australia (1969–74) in successive Menzies governments. In this interview he discusses his early life, his career as a journalist and the influence of John Curtin.

HEYDON, SIR PETER RICHARD – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1970

ORAL TRC 121/2

Sir Peter Heydon discusses his diplomatic career and refers to politicians and former prime ministers such as Sir Robert Menzies, Dr Herbert Evatt, Sir Garfield Barwick, Ben Chifley and John Curtin.

LEMMON, NELSON – INTERVIEW BY RON HURST, 1987

ORAL TRC 4900/59

Nelson Lemmon held the federal seats of Forrest in WA and St George in NSW for the ALP from August 1943 to December 1949 and May 1954 to December 1955 respectively. He was Minister for Works and Housing from November 1946 to December 1949. In this recording Lemmon discusses his political career and various politicians, including John Curtin.

LYONS, DAME ENID – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1972

ORAL TRC 121/30

In this interview Dame Enid comments on Joseph Lyons' background and his career in state and federal politics. She also discusses the ALP, the UAP and the Country Party, her husband's relationships with politicians and her meetings with, and opinion of, John Curtin.

MAKIN, NORMAN – MONOLOGUE BY NORMAN MAKIN AND INTERVIEW BY SUZANNE WALKER, 1974**ORAL TRCs 271/1 and 271/2**

Norman Makin was a politician, federal minister and the first Australian Ambassador to the US. In this interview, Makin discusses his experiences as Minister for Munitions and for the Navy in the Curtin Government (1941–45), provides a brief synopsis of Curtin as Prime Minister and also mentions Curtin's handling of Cabinet meetings.

MCEWEN, SIR JOHN – INTERVIEW BY RAY ATCHISON, 1974**ORAL TRCS 311/1 and 311/2**

In this interview Sir John McEwen, former Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, offers his early impressions of Federal Parliament and former prime ministers such as Dr Earle Page, William Morris Hughes, James Scullin, Robert Menzies and John Curtin.

REID, ALAN DOUGLAS – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1972–73**ORAL TRC 121/40**

Alan Reid had 35 years' continuous service in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery and was Dean of the Corps of the National Political Reporters. In this interview Reid discusses former prime ministers such as Joseph Lyons, Robert Menzies, William Morris Hughes, John McEwen, Arthur Fadden, John Curtin, Frank Forde and Ben Chifley.

RENSHAW, JOHN BROPHY – INTERVIEW BY AMY McGRATH, 1979–80**ORAL TRC 772**

Jack Renshaw was a member of the ALP and NSW Premier from 1964 to 1965; he was later the NSW Agent-General to London. In this interview Renshaw speaks about his early life and education, his beginnings in politics, his parliamentary career, his position as Treasurer, his appointment as Agent-General to London and prime ministers John Curtin and Ben Chifley.

RODGERS, DONALD KILGOUR – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971**ORAL TRC 121/14**

Don Rodgers was Press Secretary to both Ben Chifley and John Curtin. In this interview he discusses Curtin in Opposition, Elsie Curtin, and Curtin's relationships with political figures such as Winston Churchill, Stanley Melbourne Bruce and Ben Chifley.

ROSS, LLOYD – INTERVIEW BY SUZANNE WALKER, 1973**ORAL TRC 236**

In this interview, historian, trade unionist, writer and biographer Lloyd Ross discusses his work with the Australian Railways Union, his position as Director of Public Relations in the Department of Post-War Reconstruction under Ben Chifley and his biographical writings on Curtin.

SCHERGER, SIR FREDERICK – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1973–75**ORAL TRC 121/52**

Sir Frederick Scherger had a distinguished career in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), in which he achieved the rank of Air Chief Marshal, and was Chairman of the Australian National Airlines Commission (1966–75). In this

interview he discusses RAAF operations during World War II and comments on John Curtin.

TONKIN, JOHN TREZISE – INTERVIEW BY J D B MILLER, 1976

ORAL TRC 474

John Tonkin was a member of the ALP and Premier of WA from 1971 to 1974. In this interview he discusses his election to the Parliament of Western Australia (1933), personalities in Parliament at the time of his election and his opinion of John Curtin, both as a colleague and as a person.

Portraits and photographs

The following images are arranged chronologically as far as possible. Many are available online through the National Library's Pictures Catalogue and on PictureAustralia (www.nla.gov.au/catalogue/pictures and www.pictureaustralia.org).

Portrait of John Curtin as a young man, nd	PIC/6062/1
Portrait of John Curtin by F R Peterson, nd	PIC/6592
Portrait of John Curtin, Fremantle, nd	PIC/6252
Portrait of John Curtin, nd	PIC/6447
Portrait of James Scullin, John Curtin and John Dedman, nd	PIC/6644
Portrait of John Curtin seated at a desk with H V Evatt and John Latham, nd	PIC/6448
Portrait of John Curtin with Ben Chifley, nd	PIC/6525
<i>The Curtin Touch</i> , drawing by L Norman, nd	PIC R47, loc 3741-A
<i>Who put Australia on the map?</i> , drawing by L Norman, nd	PIC R6207 LOC 3731
Portrait of John Curtin, MHR, by A Collingridge, 1938	PIC/6450
Portrait of John Curtin, c1941–45	PIC/7098/1-3
John Curtin and General Douglas MacArthur arriving at Government House, 17 March 1944	PIC/6449
General MacArthur in earnest conversation with Mr Curtin in the Prime Minister's room, Canberra, c1944?	PIC/7845
Portrait of W M Hughes with John Curtin and His Royal Highness (HRH) the Duke of Gloucester, Governor-General of Australia, Canberra, by B H Mullaney, 1945	PIC/6581
HRH the Duke of Gloucester at his first reception as Governor-General, 30 January 1945	PIC/6826
Memorial service for Prime Minister John Curtin held at Parliament House, Canberra, 6 July 1945 This box contains 32 photographs of the memorial service held for Prime Minister Curtin at Parliament House.	PIC/6435/1-32
Prime Minister John Curtin's casket lying-in-state at King's Hall, Parliament House, Canberra, 6 July 1945	PIC/6435/22
Prime Minister John Curtin's casket and wreaths being placed on to a plane in Canberra before being flown to Perth for his funeral, by L J Dwyer, July 1945	PIC/6446

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Official records

WRITTEN RECORDS, 1939–45 WAR, 1926–92

AWM54

Recorded by: 1926–39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)
 1939–42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
 1942–93 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 214 metres

The series consists mainly of files created by headquarters and units of the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF). The files contain a wide range of operational material and reports, including copies of messages, minutes of staff conferences, general staff memoranda, appreciations, circulars, procedures, administrative instructions, intelligence summaries, signal instructions and unit histories. Please note that the following items are arranged in order of accession number.

[RAAF – Administration] Copy of a letter dated 16 January 1943 to Prime Minister of Australia

AWM54, 81/2/10

This item contains a letter to John Curtin from General Douglas MacArthur regarding the powers and functions of air officers commanding the RAAF as a portion of the Allied Air Forces in South-West Pacific Area (SWPA).

[Badges – General] Australian statements by the Prime Minister, 12 June 1942

AWM54, 89/1/3

[Casualties – Reporting] Weekly reports to the Prime Minister, 1943

AWM54, 171/2/18

This item contains a report setting out comparatively the casualties suffered by the AIF and the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) in New Guinea as at 6 February 1943. This was given as a supplement to the weekly report to Prime Minister Curtin, serial No. 159, dated 13 February 1943.

[Commands and Military Districts – General] Extracts from AG GHQ File No. 323-36, Higher Direction of War, 1942

AWM54, 199/1/3

This item contains correspondence between General MacArthur, John Curtin, Lieutenant-General George Brett (United States Army Forces in Australia), Douglas Menzies (Secretary, Defence Committee), Frederick Shedden (Secretary, Department of Defence).

[Correspondence – General] between the Prime Minister and the Premier of New South Wales, 1942

AWM54, 225/1/15

This item deals with the hospitalisation of Army personnel at Prince Henry Hospital, Little Bay in NSW.

[Defence schemes – Australia] Appreciation of the situation in the North-West Area, 1943

AWM54, 243/6/122

Material in this item was prepared by General Staff Intelligence, Headquarters, First Australian Army. This item also contains a letter of commendation from Prime Minister John Curtin, which is dated January 1943.

- [Disease and disabilities – Malaria] Miscellaneous papers, 1943–44**
This item deals with the location of troops in malarious areas, hygiene and tropical diseases and the organisation of mosquito control. It also contains correspondence between Frank Forde, the Minister for Army, and Prime Minister John Curtin.
AWM54, 267/6/7 part 133
- [Finance – General] Maintenance of the AIF abroad – financial liability, 1942**
This item deals with the exchange of ‘Most secret’ cablegrams between Prime Minister Curtin in Australia and the Australian High Commissioner in London.
AWM54, 339/1/4
- [Finance – General] Wartime economy, Prime Minister’s letter regarding the 1943–44 Estimates, 1943**
AWM54, 339/1/23
- [Inter-communication – Instructions regarding messages] Cablegram from Prime Minister, Canberra, 1942–43**
This item contains a cablegram to the Australian High Commissioner in London regarding the arrangements for the return of the Australian 9th Division from the Middle East to Australia, including details about ships and units to embark.
AWM54, 425/2/22
- [Inspections, visits and reviews – RAAF], 1944**
This item deals with the visit of Prime Minister Curtin to RAAF squadrons in England, May 1944.
AWM54, 431/11/1
- [Natives – Labour] Project of importing Asiatic labourers into SWPA, 1943**
This file contains memos from General MacArthur to Prime Minister Curtin proposing the importation of Asiatic labourers into SWPA, 29 July 1943.
AWM54, 506/5/7
- [Campaign in Greece] Cablegram from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, on the position of [Australian military personnel] still at large in Crete and Greece, 1941**
This item also contains a cablegram from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Prime Minister Curtin on the possibility of a campaign in Turkey.
AWM54, 534/1/1
- [Campaign in Malaya and Singapore – Capitulation], 1942**
This item contains a copy of a signal to Prime Minister Curtin from the American-British-Dutch-Australian Command advising him of the decision to capitulate to the Japanese on Singapore Island.
AWM54, 553/4/2
- [Parliamentary – Acts relating to the war] ‘Australia and the War’, May 1944**
This document, which is presented in the form of a statement by Prime Minister John Curtin, provides a source of reference and background on various aspects of Australian policy and the strategic basis of Australian war effort.
AWM54, 732/3/3
- [Prisoners-of-war and internees – Escapes], 1944**
This item contains brief stories told by prisoners-of-war rescued by US submarines after the torpedoing of a Japanese transport, the *Rakuyo Maru*, on 12 September 1944
AWM54, 779/10/3

in the South China Sea. The item also includes a statement by Prime Minister Curtin.

[Science – Relationship to modern warfare], 1941–45

AWM54 882/2/9

This item contains a memorandum to Prime Minister Curtin discussing Australian scientific resources used during the war.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION – BROADCAST TRANSCRIPTS AND PRESS RELEASES, 1939–50

AWM80

Recorded by: Department of Information (CA 34)

Quantity: 25.2 metres

This series contains duplicates of transcripts of material broadcast by the Broadcasting Division of the Department of Information as part of a publicity program to support the war effort. Speeches, talks, reports, Australian and overseas news, press releases, reviews and other material were broadcast to a number of countries in (ultimately) many different languages.

The division also set up an overseas broadcast monitoring service known as the 'Listening Post', which monitored incoming enemy broadcasts and enabled rapid responses to enemy propaganda. Information gathered by the Listening Post was regularly passed to the Australian military and was also used to prepare special reports and broadcasts for the relatives and friends of Australian prisoners-of-war and internees. Some of this material is also to be found in this series.

**[Department of Information – Broadcasting Division]
Talks by the Hon. John Curtin, April 1940 to October 1941**

AWM80, 1/120

'SPECIAL COLLECTION II' – DEFENCE COMMITTEE RECORDS, 1923–60

AWM123

Recorded by: Defence Committee (II) (CA 289)

Quantity: 18.5 metres

During World War II the Defence Committee's activities were closely linked with those of the Advisory War Council and the War Cabinet, and related mainly to defence policy advice and joint service coordination. The series reflects these activities, and consists of briefing material (mostly files and reports). Please note that the following items are arranged chronologically.

Secret statements on war situation, 1942

AWM123, 157

This item includes Prime Minister Curtin's address to state premiers, dated 3 February 1943; his statement made in a secret session of Parliament held on 20 February 1942; and notes for Prime Minister Curtin on the war situation, which are dated February 1942.

Prime Minister's statement in secret session, 3 September 1942

AWM123, 136

Review of war situation by Prime Minister, 10 December 1942	AWM123, 650
Prime Minister's proposal to establish an Empire Council, 1942-44 This item includes material related to an ALP conference held in December 1943 and to Curtin's proposed visit abroad.	AWM123, 316
Meeting – Prime Minister (PM) with General MacArthur – PM's press release and newspaper cuttings, December 1943	AWM123, 149
British and world Commonwealth cooperation (Prime Minister's final alterations), 1944 This item includes reports on the Australian Government's view of Far East defence activities and the relief of the Australian garrison at Tobruk in March 1944.	AWM123, 115
Conference of Commonwealth and state ministers, 25 January 1944 This item is a review of the war situation by Prime Minister Curtin and includes briefing material and a draft statement.	AWM123, 150
Review of the war situation by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives, 9 February 1944 This item contains briefing material, draft statement and press cuttings dating from January to February 1944.	AWM123, 151
Cabled advices to Prime Minister overseas, 6 April to 24 June 1944	AWM123, 295

*Private records***BLAMEY, THOMAS ALBERT – PAPERS, 1906-53****3DRL/6643**

Quantity: 8.25 metres

This extensive collection mainly comprises official papers relating to Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey, which focus on his military career as Commander of both the Middle East and the South-West Pacific Area. They chiefly date from 1939 to 1945 and consist of correspondence, operations reports, minutes, military appreciations, conference papers, maps, photographs, clippings and printed material. The series also contains files dealing with the placement of the 2nd AIF in the Middle East, policy developments in the Pacific and personal papers documenting his early teaching career. Correspondents include Prime Minister John Curtin; British Prime Minister Winston Churchill; Robert Menzies; General Henri-Fernand Dentz, the Vichy Commander-in-Chief of Syria; Australian General Vernon Sturdee; General Douglas MacArthur; and Frederick Shedden, the Secretary of the Australian War Cabinet.

Middle East correspondence and administrative papers, 1940-44**3DRL/6643 1/50**

This item includes an appreciation of the Far East situation by Australian chiefs-of-staff, which was forwarded to Winston Churchill by John Curtin.

- Middle East and South-West Pacific Area papers, 1940–45** 3DRL 6643 4/19
This item includes correspondence with John Curtin concerning manpower shortages and the critical need to review the supply of services to the US forces in light of such shortages (1943–44).
- South-West Pacific Area correspondence and administrative reports, 1941–46** 3DRL/6643 2/5
This item includes papers relating to the Australian–New Zealand conference on defence matters. It includes General Blamey's observations of the proceedings and draft statement of defence in the SWPA presented by John Curtin.
- South-West Pacific Area correspondence and administrative reports, 1941–46** 3DRL/6643 2/6
This item includes papers referring to General Douglas MacArthur, particularly to his appointment as Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of SWPA; a boundary disputes between SWPA and the South Pacific Area; and correspondence between MacArthur and John Curtin concerning the future use of Australian forces in SWPA.
- South-West Pacific Area correspondence and administrative reports, 1941–46** 3DRL/6643 2/11
This item includes papers relating to Prime Minister John Curtin, particularly his comments on the lack of operations reports presented to the War Cabinet, Blamey's comments on the reduction of Australian Military Force (AMF) divisions, a review of the prime ministers' meeting in London and correspondence with Curtin concerning General Douglas MacArthur's claim about the Brisbane Line.
- South-West Pacific Area correspondence and administrative reports, 1941–46** 3DRL/6643 2/17
This item contains papers concerning the role of the AMF, including correspondence with John Curtin, Australian General Frank Berryman and General Douglas MacArthur about the latter's reluctance to use I Australian Corps.
- South-West Pacific Area correspondence and administrative reports, 1941–46** 3DRL/6643 2/89
This item includes papers concerning policy regarding the acceptance of US awards by Australian service personnel and the granting of British awards to US personnel. Correspondents include John Curtin, General Douglas MacArthur and Australian General Edmund Herring.
- South-West Pacific Area correspondence and administrative reports, 1941–46** 3DRL/6643 2/104
This item contains papers about publicity surrounding the C-in-C (particularly John Curtin's statement on operations in New Guinea), criticism of General Thomas Blamey and a statement made upon his retirement.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA – CONFERENCE ON NEWSPAPER AND BROADCASTING ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO THE WAR EFFORT, 1942**MSS0653**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

This manuscript details the proceedings of a conference held in Canberra on 10 February 1942. Participants included Prime Minister Curtin, other government ministers and representatives of Australian government departments, newspapers and public broadcasters.

MORSHEAD, LESLIE JAMES, PAPERS, 1934–62**3DRL/2632**

Quantity: 0.14 metres

The collection comprises personal papers, official correspondence, operational records, administrative papers, reports and addresses documenting Sir Leslie Morshead's career in the World War I and World War II.

Official correspondence, 1916–47**3DRL/2632 2/8**

This item contains congratulatory messages received following the Battle of El Alamein and later operations in New Guinea. It also includes messages from General (later, Field Marshal) Bernard Montgomery of Britain and John Curtin (c1942–44).

Photographs

These photographs, arranged chronologically, are a selection only from images in the Australian War Memorial's collection that relate to John Curtin. Many Curtin photographs are available online through the Australian War Memorial's collection databases and PictureAustralia (www.awm.gov.au and www.pictureaustralia.org).

Members of the Australian War Cabinet watch the Governor-General signing the proclamation that declares war with Japan, 1941

010690

General Douglas MacArthur filling in an application form for the £35 million Liberty Loan while Prime Minister John Curtin looks on, Melbourne, 19 June 1942

136521

Paintings of John Curtin, Lenin and Joseph Stalin being carried in the Anglo-Soviet Unity Procession through city streets, Melbourne, 5 September 1942

136739

John Curtin giving a speech, Canberra, 7 October 1942

150772

This speech relates to the donation of burnt sections of the British House of Commons and Westminster Abbey damaged during the German 'Blitz' bombing of London in 1940.

Prime Minister Curtin inspecting troops of the AIF before they march through the city of Perth in support of the £100 million Austerity Loan, 3 November 1942

028738

Australian Colour Guard (Volunteer Defence Corps)[...] present the Australian flag to First Marine Division, US Marine Corps, Caulfield, Melbourne, 17 March 1943 This image features Prime Minister Curtin, who made a speech at the event.	043640
John Curtin speaking in the Town Hall in support of the Liberty Loan, Melbourne, 13 April 1943	138557
Members of the new Labor Government at Government House, Yarralumla, Canberra, 24 September 1943	139724
[Meeting of] members of the War Cabinet (including Beasley, Evatt, Forde, Curtin, Shedden, Chifley and Makin), Federal Members' Rooms, Melbourne, 10 November 1943	139924
John Curtin enjoys a joke with General MacArthur, during a dinner given in MacArthur's honour at Parliament House, Canberra, 18 March 1944	140632
Commander Gene Tunney, US Navy, formerly world heavyweight champion boxer, in the company of John Curtin, Mrs Curtin and US Minister to Australia, Nelson Johnson, The Lodge, Canberra, 18 March 1944	077690
John Curtin leaving the aircraft that brought him to England for the Dominion talks, London, May 1944	SUK12095
John Curtin getting out of a veteran Lancaster Bomber, 'G' for George, during his visit to No. 460 Squadron RAAF, Binbrook, UK, 1944	UK1300
John Curtin addresses squadron members during his visit to No. 463 (Lancaster) Squadron RAAF, RAF Station Waddington, Lincolnshire, England, 19 May 1944	SUK12193
Lord Gowrie, retiring Governor-General of Australia, chatting with John Curtin during a farewell dinner by the Australian Parliament, Melbourne, 17 July 1944	141447
John Curtin greeting HRH the Duke of Gloucester at Parliament House on his appointment as Governor-General of Australia, 30 January 1945	085954
News of the death of Prime Minister Curtin displayed on the sign board at the Salvation Army stall on Vasey Highway, Balikpapan, Borneo, 5 July 1945	110946
Memorial service at King's Hall, Parliament House, Canberra, for late John Curtin, 6 July 1945	110539
The casket containing the body of Prime Minister John Curtin is moved towards an RAAF Douglas C47 Dakota aircraft, Fairbairn, ACT, 6 July 1945	P01378.004
Inside Westminster Abbey - members of the three Australian [military] services during the memorial service for the Prime Minister John Curtin, London, 18 July 1945	UK3112

Ephemera

- Darwin has been bombed but not conquered [leaflet], 1942*** RC00810
 This item is a black-and-white leaflet quoting John Curtin's comments about the bombing of Darwin.

Film

Films are listed chronologically.

- Liberty Loan, It's up to you, 1942*** F01584
 This is a cinema trailer using archival film, animation, posters and a speech by Prime Minister Curtin urging Australians to subscribe to the Second Liberty Loan. It runs for 3 minutes, 44 seconds.

- 'War comes to Australia' (Fox Movietone News, Vol. 13, No. 6), 24 January 1942*** F00329
 This film features various segments – 'Wavell and Pownell', 'Bombing in Malaya', 'Scenes of Rabaul', 'Darwin', 'Making north-south road from Darwin to Alice Springs', 'Newcastle Steelworks', 'munitions works', 'Prime Minister Curtin' and 'Coal mines and miners'. It runs for 9 minutes.

- "All must serve", says John Curtin', Fox Movietone News, Vol. 13, No. 10, 21 February 1942*** F00333
 This film segment features Prime Minister John Curtin opening the £35 million-loan. It runs for 6 minutes.

- 1. 'Names in the news'; and 2. 'Do's and don'ts for civilians in battle zone' (Fox Movietone News, Vol. 13, No. 16), 5 April 1942*** F00339
 Part 1 of this film features General MacArthur arriving at Parliament House, Canberra, where he is greeted by Prime Minister John Curtin and Frank Forde, the Minister for the Army Minister. It runs for 1 minute, 21 seconds.

- 'Curtin talks to nation', Cinesound News, No. 552, 29 May 1942*** F00578
 In this newsreel Prime Minister John Curtin speaks to Australia and the world about Australia's war effort and good friendship to the world. It runs for 2 minutes, 55 seconds.

- 1. 'Armoured division on parade'; and 2. 'Newsbriefs: Lady Gowrie in Sydney – General MacArthur and PM in Melbourne', Cinesound News, No. 556, 26 June 1942*** F00582
 Part 2 of this item features General MacArthur and Prime Minister Curtin taking out war bonds in Melbourne.

- Prime Minister Curtin's speech about the Third Liberty (War) Loan, 1943*** F01430
 This film features Prime Minister Curtin addressing Australians about the need to contribute to the war effort by investing in the Third Liberty Loan. It runs for 2 minutes, 10 seconds.

1. 'AWAS take a rise out of Jack Davey'; 2. 'Giant Canadian spruce trees for Mosquito Bombers'; and 3. 'Crisis in Parliament – Curtin speaks', *News From Home*, No. 43, 22 June 1943

F00738

Part 3 of this film features Prime Minister Curtin speaking about the war in the House of Representatives. It runs for 2 minutes, 14 seconds.

'Anzac Agreement signed at Canberra [on] 21 January 1944', *News From Home*, No. 74, 25 January 1944

F00766

This film features the signing of the Anzac Agreement by New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser and Australian Prime Minister John Curtin. Dr Evatt speaks before the signing of the agreement. It runs for 1 minute, 51 seconds.

1. 'Airgraph mail saves space and time'; and 2. 'MacArthur speaks', *News From Home*, No. 82, 21 March 1944

F00772

Part 2 of this film features General MacArthur speaking at a dinner with Prime Minister John Curtin at Parliament House on the second anniversary of his arrival in Australia. It runs for 4 minutes, 36 seconds.

Blamey and Curtin in the USA, 1944

F01752

This is a US Signal Corps black-and-white silent film dating from May to June 1944. It features General Thomas Blamey and John Curtin, accompanied by an aide-de-camp and Mrs Curtin, on a train and arriving at a railway station during their tour of the US. It runs for 2 minutes, 14 seconds.

[Interview with Fred Daly, in *Images of Australia*, 'Decline and fall'], 1986

F00267

This colour film runs for 28 minutes, 42 seconds. Subjects covered in the film include World War II and John Curtin.

SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA

The following records are held by ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive. These records are arranged chronologically under type of media. ScreenSound Australia maintains a collection of access copies of items in its holdings for on-site viewing. For more information, visit the ScreenSound website (www.screensound.gov.au).

Film

'Prime Minister laid to rest in his home state', 1939

Title No: 127193

This newsreel segment features the transport of the late Prime Minister Joseph Lyons' body to Devonport, Tasmania on the destroyer HMAS *Vendetta* and the funeral service at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes. The nation's leaders, including Dr Earle Page, Billy Hughes, Richard Casey and John Curtin, and the Premier of Tasmania, Albert Ogilvie, were among the mourners. The film runs for 1 minute, 30 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Prime Minister laid to rest in his home state' [and other segments], *Fox Movietone News*, Vol. 10, No. 18, 1939

Title No: 59035

Title No. 127193 (above) is a segment within this newsreel.

Curtin speech to Royal Empire Society, c1939

This film features John Curtin delivering a speech in which he defines Australia's position in the Empire to the Royal Empire Society. This is a film segment from Title No: 31065.

Title No: 92588***Australian Labor Party advertisement – The march of progress, 1940***

This is a public relations film made for the ALP in Queensland, showing the development and prosperity of Queensland under a Labor government. The film depicts the development of Queensland, beginning with shots of Aboriginal people, jungles, swamps and rivers and progressing to scenes of the construction of Somerset Dam, Kangaroo Point Bridge, the Sandgate Reclamation Scheme and other projects. John Curtin speaks for Labor. An access copy is available.

Title No: 17137***John Curtin is Australia's Prime Minister: Cabinet sworn in, 1941***

The newly-elected Labor Prime Minister John Curtin and members of his Cabinet are shown seated outside Government House, Canberra, ACT. The Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, is seated next to Mr Curtin, who later makes a speech outlining his Government's policies. The film runs for 2 minutes, 57 seconds. An access copy is available.

Title No: 71176***Labor leader Curtin new Prime Minister, 1941***

This film opens with shot of Curtin and other parliamentarians. Curtin then makes a speech, followed by speeches from the Minister of the Army, Frank Forde, and other ministers in the new government. No access copy is available.

Title No: 89250***Cinesound Review, No. 0689 – advertisement, This is vital to you, 1941***

This advertisement features Prime Minister John Curtin appealing to Australians to give more funds for the Liberty Loans. An access copy is available.

Title No: 33958***Advance Australia Fair, 1941***

This film shows a number of iconic images – the Australian flag being unfurled; the Houses of Parliament, Canberra; Prime Minister John Curtin speaking in Parliament; ships at sea; aircraft in air; land forces; and the Australian flag on display. No access copy is available.

Title No: 111639***Cinesound Review, No. 0525 – 'A nation remembers. Australian War Memorial opened at Canberra', 1941***

This is a special Cinesound newsreel covering the opening of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 11 November 1941. The item opens with footage of Australian soldiers fighting in Europe during World War I. The War Memorial is dedicated to these men and women at an official ceremony attended by Australian military and political dignitaries, civilians and foreign ambassadors. Lord Gowrie and Prime Minister John Curtin make speeches and lay wreaths. Sir Harry Chauvel and representatives of foreign governments, including ministers

Title No: 222261

from China, Japan and the US, also pay their respects as Lord Gowrie speaks with Victoria Cross winners. The internal and external features of the War Memorial are then shown in detail, including magnificent sculptures and dioramas of Australian actions during World War I. The film runs for 8 minutes, 15 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Personalities living at the Federal Capital', 1941

Title No: 89268

This newsreel item features foreign and Australian dignitaries, including the Governor-General Lord Gowrie, Prime Minister Mr Curtin and diplomatic representatives from Britain (Sir Ronald Cross), the US (Mr Nelson Johnson), Japan (Tatsuo Kawai) and China (Dr Hsu Mo) at their homes in Canberra. The film includes a shot of the front of The Lodge, with Prime Minister Curtin and Mrs Curtin walking in the garden and posing for the camera. The item concludes with a shot of Mr Curtin walking through the front garden of The Lodge on his way to work. An access copy is available.

Cinesound Review, No. 0528 – 'War in Pacific', 1941

Title No: 49746

This newsreel item shows maps indicating points of Japanese attacks on US and British positions along with British, Indian, Malayan Indian and Australian troops at battle stations. The Prime Minister, John Curtin, asks all Australians to commit themselves to the task of keeping Australia free. It was released on 12 December 1941. An access copy is available.

'John Curtin, PM, speaks', 1941

Title No: 71706

No access copy of this newsreel segment is available.

'John Curtin's speech', 1941

Title No: 13126

This newsreel segment shows the welcome banquet for Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt on her visit to Australia. Toasts are given to His Majesty the King George VI and the US President Franklin Roosevelt. Prime Minister Curtin then welcomes Mrs Roosevelt to Australia and presents her with a copy of Captain Cook's *Endeavour* journal, written during his first voyage to Australia in 1768–71 (recreated using the original held in the [National Archives of Australia](#)). Curtin then calls on William Morris Hughes to support his remarks. Hughes is not seen on the film. No access copy is available.

Advertisement for the Third Liberty Loan – *This is vital to you*, 1941 [1943]

Title No: 2336

This advertisement features Prime Minister John Curtin speaking to the people of Australia. It also contains the following:

To you who now enjoy comfortable entertainment in perfect safety, I would give a timely reminder of your obligation to our fighting men who share the perils and trials of all theatres of war. You can do something to ensure their safety – to bring victory and peace nearer. Sign a pledge to support

the Third Liberty Loan at the special booth
in the foyer before you leave this theatre.
Signed Ben Chifley Federal Treasurer.

An access copy is available.

'First Victory Loan' and the 'Third Liberty Loan', 1941-43

Title No: 12631

In this film Prime Minister John Curtin addresses his countrymen about the war. This promotion also contains segments 'What have you done for your country?' and 'The road to Tokyo is the road to victory'. No access copy is available.

'Old Parliament House', c1939; and 'John Curtin', c1941

Title No: 583205

This segment of film contains footage of various scenes, including the old Parliament House, Prime Minister John Curtin, a parliamentary session, 'Billy' Hughes, Canberra Boys' Grammar School, St Christopher's Church, the old Canberra Post Office, the Australia Coat of Arms, Forestry House and views across to Civic (central Canberra). No access copy is available.

Liberty Loan - advertisement - Prime Minister John Curtin, c1941

Title No: 41373

This item is a cinema advertisement showing the Prime Minister, Mr John Curtin, giving a speech to encourage the general public to support the war effort by subscribing to the Third Liberty Loan. The film's captions include 'This is vital to you' and 'John Curtin works for Australia's future. Are you measuring up to your responsibilities in this war? Here the Prime Minister tells you the true position.' Sitting at a desk, John Curtin encourages the general public to subscribe to the Third Liberty Loan, and asks 'What have you done for liberty today?' and 'Is the Third Liberty Loan to close without your support?' The advertisement runs for 2 minutes. An access copy is available.

'Prime Minister Curtin making a speech while seated at his desk', c1941

Title No: 99814

This film segment appears to feature Prime Minister Curtin making a speech while sitting at his desk. The film may be part of a short advertising a Liberty Loan. No access is copy available.

Parliamentary session featuring Prime Minister John Curtin and Ben Chifley, c1941-45

Title No: 583009

This film opens with a shot of a Senate sitting and then goes onto the House of Representatives. Various parliamentarians are shown in the film, including Prime Minister John Curtin addressing the House with Ben Chifley sitting on the Government Front Bench. The film contains edited and unedited footage and recordings. No access copy is available.

Part of an address by John Curtin and coverage of War Cabinet meeting, 1942**Title No: 267710**

This film segment features Prime Minister Curtin making a special appeal to Australians and shows exclusive pictures of the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, and ministers signing the Declaration of War. No access copy is available.

"All must serve", says John Curtin, 1942**Title No: 89333**

This film shows a large crowd, including allied nationals in traditional dress, gathered in Martin Place, Sydney, to mark the opening of the Commonwealth's £35-million Liberty Loan. Prime Minister John Curtin makes a passionate address announcing that the Federal Cabinet has approved the complete mobilisation of all resources required for the defence of the country during World War II and outlining what is required of all Australians. This item runs for 5 minutes, 30 seconds. It was released on 21 February 1942. An access copy is available.

Canberra - Heart of Australia, 1942**Title No: 83292**

This film opens with archival footage of the historic founding of Canberra in 1913, showing Governor-General Thomas Denman and Prime Minister Andrew Fisher laying foundation stones. This is followed by more modern images of the capital, including views over the city, schoolchildren at Canberra High School, the telescope at Mount Stromlo Observatory, Stromlo Forest, the Australian Institute of Anatomy, buildings in Civic and the King George V Memorial. Photographs and the logbooks of the ill-fated 1860 expedition of Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills are also shown. The film closes with a group photograph of the Curtin Ministry. The film runs for 3 minutes, 34 seconds. No access copy is available.

Names in the news - 'General MacArthur meets Prime Minister Curtin in Canberra and Philippines President Quezon in Melbourne', 1942**Title No: 89433**

This newsreel item shows General Douglas MacArthur meeting Prime Minister John Curtin in Canberra and President Quezon of the Philippines in Melbourne. General MacArthur meets the Minister for the Army, Mr Frank Forde, on the steps of Parliament House, Canberra, before meeting the Prime Minister John Curtin. He is in Canberra for talks with the Australian War Council. In Melbourne, General and Mrs MacArthur are shown meeting President Manuel Quezon and Mrs Quezon at a railway station. An access copy is available.

Curtin defines our position in Empire, 1942**Title No: 89499**

In this film, Curtin defines Australia's position in the Empire in a speech to the Royal Empire Society. No access copy is available.

'General MacArthur helps war loan with £1000 bond', 1942**Title No: 30186**

In this newsreel item Prime Minister John Curtin witnesses General Douglas MacArthur signing a personal cheque for

£1000 to assist in making Australia's Second Liberty Loan a success. The film runs for 1 minute. An access copy is available.

Newsbriefs – 'War Loan' – 'Prime Minister Curtin and General MacArthur buy war bonds', 1942

Title No: 120416

This newsreel segment features Prime Minister John Curtin and General Douglas MacArthur taking out Liberty Loans at the Commonwealth Bank in Melbourne. This item runs for 27 seconds. An access copy is available.

'City of Sydney 100 years old', 1942

Title No: 89596

This is a newsreel item showing the special meeting of the Sydney City Council held to mark the Centenary of Sydney. It traces the progress of Sydney from a British colony to the Empire's third largest metropolis. At the meeting, which was attended by the New South Wales Governor (Lord Wakehurst), the Prime Minister (John Curtin) and other dignitaries, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Crick, makes a speech celebrating the centenary and replying to the King's message. Historic buildings in the inner city are also shown. The item runs for 3 minutes, 46 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Laying foundation stone of US Legation: Canberra', 1942

Title No: 136305

This newsreel item shows Prime Minister John Curtin, Senator Joseph Collings and members of the Allied Services among the crowd gathered in Canberra to witness US Minister to Australia, Nelson Johnson, laying the foundation stone of the US Legation. The film includes a drawing of the completed building. The film runs for 1 minute, 23 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Just as Churchill rallied women to help stem the enemy when England was threatened after Dunkirk, so today Curtin calls on our women to help Australia in her present hour of need', 1942

Title No: 89673

No access copy of this newsreel segment is available.

Austerity Loan cinema advertisement – *The price of freedom*, 1942

Title No: 65930

This cinema advertisement uses well-known Australian defence force personnel (eg Lieutenant Roden Cutler VC of the Australian Army, Lieutenant Donald Smith McFarland of the Royal Australian Navy [RAN] and Squadron Leader John Perrin of the RAAF) and Prime Minister John Curtin, to encourage Australians to buy Austerity Loan Bonds and 'to support our fighting men'. No access copy is available.

'John Curtin giving speech', 1942 [1943]

Title No: 120768

In this item Prime Minister Curtin makes an appeal to the people of Australia to support the Third Liberty Loan. No access copy is available.

'Australia goes to the polls', 1943

Title No: 233824

This newsreel item includes comprehensive coverage of the 1943 federal election day. Well-known personalities, including Robert Menzies and John Curtin, cast their ballots

alongside service personnel and civilians. For the first time, the Cinesound cameras film from the tally room in Canberra and record the dramatic swing to Labor. Some of the more amusing donkey votes are shown. This film runs for 2 minutes, 45 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Prime Minister tells House [of Representatives] of Evatt's mission: Canberra', 1943

Title No: 132072

In this newsreel item Prime Minister John Curtin speaks to the Federal Parliament about Dr Evatt's recent trip to Washington, which secured American support for Australia's air program in the Pacific during World War II. The segment runs for 1 minute, 3 seconds. An access copy is available.

Cinesound Review, No. 0608 - 'Crisis in Parliament: Curtin speaks', 1943

Title No: 51406

In this newsreel segment Prime Minister John Curtin makes an important speech to Federal Parliament in response to a censure motion by the Opposition. He states that the battle of Australia has been won but that the war in the Pacific continues. He praises the war effort of his Government, and Dr Evatt in particular, and goes on to thank President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill for their support for Australia's air program. The film runs for 2 minutes, 8 seconds. No access copy is available.

Australian Labor Party federal election campaign advertisement - *The man of the hour: John Curtin*, 1943

Title No: 32526

This is an ALP campaign film for the federal elections held on 21 August 1943. John Curtin delivers a speech in Parliament in which he moves:

...that the House approves of the action of His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth having advised the issue of a proclamation declaring the existence of a State of war with Japan...

The film then shows scenes of Australian Army equipment and men, and the construction of aircraft. General Douglas MacArthur is shown arriving at the steps of Parliament House and being greeted by Australian officials. The film continues with more military scenes - construction machinery, ship-launching, an ammunition factory, tanks in convoy in a city street and tanks firing on a practice range. The film then returns to Prime Minister Curtin giving a speech. It shows a shot of the outside of Parliament House, a general scene inside and then a close-up of Mr Curtin saying:

On August 21st you will vote...I ask you to return again to power the Government that has stood for Australia and its future.

An access copy is available.

'Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to Canberra', 1943

Title No: 13226

This newsreel item shows the ceremony in Canberra with speeches by Prime Minister Curtin and Mrs Roosevelt. The Prime Minister welcomes Mrs Roosevelt who is visiting as part of her tour of the Pacific. She is presented with a copy

of Captain Cook's journal of the voyage of HMB *Endeavour* and talks of her confidence in winning the war. No access copy is available.

Cinesound Movietone production – 'Mrs Roosevelt in Australia', 1943

Title No: 13210

This newsreel segment shows Mrs Roosevelt arriving at Parliament House, Canberra. Other footage is of a dinner held in her honour, the Australian War Memorial and Mrs Roosevelt planting a tree at the new US Legation. Mrs Roosevelt is shown accompanied by Prime Minister John Curtin. No access copy is available.

Movietone News, Vol. 14, No. 39 – 'Eleanor Roosevelt', September 1943

Title No: 214949

This film shows Mrs Roosevelt on her visit to Australia during her tour of the South-West Pacific. She is shown being welcomed at Canberra Airport by the Governor-General Lord Gowrie and Lady Gowrie, Prime Minister John Curtin and Dr Herbert Evatt. Other footage includes scenes of an official lunch at Parliament House, where Mrs Roosevelt makes a speech; tree-planting; and meeting Land Army 'girls', members of the Women's Auxiliary [Australian] Air Force (WAAF) [WAAAF] and the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), and children with polio. No access copy is available.

Cinesound Review, No. 0632 – 'Two years: December 7, 1941–43', 1943

Title No: 9254

This entire newsreel is devoted to events in the Pacific Ocean region during World War II from 7 December 1941 to 7 December 1943. The story was intended to encourage Australians to continue to support the war effort. Footage includes Prime Minister Curtin addressing the nation on the need for defence. An access copy is available.

Anzac Agreement signed at Canberra, 1944

Title No: 71294

This film shows the signing of the Anzac Agreement between Australia and New Zealand in Canberra on 21 January 1944. Delegates from New Zealand and Australia sit at a large table with the flag of each country in the background. Dr Herbert Evatt is the Master of Ceremonies as New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser is the first to sign, followed by Australian Prime Minister John Curtin. The signed agreement is then shown. The item includes short excerpts from the speeches given by the two prime ministers. The film runs for 1 minute, 45 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Navy march for War Loan: Melbourne', 1944

Title No: 90134

This is a newsreel item about an RAN march to mark the opening of Victoria's Victory Loan campaign. The item opens with a general view of RAN servicemen and women marching down Swanston Street, Melbourne. The sailors march with bayonets and Prime Minister John Curtin and Admiral Sir Guy Royle take the salute outside the Melbourne Town Hall. Shots of sailors marching eight abreast are interspersed with images of the crowd

watching the parade. The item ends with footage of WRANS from HMAS *Cerberus* marching and a general view of the parade. An access copy is available.

Cinesound Review, No. 0647 - 'MacArthur speaks' - unedited, 1944

Title No: 557171

This is an unedited newsreel of General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in the Pacific, arriving in Canberra aboard a Silver Fortress plane. Prime Minister John Curtin introduces him at an official state dinner in his honour. Following a speech by the Prime Minister, MacArthur then addresses the gathering, paying tribute to fallen Australian soldiers. The film shows the entire speeches of both men. No access copy is available although an edited copy (see Title No: 83800, below) is available for access.

Cinesound Review, No. 0647 - 'MacArthur speaks', 1944

Title No: 83800

This item is an edited version of the newsreel described above. It runs for 3 minutes, 10 seconds. An access copy is available.

'Departures: Curtin and Blamey for America', 1944

Title No: 90157

This newsreel footage shows the passengers of a luxury American ocean liner, the *Lurline*. The passenger list includes Prime Minister John Curtin, who is leaving on his trip to the US, the UK (where he will attend the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers) and Canada. Other passengers include General Thomas Blamey and 76 Australian war brides married to US servicemen. No access copy is available.

Visit to England: Prime Minister John Curtin goes overseas, [1944]

Title No. 75267

No access copy of this film is available.

Movietone News (A0571 [No. 01]) - Prime Ministers John Curtin (Australia) and Peter Fraser (New Zealand) receive the Freedom of the City of London, 1944

Title No: 30372

No access copy of this newsreel is available.

Prime Minister Curtin welcomed to Canada, c1944

Title No: 53067

This film shows Prime Minister John Curtin addressing the Canadian press and thanking the Canadian people for their hospitality and help in training visiting Australian troops. Curtin also mentions the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers in London and thanks the Prime Minister of Canada, William Lyon Mackenzie King. Prime Minister King also speaks to the press, thanking Prime Minister John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin for visiting. No access copy is available.

Prime Minister Curtin welcomed to Canada - out-takes, c1944

Title No: 594410

In this film Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King is seen shaking hands with Prime Minister John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin after the press conference at which they were welcomed to Canada. Prime Minister

Curtin and Prime Minister King leave the press conference and walk in and around Canadian Parliament House grounds. Finally they shake hands for the camera on the Parliament House staircase and Prime Minister Curtin leaves in an Australian High Commission car. No access copy is available.

'Visit to England: Prime Minister John Curtin goes overseas', 1944

Title No: 13206

This *Fox Movietone News* footage shows highlights of Prime Minister Curtin's round-the-world tour of 1944 to attend the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers in London, during which he also visited the US and Canada. The newsreel starts with Prime Minister Curtin and Mrs Curtin boarding the *Lurline* en route to the US. On Curtin's arrival in the UK, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner in London, meets him.

Other Dominion prime ministers attending the conference include William Lyon Mackenzie King (Canada), Peter Fraser (New Zealand) and General Jan Smuts (South Africa). Curtin is shown with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, and Minister for Aircraft Production, Lord Beaverbrook.

Other material in the film includes coverage of a one-day cricket match at Lords Cricket Ground between an RAAF 11 and a 'Rest of England 11', which the RAAF won. On arrival back in Australia at Brisbane, Curtin is shown giving a speech outlining the highlights of the trip. No access copy is available.



John and Elsie Curtin with Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King examining one of the Books of Remembrance in the Memorial Chamber, Peace Tower, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, 1944. NAA: M1218, 12.

Mr Curtin in London and Canada, 1944**Title No: 20958**

This item is a visual record of Prime Minister Curtin's visit to the US, the UK (to attend the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers) and Canada in May and June 1944. The footage is silent and appears unedited. It begins in the US, showing the Australian flag displayed on a large skyscraper (possibly in New York), then progresses to a shot of a motorcade and Curtin talking to President Roosevelt.

The London section of the film shows Curtin with dignitaries and various London scenes – eg barrage balloons and St Paul's Cathedral – and exterior scenes of Australia House. The film includes footage of a cricket match and a close-up of a plaque commemorating William Gilbert Grace, the 'great Cricketer'. Other footage in the film shows Curtin receiving an Honorary Doctorate of Law at Cambridge University and attendees at the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers. An access copy is available.

Mr Curtin – War on Japan, 1944**Title No: 96295**

This film shows a press conference in London, where Curtin speaks about the continuing struggle to defeat Japan:

The war which Japan started can now only end in the complete defeat of Japan. That involves the continuance of the struggle until the Japanese navy, airpower and land forces lose all capacity to act aggressively. I have no doubt that our Allies and ourselves will see that struggle through to its complete conclusion.

No access copy is available.

Prime Minister Curtin returns, 1944**Title No: 99067**

This film shows Prime Minister Curtin returning from overseas after meetings with President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill and after attending the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers in London. Mr Forde, General MacArthur and General Blamey meet him. Curtin then makes a speech outlining his visit. No access copy is available.

PM home again: Mr Curtin back after [PM's] Conference, 1944**Title No: 90198**

In this film Mr Curtin is shown returning after his trip to the US, Canada and the UK. Mr and Mrs Curtin are shown leaving the ship in Brisbane and being greeted by Mr Forde and General MacArthur. The Prime Minister then makes a speech outlining his trip. No access copy is available.

'Parliament in session', 1944**Title No: 14243**

This newsreel has five segments – 'Exterior Parliament House, Canberra' (Title No: 76083), 'Parliament in session' (Title No: 76084), 'Prime Minister addressing Cabinet' (Title No: 76085), 'Prime Minister Curtin' (Title No: 76086) and 'Prime Minister's Lodge' (Title No: 76087). An access copy is available.

Vote No: The 1944 Fourteen Points Referendum, 1944**Title No: 69130**

The 'Fourteen Points Referendum' was held on legislation proposed by the Curtin Government to allow the Federal Parliament to have the power (for five years) to make laws in respect of fourteen specified matters. These matters included the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen, national health, family allowances and Indigenous Australians. As the proposed legislation – the 'Constitution Alteration (Post-War Reconstruction and Democratic Rights) Bill' – required a change to the Constitution, the matter was decided by referendum.

This film, produced by opponents of the legislation, contains anti-Curtin Government rhetoric:

We are fighting this war for liberty – for our individual liberty – yours and mine – for the right to live and plan our own lives the way we want to – or do you desire regimentation and restrictions to continue after the war?

The film is directed at the emotions (particularly the fears) of the viewers rather than their minds. The audience is asked to vote 'No' to postwar regimentation and postwar bureaucracy and thereby vote for personal liberty. The referendum returned a 'No' vote. An access copy is available.

Vote Yes for Australia [01], 1944**Title No: 72468**

This film segment contains images of Robert Menzies and Arthur Fadden, with a voiceover stating:

No sooner had Menzies and Fadden demanded that the Commonwealth should have postwar powers to check profiteering and to control combines and monopolies than big vested interests cracked the whip. Menzies and Fadden promptly somersaulted. Today, they ask you to vote against national powers.

The film is concerned with some of the 'Fourteen Points' and calls for people to vote 'Yes'. The Curtin Government sponsored the proposals and Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, the Federal Attorney-General, made every effort to inform electors. Menzies and Fadden worked hard to defeat the proposals. An access copy is available in 'Second Victory Loan – cinema advertisement [other segments]', which is accessioned as Title No: 10717.

Cinesound Review, No. 0692 – 'HRH [The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester] Sydney, Canberra', 1945**Title No. 249863**

This newsreel shows Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, and Princess Alice, the Duchess of Gloucester, being greeted in Sydney by Lord Mayor Alderman Harding and federal and state ministers.

After the Duke's speech, the royal party travels by car to place a wreath on the Cenotaph. At Admiralty House they pose for photographs with their children, the princes William and Richard. They are next seen arriving in the rain at Parliament House, Canberra, for the swearing-in ceremony to make the Duke the new Governor-General. The ceremony is held inside the Senate chamber and is witnessed by Chief Justice Sir John Latham, Prime Minister

John Curtin, Mrs Curtin and foreign diplomats. The film runs for 5 minutes, 53 seconds. No access copy is available.

'Duke sees *Western Approaches*', 1945

Title No: 83916

This newsreel shows guests at the premiere in Canberra of the film *Western Approaches*. The dignitaries include Senator Joseph Collings, Mrs Elsie Curtin and Sir Ronald Cross (the UK High Commissioner) and Lady Cross, as well as consular officials. Special guests, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, are greeted in the foyer as they arrive. The segment runs for 52 seconds. An access copy is available.

'End of War: MacArthur and Curtin at dinner', 1945

Title No: 510633

This is film footage of what appears to be an official dinner, probably to celebrate the end of the war in Europe. Both Prime Minister Curtin and General MacArthur give speeches. The film includes footage of a large street celebration in Sydney (an advertising sign for 2UW is visible). The film shows many servicemen in the crowd and a fireworks display. No access copy is available.

***Funeral of Prime Minister Curtin*, 1945**

Title No: 15230

This film shows Prime Minister Curtin's coffin lying-in-state surrounded by military guards of honour and mourners. A military band plays as the coffin is carried onto a plane at RAAF Base Fairbairn for the trip to Perth, where Curtin is later buried at the Karrakatta Cemetery. An access copy is available.

***A great Australian passes*, 1945**

Title No: 83966

This film is a moving tribute to Prime Minister John Curtin, who died in office during World War II. The Prime Minister is shown at his home at Cottesloe and on official duties, including declaring war against Japan and meeting with General MacArthur and Mrs Roosevelt. The film then shows scenes in Canberra after Curtin's death, with domestic and foreign political representatives attending Parliament House where the Prime Minister's body lies in state under military guard. The film runs for 6 minutes, 43 seconds. An access copy is available.

***Movietone News (A0628) - 'Nation mourns John Curtin'*, 1945**

Title No: 11975

This newsreel covers the death in Canberra of Prime Minister John Curtin. Footage begins with Curtin's coffin lying-in-state in Parliament House and crowds filing past. Empire and diplomatic representatives arrive at King's Hall for the funeral service, which is conducted by the Reverend Hector Harrison. The film includes scenes of the funeral cortege proceeding to the aerodrome, where the casket is placed onboard a plane for transport to Perth. The pallbearers carrying the casket to the plane include Earle Page, William Morris Hughes and Robert Menzies. A review of highlights of Curtin's political career follows and the story concludes with scenes of the funeral at Karrakatta Cemetery. The nation's leaders join thousands of Western

Australians in a last tribute to the man who led Australia in the difficult war years. The only available access copy of this newsreel is silent.

Movietone Special – 'I shall return', 1964

Title No: 231534

This newsreel is a tribute to General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in the Pacific during World War II. Archival film footage shows MacArthur on active duty at various stages throughout his career as a distinguished military officer, from World War I to the Korean War. Other footage shows MacArthur in Australia with Prime Minister John Curtin and in Japan. He is also shown receiving a number of accolades. The film runs for 7 minutes. An access copy is available.

Memoirs – Episode 03, 'John Curtin', 1965

Title No: 48166

This is a television documentary that provides an overview of John Curtin's life, but concentrates on his political career and his wartime leadership. An access copy is available.

'John Curtin', 1966

Title No: 16587

This is an episode in the *Mr Prime Minister* television series, which was produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). The series consists of seven episodes dealing with individual prime ministers (Deakin, Hughes, Bruce, Lyons, Curtin, Chifley and Menzies). An access copy is available.

Mr Prime Minister – documentation, 1966

Title No: 593794

This item contains papers relating to the ABC's television series, *Mr Prime Minister*. The general adviser to the series was Professor Colin Hughes, University of Queensland.

Film and video titles

Hellfire Jack: The John Curtin story, 1985

Title No: 6973

This two-hour documentary traces Curtin's life from childhood through to his wartime leadership of Australia. He died just two months before victory in the Pacific. An access copy is available.

'Operation Newsreel' in-house compilation – 'John Joseph Curtin, 1885-1945', 1995

Title No: 294239

This is a compilation of *Movietone News* and *Cinesound Review* newsreels focusing on John Curtin. ScreenSound Australia compiled it during the 'Operation Newsreel Project'. An access copy is available.

Recorded sound

United Australia Party talk, Nos 19 and 20, 1937

Title No: 388276

Joseph Aloysius Lyons recorded these political talks for the 1937 federal elections. Talk No. 19 is titled 'Mr Curtin's speech', while Talk No. 20 is titled 'National insurance'. No access copy is available.

Labor political talk – 'Malnutrition – The Hon. J A Curtin MHR' – speech, 1937**Title No: 245838**

This recording contains two election speeches by John Curtin. In the first speech (accessioned as Title No: 245839) Curtin talks about health issues, particularly malnutrition, the birth rate and falling population rates; he then goes on to discuss economic conditions, employment and the provision of proper shelter.

The second speech is titled 'Defence and unemployment', which is accessioned as Title No: 245840. In this speech Curtin talks about defence and unemployment, and about banking policy and how the previous war had promoted industry. No access copy is available.

Labour [sic] political talk – 'Final appeal: Commonwealth Bank – The Hon. J A Curtin MHR', 1937**Title No: 592492**

In this speech Curtin discusses banking, politics and government. No access copy is available.

1. 'The Honourable John Curtin' – version of talk for Thursday, 6 March 1941; and 2. 'Great Britain and North America', 1941**Title No: 245865**

This recording consists of two speeches by John Curtin. The first speech is accessioned as Title No: 245866. It was given by Curtin in his capacity as ALP leader and Leader of the Opposition. In this speech Curtin gives the encouragement of the people of Australia to the people of Britain during World War II, with emphasis on the labour force.

In the second speech, which is accessioned as Title No: 245868, Curtin gives the encouragement of the people of Australia to the people of Canada and the US during World War II, with emphasis again on the labour force. No access copy is available.

'Prime Minister John Curtin commits Australia to war with Japan', 1941**Title No: 156425**

This recording deals with Curtin's declaration of war on Japan. An access copy is available.

Talk by John Curtin on the declaration of war on Japan, 1941**Title No: 307580**

An access copy is available.

Announcement that Australia is at war with Japan, 1942**Title No: 148160**

This is a recording of Prime Minister Curtin declaring war on Japan. An access copy is available.

'Mr Curtin's speech – Australia Day' [with back announcement], 1942**Title No: 81941**

In this recording Mr Curtin makes a patriotic speech paying tribute to the people who built the Australian nation and asks that with God's blessing Australia will remain a white nation. The film runs for 2 minutes. An access copy is available in 'Prime Ministers of Australia – a compilation of speeches and interviews', which is accessioned as Title No: 214438.

'Speech to America by John Curtin', 14 March 1942

This recording was produced in 1945. An access copy is available.

Title No: 307566**'Talk by the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin to be broadcast to American short-wave', 14 March 1944**

In this recording Mr Curtin speaks in honour of General Douglas MacArthur's visit to Australia in 1945. The speech was broadcast in 1947, two years after Curtin's death. It runs for 2 minutes, 40 seconds. An access copy is available.

Title No: 212287**Prime ministerial reports and speeches – Curtin and Lyons [1939–44], 1944**

This recording contains segments of speeches given on various occasions. These include Curtin's speech on the death of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons and his speeches on the laying of the foundation stone of the US Legation in Canberra and opening of the Austerity Loan. It also includes a speech made when Curtin and New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser received the Freedom of the City of London. No access copy is available.

Title No: 574621**Memorial service for the late John Curtin from Parliament House, Canberra, 1945**

The speaker in this recording is Reverend Hector Harrison. An access copy is available.

Title No: 246835

John Curtin preparing to broadcast to the US, 1942.
Lloyd Ross Papers, MS 3939, series 11, folder 65
(By permission of the National Library of Australia)

Victory in the Pacific announcement – 'After the surrender of Japan', 1945

In this recording Prime Minister Ben Chifley states that the Japanese Government has accepted the terms of surrender set by the Allied nations. He asks that the fallen be remembered and thanks those who contributed to winning the war, including the Allied commanders and the fighting men of the allied nations. He laments the death of John Curtin and emphasises the importance of working for a prosperous peace. He then invites the Australian people to participate in thanksgiving ceremonies. An access copy is available.

Title No: 179490**'Mr John Curtin receiving the Freedom of the City of London' [1944], 1946**

An access copy is available.

Title No: 307567**Austerity talk by John Curtin, c1946**

No access copy is available.

Title No: 307571*Radio recordings***'Newsbreak' – selection of four news announcements, 1932–54**

Among the contents of this recording is Prime Minister Curtin's announcement of war with Japan in 1941. An access copy is available in 'The past is prologue', which is accessioned as Title No: 211445.

Title No: 211451**'Broadcast to Great Britain', 1941**

This radio recording, which features John Curtin speaking, comprises two segments. These are 'Part 1 – Title No: 149100', for which no access copy is available; and 'Part 2 – Title No: 149101', for which an access copy is available in 'Prime Ministers of Australia – compilation of speeches – in-house compilation', accessioned as Title No: 279288.

Title No: 192574**'Children's Hospital Appeal', 1943**

This radio recording features Prime Minister Curtin. An access copy is available.

Title No: 188513*National Film and Video Lending Service Collection*

The National Film and Video Lending Service (NFVLS) Collection was transferred to ScreenSound early in 2004. This collection comprises approximately 16 000 national and international film and video titles available for loan to educational institutions, film societies, community and non-commercial groups. The following items belong to the NFVLS.

John Curtin – motion picture, 1966

The ABC produced this film as part of its *Mr Prime Minister* series. It traces the life and political career of Curtin, using contemporary film and stills. It runs for 34 minutes.

A10070184**The Prime Ministers (Episode 3, 1939–49), 1983**

Recorded by John Boland and Assistants (production for Regional Television), Episode 3 uses historical footage and

A19066899

interviews with prominent Australians. It traces the careers of Robert Menzies, Arthur Fadden, John Curtin, Francis Forde and Joseph Chifley, Australia's prime ministers between 1939 and 1949

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES PROGRAM

Noel Butlin Archives Centre

Digitised copies of the *Journalist* volumes listed below are also available online through [JCPML ERA](#).

AUSTRALIAN TIMBER WORKERS' UNION, VICTORIAN BRANCH, 1907-21

T34

Quantity: 0.92 metres

These records include rulebooks, conference reports and photographs.

TRADES UNIONS OFFICIALS, 1914

K3781

This item is a composite portrait consisting of individual photographs of the secretaries and presidents of the unions affiliated to the Victorian Trades Hall Council in 1914. Among them is a photograph of John Curtin, who was then the Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union.

THE 'JOURNALIST', c1912-92

S202

Known variously as the *Australian Journalist* (1912-14) and the *Australasian Journalist* (1914-27), the *Journalist* was the official journal of the Australian Journalists' Association. John Curtin was President of the WA Branch of the AJA from 1920-25 and maintained his membership of the union throughout his life.

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

INTERVIEW OF GLADYS JOYCE, 2003

OHI 45

In this interview with Michael Richards, Gladys Joyce discusses her time as personal secretary to John Curtin. Miss Joyce joined Curtin's staff in 1941 when he was still Leader of the Opposition and worked for him during his years as Prime Minister until his death in 1945. The interview runs for about an hour.

New South Wales

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

OWEN, EVELYN – CORRESPONDENCE, 1940–45**H8608–2**

Quantity: 55 letters

Correspondence in this series concerns the development and production of the Owen submachine gun between 1940 and 1945. Correspondents include Frank Forde, John Curtin and Ben Chifley.

STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mitchell Library

Material related to Curtin contained in the Hartwell Papers listed below is also available online through the [JCPML ERA](#).

JAMES, WALTER HARTWELL – PAPERS 1897–1939**MSS 412**

Quantity: 8 volumes, 1 box

Walter James was a lawyer, delegate at the Federal Convention (1897–98) and Premier and Attorney-General of WA (1902–04), and was closely connected with the founding and early years of the University of Western Australia (UWA). This collection of his papers includes official and personal correspondence and papers regarding the Secession Movement in WA and other matters. Correspondents include John Curtin.

Correspondence (1904–06), 1929–39**MSS 412/8**

This item includes two letters from John Curtin to Walter James. One letter is dated 15 February 1934 and discusses federal grants to the states, while the other letter is dated 8 January 1939, acknowledging thanks for birthday wishes.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND AND REGIONAL ARCHIVES

ANSTEY, FRANK – MEMOIRS, 1965**A293**

Frank Anstey was a leading left-wing federal and state politician. These records comprise a typescript copy of Anstey's political memoirs relating mainly to manoeuvrings within the federal Labor Government in the early 1930s.

Victoria**STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA***La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection*

Material related to Curtin contained in the Ovenden Papers is also available online though [JCPML ERA](#). Microfilm copies of the newspapers listed below are also available at the [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#).

KENAFICK, KENNETH JOSEPH – THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT, c1957**MS 12568**

Quantity: 15 cm

This series comprises the typescript of a manuscript titled 'The Australian Labor movement in relation to war, socialism, and internationalism; particularly as evidenced in the careers, writings, and speeches of John Curtin and Maurice Blackburn.' Parts of the manuscript are titled 'Labour, militarism and war up to 1914', 'Socialism, labourism and Jack Curtin up to 1914' and 'Maurice Blackburn to 1914.'

OVENDEN, GEORGE – PAPERS, c1906-79**MS 10711**

Quantity: 25.5 cm

George Ovenden was a member of the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP) and married Yatala Bruce in 1921. John Curtin was a friend of the Bruce family in the years of his membership of the VSP and after. The papers include: correspondence of George Ovenden, Yatala Ovenden and Don Cameron; Yatala Bruce's school notebooks (1906-09); notes of the First Albert Park Troop Scouts (1909); fixture cards; and documents related to James Joseph Ovenden's service in the Victorian Navy (1852-72). Correspondence in the series includes letters and postcards to Yatala, Beryl ('Bobbie') and Jennie Bruce from John Curtin (1912-44). A photograph of John Curtin's mother and sister is also among the papers.

Photographs

Some images of Curtin are available online through the State Library of Victoria's 'Pictures Catalogue' and PictureAustralia (www.pictureaustralia.org).

The new Advisory National War Council held its inaugural meeting at Victoria Barracks, c1940**H99.201/2587**

This image shows John Beasley, William Morris Hughes, Prime Minister Robert Menzies, Lord Gowrie (the Governor-General), John Curtin, Frank Forde, Norman Makin, Percy Spender and Arthur Fadden.

- Advisory War Council in session at Canberra, c1940** H99.201/2808
 This image shows John Beasley, Norman Makin, Frank Forde, John Curtin, Robert Menzies, William Morris Hughes, Percy Spender, Arthur Fadden and Harold Holt seated at a conference table.
- War Cabinet meets, 1941** H2000.200/1457
 This image shows General Vernon Sturdee, Frederick Shedden (Secretary of the Department of Defence), Frank Forde and Prime Minister John Curtin sitting at a table, having a discussion.
- Pilot Officer Winkle being entertained by the Prime Minister, c1942** H98.103/1636
- Presentation of Australian flag to Allied nations at Princes Park, c1943** H99.201/5298
 This images shows soldiers presenting the flag and Mr Curtin addressing the troops.

Periodicals

- Creswick Advertiser and County of Talbot Agricultural Journal (Creswick, Victoria), 1871–99** Creswick (Newspapers on microfilm)
 This item contains copies of this newspaper dating from 1871 (No. 1502) to 1899 (No. 6190). The newspaper was published three times a week in Creswick, the town where John Curtin was born in 1885. A microfilm copy is available.
- Socialist (Melbourne, Vic), c1906–23** LTM 75
 This item contains copies of the *Socialist* dating from around 2 April 1906 to May 1923. A microfilm copy is available.
- Timber Worker – official organ of the Federated Timber Workers' Association, Victorian Branch, 1913–30** LTM 65
 This item contains copies of the *Timber Worker* from Vol. 1, No. 1 (February 1913) to Vol. 18, No. 12 (27 December 1930). A microfilm copy is available.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY – BARRIER DISTRICT ASSEMBLY RECORDS, 1891–1939 89 20

Quantity: 12 cm

Records in this series contain correspondence, ALP Provisional Central Executive minutes, publications (including the *Labor Daily* and the *Municipal Labor Manifesto*), leaflets, placards and other memorabilia. It includes material relating to John Christian Watson (Australia's first Labor Prime Minister, 1904) and correspondence with John Curtin.

AUSTRALIAN TIMBER WORKERS' UNION – VICTORIAN BRANCH RECORDS, 1905–83**84 60**

Quantity: 62 archives boxes, 1 over-sized item

Records in this series include minutes of various meetings, (eg of the union's managing committee, its executive and Melbourne members); books; the organiser's minute files and rough minutes; attendance books; financial papers, including day book receipts, wage books, cashbooks, the steward's ledger and balance sheets; subject files; correspondence regarding general matters, the Federal Council and employers; membership material and rules; organising reports; photographs; newspapers and journals, including the *Victorian Timber Worker*, the *NSW Timber Worker*, the *New Zealand Timber Worker* and the *Westralian Worker*.

John Curtin was Secretary of the Victorian Timber Workers' Union (1911–15) and founding editor of the union's newspaper, the *Timber Worker* (1913).

HARTNETT, SIR LAURENCE – PAPERS, 1923–85**86 129**

Quantity: 3.5 metres

Sir Laurence Hartnett was the Managing-Director of General Motors in Australia (1934–47). He also founded the Melbourne-based Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation in 1935 and was its director until 1947. Sir Laurence was also the Director of Ordnance Production in the Munitions Department for during World War II.

Papers in this series include correspondence, speeches, letters of introduction and files relating to wartime industrial production of munitions and vehicles. Correspondents include John Curtin.

HARTNETT, SIR LAURENCE – PAPERS, 1938–81**89 92**

Quantity: 1 cm

This series contains testimonials, including one from John Curtin (dated 9 June 1942), introducing Sir Laurence on an official visit to the US and Canada.

Western Australia**STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA***J S Battye Library of Western Australian History*

Material related to John Curtin in the Longmore Papers and some of the records of the Australian Labor Party listed below are also available online through the [JCPML ERA](#). Digitised transcripts of the Macleod and Shea interviews are similarly available on ERA. More information about the J S Battye Library of Western Australia collection is available online (www.liswa.wa.gov.au/battye).

Manuscripts

In this section Curtin's records are listed first, followed by other records arranged alphabetically by name of the creator.

CURTIN, JOHN – LETTER, c1920s**2165A**

Quantity: 1 item

This item is a letter from John Curtin, as editor of the *Westralian Worker*, to a Miss Murray, regarding a shorthand-typist position.

CURTIN, JOHN – LETTERS, 1928–41**MN 1543 4856A**

Quantity: 3 items

Records in this series include a letter from John Curtin to a Mrs Flynn accepting an invitation to the wedding of Mary Flynn and John Barlow, a letter from John Curtin to Jack Barlow and a letter to Mr Barlow from the Prime Minister's Office.

CURTIN, JOHN – LETTERS, 1934–36**865A**

Quantity: 3 items

These records comprise letters concerning Curtin's resignation as a trustee of the Public Library Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia.

CURTIN, JOHN – CORRESPONDENCE, 1942–43**1466A**

Quantity: 3 items

These records comprise correspondence between John Curtin and Lieutenant-General Leslie Morshead (General Officer Commanding Australian Imperial Force, Middle East, 1941–43), including a letter from John Curtin in reply to Harold John Fleming of the 1st Australian Railway Construction Unit, and a letter from General Leslie Morshead in reply to Harold Fleming.

ALP – WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH – RECORDS, 1899–1989**MN 300**

Quantity: 32 metres

This collection contains records of the State Executive of the ALP and of its parliamentary wing and various branches. Access to this collection is partly restricted. Records include minutes, correspondence, conference proceedings, election campaign material, financial records, membership lists and subject files under a wide range of headings. The subject files relate to particular people, unions and topics, including the Household Workers' Union, the Fabian Society, Abraham Needham (Curtin's father-in-law), Labor Day, one 'big' union, unemployment, the bulk handling of wheat, 'socials' (parties) in 1921–22 and the seamen's dispute of 1924. These records contain a wealth of material relevant to John Curtin.

The following records represent only a limited selection of material from this collection that relates to John Curtin.

Minutes – ALP National Congresses, 1913–28	MN 300 1573A/18
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – ‘CR–CZ’, 1916–22	MN 300 1688A/27
This item includes a letter to the ALP from John Curtin expressing thanks for condolences on the death of Abraham Needham. The letter is dated 31 August 1922.	
Minutes –ALP State Organising Committee, 1920–22	MN 300 1573A/25
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – international, 1923–27	MN 300 1688A/234
This item includes a letter from John Curtin, on <i>Westralian Worker</i> letterhead, dated 6 September 1924, on the importance of Australia ratifying International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions along with a copy of ‘Report submitted to the Prime Minister of Australia, 5 September 1924, by John Curtin, Australian Delegate to ILO Conference, Geneva, 1924’.	
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – seamen’s dispute, 1924	MN 300 1688A/272
This item includes press clippings relating to the blacklisting of Curtin during the seamen’s dispute and circular letters from Federated Seamen’s Union of Australasia, Sydney outlining its case.	
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – reports (State Executive), 1924–27	MN 300 1688A/268
Minutes – ALP State Executive meetings, 1925–30	MN 300 1573A/4
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – family endowment, 1927	MN 300 1688A/318
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – Federal Parliament, 1927–29	MN 300 1688A/323
Correspondence files – ALP Metropolitan Council – federal elections, 1928–31	MN 300 1319A/240
Fremantle District Council of the Australian Labor Party – election material (mainly printed), 1930s to 1940	MN 300 1802A/30
Douglas Credit proposals, 1932–36	MN 300 1688A/415
This item includes the minutes of the 1932 ALP State Congress at which John Curtin was appointed to the Douglas Credit Committee; a Douglas Credit Movement leaflet; a committee report; an additional report by Curtin; and a letter from Curtin to Trainer, dated 25 August 1933.	
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – Federal Executive, 1933–36	MN 300 1688A/428
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, 1933–36	MN 300 1688A/429
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – Federal Unity Conferences, 1934–35	MN 300 1688A/430

Australian Labor Party – correspondence, 1939	MN 300 3504A/31
Australian Labor Party – correspondence, 1939	MN 300 3504A/32
ALP records – State Executive minutes – 31 March 1939 to 15 December 1941 These minutes include those of 6 and 13 January 1941 regarding John Curtin's involvement in the Swan electorate by-election campaign in December 1940, at which the ALP candidate, James Dinan, claimed lack of support (the 'Dinan case').	MN 300 1704A/42
Fremantle District Council of the Australian Labor Party – election returns, 1940–41	MN 300 1802A/32
Fremantle District Council of the Australian Labor Party – Mr John Curtin, 1941–44	MN 300 1802A/23
ALP records – State Executive minutes – 17 October 1941 to 12 May 1944 Part IV of this item includes an address by John Curtin to a meeting of ALP State Executive and WA federal Labor parliamentarians at the Perth Trades Hall on 26 October 1942, in which he discussed the 'Fourteen Powers' referendum.	MN 300 1704A/43
Correspondence files – ALP Metropolitan Council – miscellaneous file, 1942–43	MN 300 1319A/307
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – federal elections – 'How-to-Vote' material, 1943 This item includes a number of election publications, including leaflets, flyers and 'How-to-Vote' cards. Titles include <i>For the safety of Australia Return the Curtin Government</i> , <i>Labor looks before it leaps</i> , <i>Military training</i> , <i>A step towards decentralisation</i> , <i>Why women vote for Labor</i> , <i>Homes for the people</i> , <i>Labor takes action to help primary producers</i> , <i>Labor is the Soldiers' Party</i> and <i>Well done Curtin – Carry On!</i> (a flyer for a speech given by Curtin on 2 August 1943 at the Sydney Town Hall).	MN 300 1719A/17.6
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – federal elections, 1943	MN 300 1719A/17.7
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – federal elections, 1943 This item includes a copy of 'Australia's Future in War and Peace' by Prime Minister Curtin, which is based on a speech delivered in Sydney on 6 June 1943.	MN 300 1719A/17.9.2
Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – personal congratulations and condolences, 1945–48 This item includes a card from Mrs Curtin and the Curtin family expressing thanks for a message of sympathy on the death of John Curtin as well as numerous letters and telegrams from a range of people and organisations regarding condolences and arrangements for Curtin's funeral.	MN 300 1719A/45

LONGMORE, CYRIL – PAPERS, 1908–52**MN 158 1298A**

Quantity: 0.68 metres

Cyril Longmore was editor of the *Western Mail* newspaper, a captain in the First Australian Imperial Force during World War I, a prospector and a war correspondent during World War II. His papers include World War I records of messages, orders, letters, reports and photographs taken at Gallipoli and in Belgium and France. Material from World War II includes reports from north-west Western Australia on the bombing of Broome and the training of Indigenous Australians as guerrilla fighters; confidential war news dispatched to the Department of Information; correspondence with John Curtin about the 1943 election; the use of Indigenous Australians for war duties; newspaper cuttings, including articles on gold prospecting in Coolgardie; and notes, accounts, correspondence and photographs of the Third State Prospecting Party.

OFFICE OF THE 'WESTRALIAN WORKER' – RECORDS, 1906–28**MN 583 268A-274A**

Quantity: 0.24 metres

The People's Printing and Publishing Company of Western Australia was the publisher of the *Westralian Worker*, the official mouthpiece of the WA Labor Party. The paper began publication in 1900 and John Curtin was its editor from 1917 to 1928. Records in this collection include a minute book of Workers' Board Executive (1906–12); a roll book of shareholders (1912–13); a list of shareholders (1922); a cash book (1923–28); a record of fees paid by the Collie Miners' Union (1926–27), the Harbour Workers' Union (1926–28) and the Timber Workers' Union (1927–28); a prospectus; a memorandum and articles of association (1915); and reports and balance sheets (1915–23).

RYAN, LESLIE ALBERT – PAPERS, 1932–43**MN 1784 5359A**

Quantity: 1 cm

These papers comprise a reference signed by John Curtin (1932), a sketchbook with drawings of life in the RAAF during World War II and some pieces of poetry.

Oral histories and sound recordings

In this section Curtin's records are listed first, followed by other records arranged alphabetically by surname of the interviewee.

[CURTIN, JOHN] VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECHES, 1930s to 1945**OH210**

This transcript comprises recorded speeches made by John Curtin on various occasions. These include the death of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons (1939), the declaration of war with Japan (1941), the laying of the foundation stone of the US Legation in Canberra (1942), Curtin's speech to the people of America (1942), the raising of funds for the £100-million Austerity Loan (1942), the conferral upon

Curtin of the Freedom of the City of London (1944) and Curtin's speech to Houses of Parliament, Canada (1944).

[Macleod, Elsie] Interview, 1994–95

OH2612/1

In this interview Elsie Macleod, nee Curtin, speaks at length about her parents, John and Elsie Curtin, and about Curtin family life.

[Shea, Frances] Interview, 1982

OH739

In this interview Frances Shea describes living in the East Fremantle area in the early part of the twentieth century. She recalls her education and schooling and her job as a clerk at the *Westralian Worker*. She gives a perspective on what life was like during the Great Depression and about her subsequent family life.

[Shea, Frances] Interview, 1995

OH2612/2

In this interview Frances Shea recalls John Curtin from 1918 onwards as a family friend and work colleague on the staff of the *Westralian Worker*.

[Shelley, Cecilia] Interview, 1976

OH171

Cecilia Shelley recounts details of her family and early life and her involvement with the Labor Movement in WA. She discusses union and labour politics and personalities, including John Curtin.

[Tonkin, John Trezise] Interview, 1972–73

OH2642

John Tonkin, Premier of Western Australia from 1971 to 1974, discusses his career in state politics and comments on political colleagues, including John Curtin, Albert Hawke, Phillip Collier and Alex McCallum.

Film

Sir Frederick Samson – personal film – reel 6, 'Air raid wardens, Fremantle', 1940–45

E1100

This film includes footage of John and Elsie Curtin.

Newspapers

The *Westralian Worker*, published Perth, WA Labor Party, 1900–51

F 331.09941 WES

This material is available on microfilm.

Portraits and photographs

Some of the following images of John Curtin can be viewed online through the State Library of Western Australia's Pictorial Collection catalogue (www.henrietta.lis.wa.gov.au and follow links). The following items are arranged chronologically.

Stirling Street, Northbridge – [shows offices of the *Westralian Worker* and the *Sunday Times*, the Open Markets and the Metropolitan Coffee Palace, c1930

8292B/B/101

The 'Gold Bonus' meeting, 1930

7549B

This item is a group portrait that includes John Curtin.

John Curtin sitting in front of a BBC microphone, c1941–45	BA499/22
John Curtin's triumphant return to Perth as Prime Minister, 1942	BA499/23
ALP federal and state members of parliament and trade unionists marching in funeral procession of the late Prime Minister John Curtin, 1945	8078B
Family and mourners at funeral of late Prime Minister John Curtin at Karrakatta Cemetery, 1945	8076B
Military band leading funeral procession of late Prime Minister John Curtin through Cottesloe, 1945	8077B
Bust of John Curtin, PM, memorial in the Cottesloe Civic Centre, [photograph] by George Russo, 1987	BA1130/68
Curtin Family home, Jarrad Street, Cottesloe, [photograph] by George Russo, 1987	BA1130/67

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ARCHIVES

Records relating to the journalism course listed below are also available online through [JCPML ERA](#). The records are arranged chronologically.

Australian Journalists' Association – Correspondence, 22 October 1918 to 14 July 1926 This series contains correspondence with the AJA relating to the establishment of a journalism course and 'Courses of Study' booklets. John Curtin is included on a list of persons attending courses in May 1926.	First Series File No. 235
'Diploma in Journalism' – practical lectures, 1929 This collection contains a booklet of lectures delivered to journalism classes, the course regulations and a program of the technical lectures and prescribed prerequisite tests. John Curtin was involved in the journalism course as a member and then as President (1920–25) of the WA Branch of the AJA.	Consignment 715
Journalism diploma course, 5 March 1928 to 26 July 1933 This series includes correspondence regarding the payment of lecturers, a booklet from the Bulletin School of Journalism at the University of Missouri (US), a proposed course program, lecture times and information regarding board appointments.	First Series File No. 1745

South Australia

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

EVATT, HERBERT VERE – COLLECTION, 1913–65	994.05 E92Q
Quantity: c110 metres	
Papers in this series include correspondence covering Herbert Vere Evatt's private and public life, mainly when he was the Attorney-General, Minister for External Affairs	

and Leader of the Opposition. Other material in the series includes a collection of newspaper cuttings; printed matter relating to the ALP, federal elections between 1940 and 1959, the United Nations between 1943 and 1949, and the Petrov Affair; books, journals, pamphlets and photographs; manuscripts of books and articles published by Evatt; and some legal material. A file titled 'Curtin, John' is also found in the series.

United Kingdom

CHURCHILL ARCHIVES CENTRE

Material related to Curtin in the Robinson Papers listed below is available online through the [JCPML ERA](#), while an online catalogue to the papers of Winston Churchill is also available (www.chu.cam.ac.uk/churchill_papers). The following material is arranged chronologically.

PAPERS OF WINSTON CHURCHILL – CHARTWELL TRUST PAPERS – PERSONAL, 1884–1965

CHAR 1

The personal papers of Churchill in this series include correspondence with or about his family and friends on non-public topics. The series also includes papers on Churchill's personal, financial and legal affairs, and his social life.

Chequers – household accounts – correspondence, 17 February to 2 November 1944

CHAR 1/385

This item contains a list of official overseas guests at Chequers, the British prime ministerial residence, for April to June 1944. These visitors include Field Marshal Jan Smuts (South Africa), Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King (Canada) and Prime Minister John Curtin.

PAPERS OF WINSTON CHURCHILL – CHARTWELL TRUST PAPERS – SPEECHES, 1897–1965

CHAR 9

Records in this series include speeches by Churchill along with notes, drafts of speeches, speaking notes, press releases and cuttings, *Hansard* extracts and other printed material. There are references to John Curtin in several speeches and in the associated material.

Non-House of Commons – speech notes and press cuttings, 2 March 1944 to 4 January 1945

CHAR 9/166

This item includes Churchill's speech given at the Australia Club in London on 18 May 1944, at a luncheon in honour of John Curtin. A newspaper cutting from *The Times* newspaper reporting the speech is also included.

Non-House of Commons – speech notes and source material, 9 January to 27 April 1941

CHAR 9/181A-B

This item contains a number of papers, including Churchill's appeal to Australians to support the war loan campaign and praising John Curtin as the Prime

Minister of Australia. Other material in this item includes correspondence about the recording of the speech by the British Broadcasting Commission; notes by John Peck, John Martin and Anthony Bevir; a BBC broadcast by Churchill entitled *Westward, look, the land is bright*, which deals with the war situation; and correspondence from John Curtin and others.

PAPERS OF WINSTON CHURCHILL – CHARTWELL TRUST PAPERS – PUBLIC AND POLITICAL – GENERAL, 1898–1964

CHAR 2

The papers in this series relate to Churchill's activities as a person in public life other than to his work as a Member of Parliament or as a minister. This series includes several items relating to Prime Minister Curtin.

Correspondence congratulating Churchill on his sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth birthdays, November 1941 to December 1942

CHAR 2/453

Patronage – correspondence – HQ, February 1943 to February 1944

CHAR 2/485

Birthday congratulations – Dominions and colonies, November 1944

CHAR 2/517

Gifts – 'T-Z', 1 January 1944 to 31 December 1944

CHAR 2/526

This item includes correspondence with William Tainish about a poem on the fourth anniversary of the start of the war and copies of correspondence between John Curtin and Sir Ronald Cross, the Australian High Commissioner, London.



Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers, London, 1944. NAA: A5954, 661/12

Left to right: Prime Minister Peter Fraser (New Zealand), Prime Minister John Curtin, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, His Majesty George VI, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King (Canada) and Field Marshall Jan Smuts (South Africa).

**PAPERS OF WINSTON CHURCHILL – CHARTWELL TRUST PAPERS –
OFFICIAL – PRIME MINISTER, 1940–45****CHAR 20**

Papers in this series relate to Churchill's wartime prime ministership. The material is wide-ranging and includes private office correspondence; personal telegrams; printed copies of personal minutes, telegrams and reports; correspondence about appointments and patronage; family correspondence; and engagement cards and diaries.

Among the records relevant to Prime Minister John Curtin are around 450 telegrams, mainly between him and Churchill, but also between Churchill and other people. These include other Dominion prime ministers, President Roosevelt, Richard Gardiner Casey, Sir Archibald Wavell, Dr Earle Page, Frank Forde, Clement Attlee, Ronald Cross and Arthur Fadden. The telegrams are arranged chronologically and provide a fascinating view of Australian-British and Churchill-Curtin relations during the war years. The series also contains a small amount of other material, such as newspaper clippings and reports, which refer to Curtin.

Telegram from the President of the United States [Franklin Roosevelt] to Winston Churchill, 21 February 1942**CHAR 20/70/104-105**

Reciting the text of his message to John Curtin, Roosevelt promises American troops and naval protection for Australia, emphasises the strategic importance of Burma and appeals for the diversion of [the 7th] Australian Division to Burma.

Telegram from John Curtin to Winston Churchill marked 'Most Secret', 31 July 1942**CHAR 20/78/105-106**

This telegram discusses the use of Australian troops in the Middle East. It includes comments on the review by the British Chiefs of Staff and on the threat to Australia from the Japanese. In the telegram Curtin agrees to extend the temporary retention of the Australian 9th Division in the Middle East and to provide two months' worth of reinforcements. He also comments on the need to develop air strength in Australia and states that the agreement for 9th Division to remain in Middle East is conditional on measures being taken to ensure the allotment of aircraft.

Telegram from Winston Churchill to Prime Minister of Australia marked 'Most Secret and Personal', 10 December 1942**CHAR 20/84/109**

In this telegram Churchill comments about the arrangements to return the 9th Division to Australia from the Middle East and on plans to make two more aircraft carriers available in the Pacific.

Telegram from Winston Churchill to John Curtin marked 'Secret and Personal', 17 July 1943**CHAR 20/115/55**

In this telegram Churchill asks Curtin to guard against disclosures of controversial material during the forthcoming general election and to try to prevent questioning of the Allies' policies.

Telegram from John Curtin to Winston Churchill marked 'Most Secret and Personal', 19 July 1943

CHAR 20/115/79

In this telegram Curtin discusses the forthcoming Australian federal election, stating it should be a purely domestic affair. He comments on a report by Robert Menzies, in which he criticises the Curtin Government for not sending an AIF division to Burma, and asks for more information on this report.

Telegram from Winston Churchill to John Curtin marked 'Most Secret and Personal', 11 November 1943

CHAR 20/124/38

In this telegram, Churchill states that he is very glad that 'His Majesty King George VI has given his permission to HRH the Duke of Gloucester becoming the Governor-General of Australia.'

Telegram from the Prime Minister of Australia to Winston Churchill marked 'Most Secret and Personal', 4 March 1944

CHAR 20/158/55

In this telegram Curtin asks Churchill for a detailed account of decisions reached at the Sextant Conference in Cairo before he leaves Australia. Curtin also asks that Churchill advise him of the opinion of his naval advisers regarding possible Japanese incursions into the Indian Ocean.

Telegram from Winston Churchill to the Prime Minister of Australia marked 'Most Secret and Personal', 11 March 1944

CHAR 20/159/36

In this telegram Churchill informs Curtin that the British Chiefs of Staff have been investigating the most effective contribution British forces could make towards the defeat of the Japanese. Churchill states that this has resulted in two proposals – first, that Britain would use the bulk of her naval force across the Indian Ocean against the Malay barrier, using India as its main base; or, secondly, that Britain would send these forces, along with land and air forces, to the South-West Pacific Area, using Australia as its main base. He suggests that a small party of administrative experts should be sent to Australia to study its potential as a base.

John Curtin's report to the Australian Parliament of the prime ministers' meeting in London in May 1944

CHAR 20/140B/227

This report explains the purpose of the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers and comments on the war with Germany and Japan. It also describes foreign policy in relation to the conduct of the war and discusses future world organisations and improved machinery for Empire cooperation. It goes on to describe the views of the governments of other nations and comments on various economic, social and transport questions. The report is annotated.

The War in the Pacific, 12 August 1944 – 26 September 1944

CHAR 20/186

This item contains telegrams exchanged between Prime Minister Churchill, Prime Minister Curtin and General Douglas MacArthur.

Telegram from Winston Churchill to John Curtin marked 'Personal', 3 May 1945

CHAR 20/217/57

In this telegram, Churchill expresses his sorrow at Curtin's illness and wishes him a speedy recovery.

ROBINSON, PROFESSOR SIR EDWARD AUSTIN GOSSAGE – PAPERS, c1940–60

ROBN

Quantity: 80 boxes

Papers in this collection deal with the British agencies such as Ministry of Production (during World War II) and the Board of Trade and the Treasury (both in the postwar period). Other material deals with the European Recovery Program (known variously as the Marshall Plan, Marshall Aid or the Marshall Program) and the Organisation for European Cooperation and Development. These papers contain some material relevant to John Curtin and Australia.

Ministry of Production – Australia as a base – 'Top Secret' memo, 1944

ROBN 2/3/4

In October 1943 Curtin asked the British Government for its views on the desirable distribution of effort of available Australian manpower between the armed forces, munitions production, food production and so on. This file is concerned with answering this question, assisted by a report compiled by a British press delegation to Australia in October to November 1943. A copy of the 17-page report is included in this item.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Material on Curtin contained in the Durnford Papers and the photographs and portraits listed below are also available online through the [JCPML ERA](#). Copies of listed films are also held by the [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#).

DURNFORD, VICE-ADMIRAL JOHN WALTER – MISCELLANEOUS NAVAL PAPERS, 1930–51

JWD 5

Quantity: 15 items

British Commodore (later Vice-Admiral) John Walter Durnford served as Second Naval Member of the Commonwealth of Australia Naval Board from December 1940 to April 1942. His papers include correspondence with Prime Minister Curtin.

Letter (copy) from Commodore J W Durnford to John Curtin – leakage of secret naval information, 11 December 1941

Letter (copy) from John Curtin to Commodore J W Durnford – reply to Durnford's letter, 22 December 1941

Photographs and portraits

John Curtin speaking at Empire Prime Ministers' dinner, Greenwich, 8 May 1944	4700-01 A23164-5
Guests at Empire Prime Ministers' dinner, Greenwich, 8 May 1944	4700-01 A23166
John Curtin talking to guests at Empire Prime Ministers' dinner, Greenwich, 8 May 1944	4700-01 A23171
John Curtin signing visitors' book at Empire Prime Ministers' dinner, Greenwich, 8 May 1944	4700-01 A23172
Guests arriving at Empire Prime Ministers' dinner, Greenwich, 8 May 1944	4700-01 A23173
Dominion premiers [sic] signing an agreement at Downing Street on 16 May 1944	4700-08 HU55580
John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, speaking at a press conference at the Ministry of Information, London, May 1944	4700-09 HU73369
Prime ministers John Curtin of Australia and Jan Smuts of South Africa, Guildhall, London, May 1944	TBA21 HU69262

Films

'Arrival of Mr Curtin at Croydon', 29 April 1944 Prime Minister Curtin arrives by plane and talks to the press. He is in England for the first wartime Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers and is shown with High Commissioner Stanley Melbourne Bruce. The film runs for 2 minutes.	ACA 7
<i>Commonwealth leaders meet at Empire Conference [Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers], 5 June 1944</i> This film shows the leaders of British Commonwealth countries meeting in London for the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers held in May 1944. Various scenes are shown, including official cars parked outside No. 10 Downing Street, London; British Prime Minister Churchill talking to Field Marshal Jan Smuts (Prime Minister of South Africa) in the gardens of No. 10 Downing Street; and the four Dominion prime ministers (Field Marshal Smuts, William Lyon Mackenzie King, John Curtin and Peter Fraser) sitting at a table with Winston Churchill at the start of the conference. The commentary outlines the main points of a declaration signed by Churchill and the Dominion prime ministers in which they reiterate their inflexible resolve to continue the war until the defeat of the enemy has been achieved and the agony of mankind is ended. The film runs for 1 minute, 15 seconds.	WPN 161 II

JOHN RYLANDS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF MANCHESTER

*Labour History Archives and Study Centre***LABOUR PARTY ARCHIVES, 1906–****LP**

The records in this series comprise politicians' private papers, National Executive Committee minutes, British Labour Party annual reports, general secretaries' papers, policy committee minutes and research department, international department and Parliamentary Labour Party papers.

The General Secretary's papers – death, telegrams from MP [sic] and Clement Attlee to Secretary of the Australian Labor Party on death of John Curtin, 5 July 1945

LP/GS/DEA/10-11**NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

The National Archives incorporates the UK Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Its records catalogue can be viewed online (www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk). The National Archives holds material about Curtin collected from the Cabinet Office, the British Foreign Office and the Dominions Office. The records listed below are available online through the [JCPML ERA](#).

Material in the Prime Minister's Office records is available on microfilm. A copy of 'Churchill at war: the Prime Minister's Office papers, 1940-45', which contains PREM 3 and PREM 4, can be viewed at the National Library of Australia (accession number mfm G27767-28057). The following material is ordered by accession number.

CABINET OFFICE – MINISTER OF DEFENCE SECRETARIAT – RECORDS, 1938–47**CAB 120**

This series consists of the files of the Military Secretariat of the Cabinet Office for the period that Churchill and Attlee successively combined the offices of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. The files reflect the personal direction of the war and its aftermath over the whole range of issues in which the minister involved himself and the machinery through which he operated.

Mr Curtin, June 1944 – January 1945

This item mainly comprises telegrams between Churchill and Curtin.

CAB 120/821**DOMINIONS OFFICE AND COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE – ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1915–71****DO 35**

This series comprises the general records of the Dominions Office, which are concerned with relations within British Commonwealth nations. This series includes some records created by this agency's successor bodies – the Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office.

Illness and death of prominent citizens – Australia (Mr John Curtin), 1945

DO 35/1120

**FOREIGN OFFICE – POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS – GENERAL
CORRESPONDENCE, 1906–66****FO 371**

Records in this series contain correspondence and other material. The Foreign Office's political departments, which included the Political Intelligence Department (1939–46) and some of the joint Foreign Office/Commonwealth Relations Office departments, created these records. Subjects covered include the UK's political, trade and other relations with states and territories outside the British colonial empire; Dominion territories and Commonwealth states; international defence organisations; the League of Nations; the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies; international economic organisations; and the Council of Europe, the Baghdad Pact and the South Pacific Commission.

War preparation against Japan, 1941**FO 371/27976**

This item contains a copy of a telegram from the UK High Commissioner in Australia regarding the dangerous position Australia would be in if the Japanese were to attack.

Australian affairs, 1941**FO 371/29111****United States – views on colonial policy, 1942****FO 371/31527**

This item contains a copy of telegram from the UK High Commissioner in Australia about Australian ideas on their country's future role in the South-West Pacific Area and in South-East Asia.

Committee on American opinion and the British Empire, 1943**FO 371/34090**

This item contains a report from General Ewing, UK Army Liaison Staff, Australia on relations between Australian and American forces.

Committee on American opinion and the British Empire, 1943**FO 371/34089**

This item contains a report by General Ewing and notes by Lieutenant-Colonel Sanford, who writes that the 'United States troops in Australia are definitely unpopular with the Australian troops'.

United States–Australian relations, 1943**FO 371/34218**

This item contains statements and cablegrams about the deteriorating relations between Australia and USA – 'There are strong reactions against the consequence of an army of occupation.'

Australia–New Zealand Agreement, 1944**FO 371/42682**

This item contains a copy of an address by Prime Minister Curtin to members of the Empire Parliamentary Association, House of Commons, Westminster, on 17 May 1944.

American opinion and the British Empire, 1944**FO 371/38523**

This item contains extracts from an article in the *New York Times* reporting remarks made by prime ministers Curtin and Fraser about the Australia–New Zealand Agreement, along with UK reaction to it.

Political situation – consular reports, 1944

FO 371/38502

This item contains a San Francisco consular report that includes comments on Mr Curtin's brief visit to San Francisco, which 'appears to have been a great success.'

Australian affairs, 1944

FO 371/42673

This item includes copies of *Australian Current Notes on International Affairs*, produced by the Department of External Affairs, Canberra, for October 1943 to April 1944; copies of dispatches from the UK High Commissioner, Canberra providing overviews of internal affairs in Australia (1943–44); and a report from the UK High Commissioner about the Triennial ALP Conference held in Canberra in December 1943. The latter report notes that the:

...outstanding feature of the Conference was Mr Curtin's speech which was devoted to an appeal to the Labor Party to abandon its policy of isolation and the development of his suggestions for closer Empire collaboration.

Suggestions for improvement in methods of inter-Commonwealth collaboration and consultation on foreign affairs, 1944

FO 371/42674

Australian diplomatic representation abroad – immigration to Australia, 1945

FO 371/50368

The item contains copies of dispatches, telegrams and other material from the UK High Commissioner, Canberra, about internal affairs in Australia between May and October 1945.

FOREIGN OFFICE – TREATY DEPARTMENT AND SUCCESSORS – GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1906–67

FO 372

Items in this series contain correspondence and other material created by the Treaty Department and its successor agencies. Subjects covered include treaty correspondence with other countries; shipping claims arising from the Russo-Japanese war; honours and decorations; territorial waters; extradition treaties; nationality; consular and diplomatic appointments; diplomatic privileges; civil procedure; deportation agreements; and various royal matters, including state and royal visits.

Mr E J Flynn – US Ambassador to Australia, 1943

FO 372/3555

This item contains telegrams and other material about the controversy over the appointment of Mr Flynn as US Ambassador to Australia and the reaction of the Australian press to the appointment.

FOREIGN OFFICE – PRIVATE OFFICE PAPERS OF SIR ANTHONY EDEN, EARL OF AVON, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1936–46

FO 954

This series contains copies of the private office papers of Anthony Eden in his capacity as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1936–38 and 1940–45). Items in the series that relate to Prime Minister Curtin include copies of telegrams between Curtin, Prime Minister Churchill, Richard Gardiner Casey and President Roosevelt. Please

note that the following items include page numbers (eg 'FO 954/4B, 400' refers to page 400 of item FO 954/4B).

Dominions – Prime Minister [Churchill] to Mr Curtin – reply to proposals about air cooperation between the US and Australia, 20 March 1942	FO 954/4B, 400
Dominions – J S M [sic], Washington to Chiefs of Staff, London – situation in the South Pacific (draft reply to Mr Curtin), 16 September 1942	FO 954/4B, 400–62
Dominions – Foreign Office tel. [telegram] to Washington, No. 7526; Prime Minister [Churchill] to President [Roosevelt], No. 215 – Mr Curtin insists on return of Australian Division, 2 December 1942	FO 954/4B, 493
Far East – Mr Curtin's telegram to Prime Minister [Churchill] – talk with General MacArthur – review of Australian war effort – British Naval Task Force, 4 July 1944	FO 954/7A, 143–44
War (General) – Prime Minister [Churchill] – telegram to Mr Curtin – progress of the war, 18 September 1944	FO 954/32, 619–23

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – OPERATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE AND PAPERS, 1940–45

PREM 3

This series contains papers created in the Secretariat of the Prime Minister's Office during World War II. The series also contains Prime Minister Churchill's papers on defence and operational matters, which were created in his capacity as both Prime Minister and Minister for Defence. These papers comprise subject files arranged alphabetically. Subjects covered in the series include the Far East, China and the War in the Pacific. There is a wealth of material relevant to Australia and Prime Minister Curtin to be found in these records.

[South-East Asia – Operations in] Singapore – Telegrams, 1941 to May 1942	PREM 3/168/1
[British and imperial campaign] – Telegrams exchanged with Australia concerning conduct of campaign, November 1941 to January 1942	PREM 3/206/2
[Anzac area] Selection of telegrams to and from Prime Minister of Australia, December 1941 to January 1942	PREM 3/145/3
[Pacific War Council] Selection of telegrams between Prime Minister Churchill and Prime Minister Curtin, December 1941 to February 1942	PREM 3/167/1-3
[Australian and New Zealand forces] Australian Division to reinforce Burma, February 1942	PREM 3/63/4
[Australian and New Zealand forces] Return of Australian and New Zealand divisions from Middle East, February to December 1942	PREM 3/63/10
[Australia and New Zealand, defence of] Possible invasion of Australia, March to April 1942	PREM 3/151/2

- [South-East Asia – Operations in] Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham's⁶⁸ despatch on Far East and General Wavell's⁶⁹ report on operations in Malaya and Singapore, June to December 1943 PREM 3/168/2-3
- [Hostilities – General] Sir Walter Layton's report on visit to Australia and New Zealand, February 1944 PREM 3/159/2
- [Australian and New Zealand forces] Australian manpower and war effort, October 1943 to April 1945 PREM 3/63/8

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – CONFIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE AND PAPERS, 1940–45

PREM 4

This series contains material relating to the work of British civil service departments during World War II. The papers detail wartime activities and policies concerning issues on the home front. Some records in this series relate to Prime Minister Curtin and Australia.

- [Home – Imperial] Telegrams exchanged with Dominion prime ministers, November 1940 to December 1942 PREM 4/43B/2
- [Australian political crises and Australian representation in the War Cabinet] Australian election, July to September 1943 PREM 4/50/10
- [Australian political crises and Australian representation in the War Cabinet] Australia–New Zealand Agreement, January to March 1944 PREM 4/50/12
- [Home – Imperial] Engagements for Dominion prime ministers, March to May 1944 PREM 4/42/4
- [Home – Imperial] Programme of discussions, statements, attendance and photographs at meetings of Dominion prime ministers, March to June 1944 PREM 4/42/6

United States of America

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

The Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is currently digitising key elements of its collection and it is possible to view many items online (www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu). Most of the material related to John Curtin in this collection is also available for viewing online through [JCPML ERA](#).

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN D – PAPERS AS PRESIDENT – PRESIDENT'S SECRETARY'S FILE, 1933–45

This series includes the following files relating to John Curtin:

- Safe – Australia, 1 to 9 June 1942
- Diplomatic – Australia, 28 November 1939 – 25 August 1942
- Diplomatic – Australia, 14 September 1942 – 13 June 1944

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN D – PAPERS AS PRESIDENT – MAP ROOM FILE, 1941–45

The series includes the following files that include messages to and from John Curtin:

Miscellaneous dispatches in, 1942

Miscellaneous dispatches out, 1942

Miscellaneous dispatches in, 1943

Miscellaneous dispatches out, 1943

Miscellaneous dispatches in, 1944

Miscellaneous dispatches out, 1944

Roosevelt to Churchill correspondence, 1942

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN D – PAPERS AS PRESIDENT – PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL FILE, 1933–45

This series includes the following file relating to John Curtin:

PPF 8459 – Curtin, John, 8 June 1943 – 13 September 1944

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN D – PAPERS AS PRESIDENT – OFFICIAL FILE, 1933–45

This series includes the following files relating to John Curtin:

OF 48-d – Australia, 3 May 1933 – 30 December 1940

OF 48-d – Australia, 19 March 1941 – 19 October 1943

OF 48-d – Australia, 3 April 1944 – 12 March 1945

OF 48-d – Australia, X-ref, 17 August 1933 – 10 April 1945

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT – RECORDS, 1933–45

This series includes the following files relating to John Curtin's visit to the US in 1944:

Dinner, Prime Minister of Australia John Curtin, 25 April 1944

Luncheon, Mrs Curtin, 3 May 1944

Photographs

Eleanor Roosevelt shaking hands with Prime Minister John Curtin on her arrival in Canberra, 3 September 1943	FDRL 51-115:169(151)
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Eleanor Roosevelt being greeted by Prime Minister John Curtin on her arrival in Canberra, 3 September 1943	FDRL 75-4(72)
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MacARTHUR MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The MacArthur Memorial Library and Archives (MML&A) holds the official and personal papers of General Douglas MacArthur. Highlights of the collection are its photographs and materials relating to World War II and the Korean War. The library also holds the papers of his subordinate generals, US veterans and acquaintances of General MacArthur.

The collection is arranged into Record Groups (RGs). The JCPML holds microfilm copies of material relating to John Curtin from RG 3 and RG 4, which are described below. Photographs and listed items from RGs 5, 10 and 27 are also available online on [JCPML ERA](#).

RECORDS OF HEADQUARTERS, SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC AREA (SWPA), 1942-45**RG 3**

Quantity: 100 feet (also on microfilm)

This record group contains material gathered by General MacArthur's personal staff during 1942-45. The documents comprise intelligence documents, operations plans, correspondence, messages, orders, geographic surveys, captured documents, interrogation reports and historical index cards. Most of the messages (radiograms) for this period are located in RG 4.

Index cards for Prime Minister Curtin documents in SWPA series, 1942-45

Official correspondence, March 1942 to June 1944

Official correspondence, July 1944 to August 1945

SWPA Headquarters records, 1942-45

Commander-in-Chief correspondence relating to John Curtin, 1942-45

RECORDS OF GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY FORCES PACIFIC (USAFPAC), 1942-47**RG 4**

Quantity: 24.5 feet (also on microfilm)

This collection contains material kept by General MacArthur's staff. This material mainly comprises intelligence and operations summaries, memorandums, correspondence, orders and reports. Although USAFPAC was created on 3 April 1945, the correspondence dates from the arrival of MacArthur in Australia in 1942. The remainder of the material begins with 1945 and extends to January 1947, covering part of the military forces and activities of the occupation of Japan.

Index cards for John Curtin documents in USAFPAC series, 1942-47

General files - Australian Government, 1-100, 1942-47

General files - Australian Government, 101-500, 28 February to 11 August 1942

General files - Australian Government, 501-942, 12 August 1942 to 8 June 1943

G-2 Estimate - Far Eastern Intelligence, 8 June 1943 to 1 August 1945

History of MacArthur's commands, 1941-45

Operating procedure – Sixth Army, 1941–45**Series 5 – Communiqués, 1942–45; and Press releases, 1942–46****RECORDS OF GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS (SCAP), 1945–51****RG 5**

Quantity: 57 feet (also on microfilm)

These records mainly relate to the occupation of Japan and include personal and official correspondence, reports, peace treaty folders, general orders, circulars, minutes of the Allied Council for Japan, and daily appointments and memos for the Supreme Commander. Some correspondence dates from MacArthur's arrival in Australia in 1942. RG 5 includes correspondence related to John Curtin.

Index cards for John Curtin documents held in the SCAP Diplomatic Section, Australian Prime Minister, 1942–45**GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR'S PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE, 1848–1964****RG 10**

Quantity: 99 feet (also on microfilm)

These records contain official and semi-official material as well as personal correspondence, 'VIP' correspondence and the manuscript of MacArthur's autobiography, *Reminiscences*. RG 10 includes correspondence related to John Curtin.

Index card entries for John Curtin documents contained in General MacArthur's private correspondence, 1942–43**PAPERS OF MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD J MARSHALL, 1916–51****RG 29–RG 29C**

Quantity: c6 feet

These collections contain records of official and personal correspondence, writings and journals, photographs, printed materials and publications related to Major-General Marshall's career in the US Army from 1916–52, including his time as Chief of Staff for Logistics on the staff of General MacArthur (1941–46).

Official correspondence of R J Marshall, 1916–51**RG 29 series 1**

This material includes correspondence, including personal letters to and from, Prime Minister Curtin (1943); a report on Australian manpower from Curtin; official correspondence for both SWP and USAFPAC; a 1943 report on lend-lease operations in Australia; and a 'Report on procurements in Australia and Tasmania and other matters, 1942–45' by US Brigadier-General Hugh Hester, dealing with matters such as engineering, transportation, the US Signal Corps, medical care, lend-lease, subsistence and ordnance.

Photographs

Photographs in the MML&A relating to John Curtin include the following:

General MacArthur with Lord Gowrie and Prime Minister John Curtin, [c1942–45]	MML&A 9556
General MacArthur at Commonwealth Bank, Melbourne with Prime Minister Curtin, 1942	MML&A 9562
General MacArthur and Prime Minister Curtin, Brisbane, [c1942–45]	MML&A 9602
Mrs Roosevelt with Prime Minister Curtin at state luncheon or dinner, 4 September 1943	MML&A 9021
General MacArthur with Prime Minister Curtin and US Ambassador Nelson Johnson, Canberra, [c1942–45]	MML&A 9755
General MacArthur meets with Prime Minister Curtin in Sydney to discuss vital war problems, [c1942–45]	MML&A 10380

Notes

⁶¹ Downs, Ian. *The Australian Trusteeship: Papua New Guinea, 1945–75*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1980.

⁶² Fricke, Graham L. *Profiles of power: The Prime Ministers of Australia*, Ferntree Gully, Victoria, Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

⁶³ Hall, Cecil R. *The Manufacturers: Australian manufacturing achievements to 1960*, [Sydney] Angus and Robertson, 1971.

⁶⁴ Ross, Lloyd. *John Curtin: A Biography*, Melbourne, Sun Books, 1983 (first published: South Melbourne: Macmillan, c1977).

⁶⁵ Lloyd, C and Hall, R (eds); original notes, Smith, F. *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's War*, Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1997.

⁶⁶ Souter, Gavin. *Acts of Parliament: A Narrative History of the Senate and House of Representatives*, Commonwealth of Australia, Carlton, Victoria, Melbourne University Press, 1989.

⁶⁷ Beazley, K E. *John Curtin – An Atypical Labor Leader*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1972.

⁶⁸ Britain's Commander-in-Chief, Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, the British Government's Special Envoy to the Far East (1942).

⁶⁹ Britain's Field Marshal Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief, American-British-Dutch-Australian Command, South-West Pacific (1942) and Commander-in-Chief, India (1942–43).

5

Elsie Curtin



Studio portrait of Elsie Curtin, 1942.
JCPML00376/15

Elsie Curtin, wife of Australia's wartime Prime Minister John Curtin, was born in Ballarat, Victoria on 4 October 1890, one of three children and the only daughter of Abraham Needham and Annie (nee Hosking). Her father, Abraham, born near Colac in Victoria in July 1860, earned his living as a painter and sign writer but was dependent on the goldmining industry for the more specialised aspects of his work in gold-leaf and wood-graining. When the demand for these services declined in the mid-1890s, he migrated to South Africa, returning for his family two years later in 1898 with businesses successfully established in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

In South Africa Elsie was educated at Woodstock in the Cape Town area and she recalled her childhood as 'exceptionally happy'.⁷⁰ Most of her interests are said to have centred on the Church⁷¹ – her mother's parents had been devout members of the Primitive Methodist Church – and she played the organ at the Methodist Church in Cape Town.

At an early age Elsie had also become interested in politics through discussions with her father who had, after moving away to some extent from his earlier strict Methodist views and experiences as preacher in the Victorian countryside, become a foundation member in 1904 of the Cape Town Social Democratic Federation and then the editor of a socialist newspaper. Elsie herself joined the federation three years later at the age of 17, but at this stage she also seems to have maintained her strong commitment to Methodism, including signing the pledge to abstain from alcohol and dancing.

Both in South Africa and then in Tasmania, Elsie had numerous opportunities over the years to discuss topical political issues and absorb socialist values through the commitment of her father. Her mother was also an important influence, giving active support to the suffragette cause in South Africa.⁷²

Evidence of the strength of Abraham Needham's conversion to what had become his new religion of socialism can be found in the pages of various issues of the *Cape Socialist*. In one issue, one of the paper's journalists suggested that it was Needham's 'strong personality and whole hearted advocacy on all occasions of Socialism' that was largely 'instrumental in the great success of the movement here'.⁷³ At the time the paper was seeking funds for

Needham's defence against charges that led to him being gaoled for a few days following an outbreak of looting in the wake of a meeting of unemployed workers.

Needham himself had a passion for writing poetry and on this occasion he likened the role of socialist reformers to that of the early Christians as:

...the prophets, priests and kings of hope and liberty for men...who fought a fight for Truth and Right.⁷⁴

On other occasions he proclaimed that 'Christ of Nazareth is my standard' and that Christ was a symbol of 'the vast toiling masses'. Elsie subsequently recalled that 'night after night' her father:

...burned the midnight oil while he studied, read or wrote articles for his papers and his poems: the latter he had published in one volume.⁷⁵

When the Needhams returned to Hobart in 1908 (leaving one son in Cape Town), Abraham established another sign-writing business as well as completing a course in economics and studying astronomy and phrenology. Elsie, for her part, assisted with the business accounts and also with duties such as embroidering union banners. The family seems to have enjoyed a full social life with music as one of the main forms of entertainment⁷⁶ – Elsie enjoyed playing the piano even though she had only one year's tuition – and it was into this environment that John Curtin was introduced in 1912 when he came to Tasmania in his capacity as the newly-appointed Secretary of the Victorian Timber Workers' Union.

It is not surprising that Curtin and Needham established an easy rapport as friends and colleagues given the manner in which each had moved from organised religion to a passionate reforming advocacy of socialism. The circumstances of the first meeting between the 27-year-old Curtin and Needham's 22-year-old daughter are still unclear but perhaps the most likely version is that in May 1912 Curtin was invited back to the Needham home following a day spent sailing with Abraham and one of his sons. Reference to a number of other visits to the Needham home, walks in the evening (ostensibly to pursue the family interest in astronomy) and entries in Elsie's autograph book urging her to read and educate herself for the cause,⁷⁷ all attest that the relationship quickly developed even if there was little indication at this stage of romantic interest between the two.

These sentiments were clearly evident when, on his return to Melbourne, Curtin wrote to Needham thanking him for the fellowship of his family:

All the time I was in Hobart I never scrupled to avail myself of the good companionship and friendly chatter which Mrs Needham and Elsie in keeping with your self seem to have so big a monopoly of.⁷⁸

Then again in the following month he wrote of '...the silly chats, the laughing hours and the right good fun we knocked out of the daily round...',⁷⁹ while likening Abraham to men like Tom Mann, '...now gone, or far away, who showed me the road and bade me march to the end.'⁸⁰

In this regard, David Day has suggested that Needham in many respects filled the gap in Curtin's life left with the departure overseas of Mann, whom he describes as Curtin's mentor and father-figure.

Curtin visited Elsie and the Needham family again in March 1913 while in Hobart for a union conference and, according to Elsie, the couple 'went to a couple of shows together.'⁸¹ She also attended a couple of political meetings at which he spoke. By this time Curtin was writing to Elsie personally but references to romance and marriage were confined to the occasional oblique reference as when he suggested that:

One of these days I'll advertise for a companion 'affectionate disposition, very domestic not too musical desiring someone to support'.⁸²

Curtin saw Elsie again in Melbourne in 1914 when she was on her way to South Africa to visit her brother and friends. While she was in Melbourne, the two attended numerous Victorian Socialist Party meetings, which embraced musical items and lectures as well as political discussions. Just before she was due to leave, Curtin proposed marriage to her on St Kilda Beach and she accepted, although no formal engagement was announced and no ring given. In Elsie's own words, 'I would have given anything to be able to grab my baggage from the hold and run down the gang-plank again.'⁸³

Elsie's return from South Africa in November 1915 coincided with one of the more difficult stages in Curtin's life, centred on his resignation from his post as Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union. Writing to 'My Elsie' to explain his decision, he suggested that:

Because I love you better than all else in the world I am fully resolved to no longer mess round in the swirl of nothingness, that means I have decided definitely and decisively to work under such circumstances as will permit the living of a rational existence...⁸⁴

and...

...Oh Elsie Dearest like Hamlet 'I love you best O Most best' ...Beyond & above everything I offer you my whole life, hopes for happiness, work and being...until time ends and nothing is.⁸⁵

Throughout 1916, while Curtin battled his disillusionment with the response of the workers to the socialist message and his own devil of alcoholism, his relationship with Elsie continued through correspondence, but even when he visited Hobart in November he was still not financially in a position to make firm wedding plans.

However, his appointment as editor of the *Westralian Worker* and the subsequent move to Perth in February 1917 removed the major financial obstacle and on 21 April, a week after Elsie's arrival in Perth, they were married by arrangement with the Registrar-General in the dining room of a house in West Leederville owned by a Justice of the Peace (JP), Mr Penna. They had only two guests (both witnesses from the *Westralian Worker*) and no honeymoon to follow. Indeed, according to Elsie, after 'tea and cakes' at 'the old Moana Café', the newly married couple spent their wedding afternoon sitting in a rented house in West Leederville waiting for their furniture to arrive, and the next evening she accompanied her husband to a political meeting.⁸⁶

In the months that followed Curtin threw himself into his editorial work (sending more than a quarter of his salary to his parents each week) and into political meetings, which culminated in the successful campaign against the second conscription referendum, while Elsie adapted to her new life. On 30 December 1917 she gave birth prematurely to their first

child, Elsie Milda (and thereafter referred to her husband as 'Dad' while he, for his part, nicknamed her 'Nippy' after a favourite dog; as a dog lover she took this as a compliment!).



John and Elsie Curtin pictured in their wedding outfits, 1917. JCPML00376/14

1919 was a difficult year for the Curtins. On 25 March Curtin's father died in Melbourne but he was unable to attend the funeral (in September 1938 Curtin attended, with his brothers and sisters, the funeral of their mother following her death a few weeks short of her eighty-seventh birthday). Four weeks later came the death from influenza of Frank Hyett, said to be 'the closest male friend Curtin ever had'.⁸⁷

These personal tragedies, and a humiliating defeat as the Australian Labor Party (ALP) candidate for the seat of Perth in the House of Representatives in December, contributed to a breakdown diagnosed as neurasthenia that forced Curtin to take several months' rest before he could resume anything like his normal hectic schedule. Fortunately for Elsie, her parents had sold their home in Hobart and moved across the country to live with the Curtin family in the home they had rented since July 1917 – No. 3 Napier Street in the beachside suburb of Cottesloe.

In addition to providing an additional source of domestic comfort for Elsie, Abraham was able on many occasions to fill in for Curtin by writing leaders (including an important editorial in Easter 1920 in which, in sympathy with Curtin's views at the time, he wrote that 'reformist methods cannot avail')⁸⁸ and other articles for the *Westralian Worker*. Looking back, Elsie was to describe Curtin's moods in this period as veering between 'high optimism and deep melancholy, as inexplicable as they were irregular'.⁸⁹

The Curtin's second child, John Francis (named in memory of Frank Hyett), was born on 31 January 1921 and the expanded family moved down the road to No. 15 Napier Street, a house purchased with financial assistance from Abraham, who was to die from a heart attack the following year. According to Elsie, his death was:

...a big personal loss to John as well as to me. In the three years my father lived with us, he and John had consolidated the instinctive liking for one another they had felt, when they first met in 1912. They had become more like brothers.⁹⁰

In February 1923 John and Elsie bought a block of land (registered in Elsie's name only) in Jarrad Street, Cottesloe on which local builder Arnold Bullock erected for them a four-roomed brick home with surrounding verandas on three sides (though 'as time went by

the verandahs [sic] gradually disappeared into enclosures – as so often happens with verandahs⁹¹), which remained the family home for the rest of their lives. Elsie's mother, Annie Needham, also moved with them and remained until her death in 1944.

Settled in their own home, the Curtin family would often spend the evening around the piano after eating one of Elsie's plain-cooked meals, with Cornish pasties as a specialty.⁹² While music, including singing in choirs such as the Subiaco Choral Society, continued to be an important part of Elsie's life, family sources indicate that neither she nor her husband attended any church after their marriage and neither of the children was christened.⁹³ On the political front, during the 1920s Elsie became increasingly active in the Labor Women's Organisation (LWO). She was a member in the Perth area for several years and in 1924 she became the founding Treasurer of the Fremantle LWO. She also served on the committee responsible for building the Cottesloe Infant Health Clinic.

After one more unsuccessful election campaign in 1925, and a number of absences from home as he travelled around Australia with the Royal Commission on Child Endowment and Family Allowances, John Curtin finally succeeded at his fourth attempt to enter federal politics, winning the seat of Fremantle in November 1928. Elsie and the children accompanied him to Canberra in January 1929, the first time since her marriage (apart from visits to hospital to have her two children) that she had been away from home 'for even one night.'⁹⁴ The family stayed at the Wellington Hotel with the children attending Telopea Park School for a term, allowing Elsie to be present for her husband's maiden speech on 14 February before they returned to Perth in April. The family again accompanied him to Canberra in November 1929 when the newly-elected Scullin Government met in Parliament for the first time (though without Curtin in the Cabinet) and then stayed on until Christmas morning.

Two years later in December 1931, Curtin fought his third election in four years and along with many of his colleagues was crushingly defeated and left unemployed for several months. In this context his daughter recalls the family folding up the pile of campaign pamphlets and distributing the material around the surrounding streets while their father delivered up to three speeches in one night at three different halls.⁹⁵ Elsie accepted the changed circumstances philosophically, not the least because Curtin's drinking problem, if not entirely solved, was at least much less obvious, and she had her husband involved in trips to the local cinema, growing zinnias and playing cricket in the front garden with their son, John.

Working for a time as a freelance journalist, Curtin also acted as a sports writer with the *Westralian Worker*, providing racing tips for the paper and reporting on football matches, which he attended with his son. He and Elsie also received income from a house they had built across the road from their own and which they rented out, as well as from paid work for the ALP prior to Curtin's appointment by the Collier Government in 1933 to chair the committee drawing up the Western Australia's submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Back in federal politics after regaining Fremantle for the ALP in 1934, Curtin became Leader of the Opposition on 4 October 1935, Elsie's forty-fifth birthday, and henceforth he could usually manage only the occasional fortnight at home. By this time their daughter Elsie was working as a stenographer and had joined the Young Labor League but her brother was still

at secondary school. For their father, communications with his children were difficult – as evidenced by his letters to his son, including one written in October 1936 cautioning him against neglecting his study for sport:

It is vital you attend practice for cricket...[b]ut practice for manhood and its jobs is also imperative.⁹⁶

Elsie also found that communications with her husband during his absences were now much more frequently through the telephone rather than the bi-weekly letters that had been his practice previously.⁹⁷

In the political limelight herself far more than before, Elsie travelled by sea in April 1936 to meet her husband in Adelaide and they then visited Melbourne, Hobart and Launceston before she went with him to the Hotel Kurrajong in Canberra for what she described as a 'second honeymoon' (or, on occasions, as their 'proper honeymoon'). Increasingly, Elsie's role was to manage the household financially as well as performing 'more traditional wifely tasks'.⁹⁸ As Elsie herself explained the situation:

...some women are more fitted to work outside the home, and others were more suited to looking after their families and households.⁹⁹

At the same time this comment underplays the role she came to play in the Fremantle electorate with her husband's increasingly lengthy absences in the east as well as her ongoing involvement with the LWO.



Elsie Curtin (seated front row, fourth from right) with members of the Fremantle Labor Women's Organisation, celebrating John Curtin becoming Prime Minister of Australia, October 1941. JCPML00376/161

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Curtin's absences became even more prolonged, though he did call by phone 'every second day or something like that' and he also wrote regularly until he became Prime Minister.¹⁰⁰ In October 1940, shortly after her husband's narrow re-election for Fremantle in September 1940, Elsie was given a fiftieth birthday party by the LWO but Curtin had been delayed in Canberra and at the time was midway across the Nullarbor. However, Elsie returned with him to Canberra and stayed there until just before Christmas.

On 3 October 1941, the day before her fifty-first birthday, Elsie received a telegram from Curtin informing her of a highly significant 'birthday present' with the decision of the two independents to support the ALP in bringing down the Fadden Government.¹⁰¹ Curtin told her that while he would move into The Lodge, he wanted her to retain their Cottesloe home and not leave either the home or the family indefinitely. At that stage Elsie still had her mother living with her and her daughter was working in Perth, although her son John was stationed with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at Geraldton, Western Australia.

Elsie herself went to Canberra at the end of the month for her first stay at The Lodge but when the outbreak of war with Japan prevented Curtin's return to Perth for the rest of the year, he sent a telegram to her pointing out that this would be the first Christmas since their marriage that they had not spent together.¹⁰² Subsequently, Elsie established a wartime pattern of travelling by rail to Canberra twice a year, spending two or three months at The Lodge each time. Looking back she suggested that it had been:

...a rather difficult time for me when I first went over there. It was strange for me to have such a big place to run, and well-meaning people confused me by telling me what I should do, what I should wear [including having her hair 'permed'] and how I should act as the Prime Minister's wife.¹⁰³

However she suggested that the entertaining was 'mostly quite informal' in the context of wartime exigencies and that she was 'very fortunate' in their choice of housekeeper. As it was, throughout the war – and while not breaching confidentiality requirements – Curtin from time to time confided some of his doubts and anxieties to her, as in January 1942 when he wrote:

The war goes very badly and I have a cable fight with Churchill almost every day... The truth is that Britain never thought Japan would fight and made no preparations to meet that eventuality.¹⁰⁴

During Elsie's visit to Canberra in April 1942, the couple celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and later in the year they made a special visit to an old friend, Dame Mary Gilmore, in Sydney on the occasion of her seventy-seventh birthday. Curtin also came to Perth with Elsie in late October to attend the wedding of their daughter Elsie to Cottesloe dentist William Cole on 4 November.

Apart from duties such as launching ships and carrying out a great deal of day-to-day electorate work, Elsie assisted her husband and performed an interesting and perhaps not surprising role when, through the press, she delivered 'austerity hints to the nation' concerning how to overcome shortages of food and clothing.¹⁰⁵ The hints included admonitions to use fresh rather than tinned food, to buy cheaper cuts of meat and dress them 'skillfully', to hand-knit socks and to go without stockings.

In 1944, following a last-minute request from her husband,¹⁰⁶ Elsie made her first overseas trip since visiting South Africa in 1914, accompanying Curtin to the United States (US) and Canada, though not to London, an omission which led Elsie to suggest:

I was dumped. I was very cross about it. There were eight men in the plane and they didn't want me because I was a woman.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, her daughter Elsie has indicated that she was told by her mother that her father 'was concerned' about them both being in the plane together in case the plane crashed.¹⁰⁸

The initial trip across the Pacific to the US by sea was marred by Elsie's adverse reaction to smallpox vaccinations. Curtin 'scarcely left her side for two days', leading one journalist to suggest 'it is hard to imagine a more devoted couple.'¹⁰⁹ On arrival in San Francisco, they were met by Sir Owen Dixon, Australian Minister in Washington, at what Elsie described as a 'wonderful welcome, with band and red carpet and all.'¹¹⁰ In Washington Elsie met Eleanor Roosevelt (she had been in Perth when the President's wife was in Canberra in September 1943) and they flew together to South Carolina to meet with President Roosevelt. In later years they maintained a friendship by correspondence.

Back in Washington Elsie gave a press conference at which the 20 female journalists present were said to have been intrigued to discover that the Prime Minister's wife did her own housework and shopping.¹¹¹ After her husband's departure to London, Elsie stayed in Washington at Sir Owen Dixon's residence before travelling by train to Ottawa, Canada, arriving a few hours before Curtin's return. As previously mentioned, Elsie's own health had been the main cause for concern during the early stages of the trip, but Curtin had been unwell for a few days while in Washington and Elsie noted when she saw her husband in Canada that he seemed tired and his hair was 'whiter and thinner.'¹¹² Arriving back in Australia in July, Elsie gave a farewell reception for the Governor-General's wife, Lady Gowrie, and then returned to Perth for her mother's birthday. Her mother was to die only a few months later on 5 September 1944 at the age of 86. When Curtin was admitted to Melbourne's Mercy Hospital in November following a heart attack, he persuaded his wife (to whom he wrote regularly every week while he was in hospital) and daughter to stay in Perth until after son John's wedding to Catherine Neill at the Ross Memorial Presbyterian Church in West Perth on 9 December 1944. His daughter Elsie then came over and visited Curtin each day until he left hospital in late December and accompanied him back to The Lodge where he was later joined by his wife. He returned to his prime ministerial duties on 22 January.

Still not fully aware of the gravity of her husband's illness, Elsie stayed on in Canberra except for a visit to Adelaide to open the interstate Labor Women's Conference on 12 February 1945. After another heart attack in April that year and a short stay in a private hospital in Canberra, Curtin returned to The Lodge, was carried upstairs to his bedroom and 'never came down again alive.'¹¹³ For a time he tried to keep up with the news by reading the papers but 'after a while he didn't ask for them.' His son John visited him in June and was there when he died in his sleep in the early hours of 5 July just a few hours before his daughter was scheduled to fly over from Perth in a RAAF bomber.

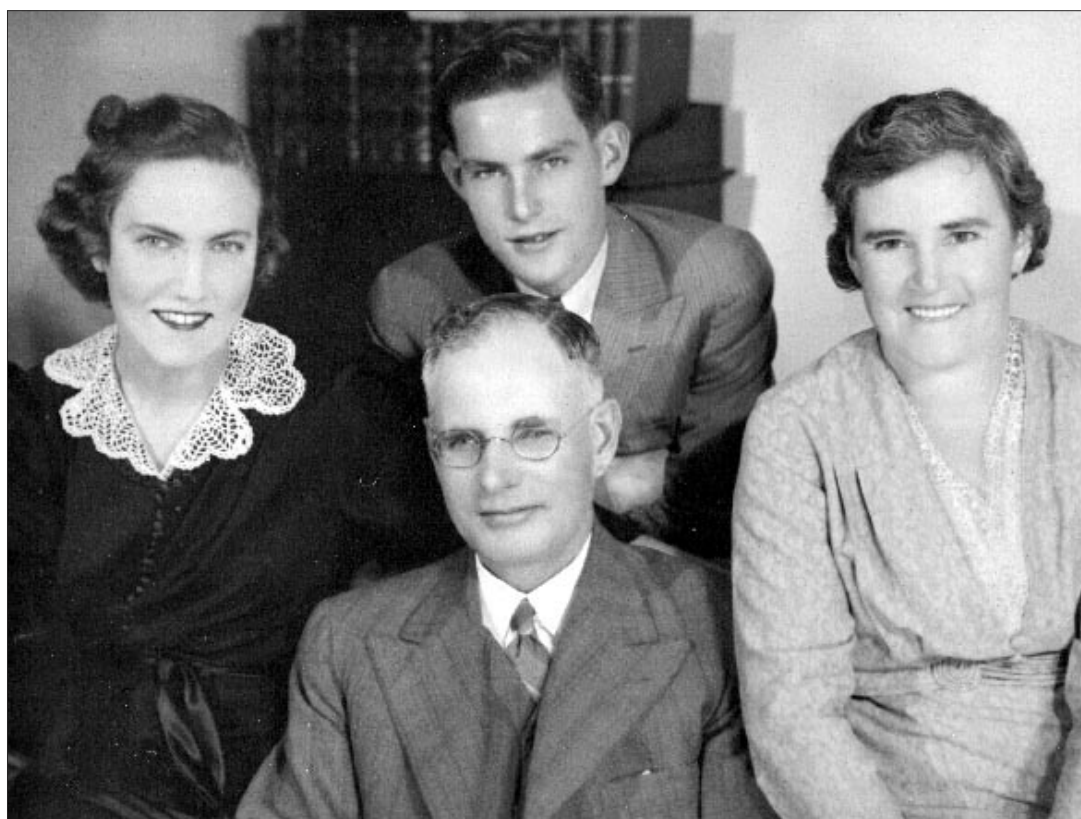
Elsie and son John were the chief mourners at the memorial service in Canberra while daughter Elsie remained in Perth to join them for the funeral there. Soon after Curtin's death, the House of Representatives granted Elsie a pension of £500 per year in recognition

of the fact that she could have expected 'years of financial security and the association of her husband.'¹¹⁴

In the years that followed Elsie continued to live in her Cottesloe home, the ownership of which was transferred to her daughter in 1948. Elected as the Western Australian President of the LWO in 1944, she continued to serve in that position until September 1946, after which she maintained her active association with the organisation. During the war she had also served on the Central Council of the Red Cross Society and been patron of the Cottesloe Surf Life-Saving Club.¹¹⁵ In 1949 she returned to Canberra for the laying of the foundation stone of the John Curtin School of Medical Research, staying at The Lodge as a guest of Prime Minister Chifley and his wife.

She also visited New Zealand and on her way home had lunch and dinner at The Lodge as the guest of the newly-elected incumbent, Prime Minister Robert Menzies and his wife. In an unusual move for her, she participated in Dr Evatt's successful campaign in the by-then marginal seat of Barton. Other awards and activities included being made a JP in 1955, sitting on the Married Women's Court, acting as a visitor to Fremantle Prison and life membership of several organisations, including the Perth Branch of the Association of Civilian Widows, the Royal Association of Justices, the Women's Justices Association and the Fremantle LWO.

Among Elsie's other interests would be numbered membership of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Cottesloe Women's Service Guild and the presidency of the Ship Lovers Society.¹¹⁶ In 1970 she was awarded a CBE for 'services to the community' and 'encouragement' to her husband in the wartime years. She died on 24 June 1975 five months after suffering a stroke and is buried beside her husband in Karrakatta Cemetery.



The Curtin family, 1938. JCPML00376/18

Elsie's relationship with her children seems to have remained close throughout their lives. Her daughter wrote that her parents were 'easy going' and her mother, who had the 'principal upbringing of the children', was 'a placid cheerful person who seldom reprimanded her children' – indeed neither of her parents had 'believed in any physical punishment for the children.'¹¹⁷ After her mother's death, Elsie continued to live in the family home until it was acquired for posterity by state and federal governments to be managed by the National Trust of Australia and the university that bears Curtin's name.

John Curtin's first major biographer, Lloyd Ross, emphasises Elsie Curtin's 'refusal to pretend' and 'unwillingness to be diplomatic', but he also contends that she 'was better versed in the history and principles of the Labor Movement than were most of her critics', a situation based on her own reading and the fact that 'she had discussed fully and freely a range of progressive ideas with her father.'¹¹⁸

In the words of her daughter, Elsie Curtin was 'ideal as a partner' for John Curtin; with her 'even temperament', she could act as a 'sounding board' for him. She handled all the family's financial matters and at the same time had the background and interest in politics through her parents that enabled her, while shunning publicity as the Prime Minister's wife, to play her own active role within the Labor Party and in the community. In this regard, in the days before MPs were provided with electoral staff, she had a great many calls on her time to reply to letters and to attend meetings and functions. Throughout her time as a prime ministerial wife she spent several months at a time twice a year at The Lodge and the whole of the last six months of her husband's life. It is difficult to deny that 'her cheerful, positive, practical outlook on life was a perfect counterbalance to her husband's dreamy idealism, emotional volatility and acute sensitivity.'¹¹⁹



John and Elsie Curtin with General Sir Thomas Blamey on board the *Lurline* before leaving Sydney for the US, 1944. NAA: M1218, 5

Notes

- ⁷⁰ Diane Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives: The Public and Private Lives of Ten Australian Women*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, 1992, p. 116.
- ⁷¹ Records of the Curtin Family. Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd. JCPML00399/18.
- ⁷² Records of the Curtin Family. Proposed script of ABC broadcast by Irene Greenwood, 'Mrs John Curtin - a personal sketch', 27 July 1945. JCPML00398/74.
- ⁷³ David Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 1999, p. 147.
- ⁷⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ Greenwood, 'Mrs John Curtin - A personal sketch', JCPML00398/74.
- ⁷⁶ Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 117.
- ⁷⁷ David Black, *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree: John Curtin's Letters 1907 to 1945*, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, Bentley, 2001, p. 55.
- ⁷⁸ Letter from Curtin to Abraham Needham, 6 June 1912, cited in *ibid.*, p.57.
- ⁷⁹ Letter from Curtin to Abraham Needham, 2 July 1912, cited in *ibid.*, p. 61.
- ⁸⁰ Letter from Curtin to Abraham Needham, 6 December 1912, cited in Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, p. 152
- ⁸¹ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 12 March 1951.
- ⁸² Curtin to Elsie Needham, 27 June 1913, in Black, *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree*, p. 70.
- ⁸³ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 12 March 1951.
- ⁸⁴ Curtin to Elsie Needham, 21 November 1915 in Black, *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree*, p. 79.
- ⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 81.
- ⁸⁶ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 12 March 1951, and JCPML. Records of Tom Fitzgerald. Letter, Elsie Macleod to Margaret and Tom Fitzgerald, 20 September 1989. JCPML00705/1/27.
- ⁸⁷ Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, p. 260.
- ⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 270.
- ⁸⁹ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 19 March 1951.
- ⁹⁰ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 26 March 1951.
- ⁹¹ Records of the Curtin Family. Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd. JCPML00399/18.
- ⁹² Records of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library. Interview of Elsie Macleod, 10 May 1994 to 20 February 1995. JCPML00012/1.
- ⁹³ JCPML. Records of the Curtin Family. Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd. JCPML00399/18.
- ⁹⁴ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 26 March 1951.
- ⁹⁵ Records of the Curtin Family. Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd. JCPML00399/18.
- ⁹⁶ Letter from John Curtin to his son John, 2 October 1936, cited in Black, *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree*, p. 186.
- ⁹⁷ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 26 March 1951.

⁹⁸ Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 129.

⁹⁹ 'Likes Home Life: Wife of Labor Politician', *Melbourne Herald*, 9 April 1936, cited in Records of the Curtin Family. Scrapbook No 2A, 1942-95. JCPML00298/2.

¹⁰⁰ Interview of Elsie Macleod, JCPML00012/1.

¹⁰¹ See Black, *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree*, p. 207.

¹⁰² Telegram dated 23 December 1942 in Black, *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree*, p. 210.

¹⁰³ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 2 April 1951.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from John Curtin to Elsie Curtin, 5 January 1942, cited in Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1977, p. 254.

¹⁰⁵ *Argus*, 18 September 1942, cited in Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ See Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, pp. 134ff., for a description of this trip.

¹⁰⁷ *Argus*, 21 July 1944.

¹⁰⁸ Interview of Elsie Macleod, JCPML00012/1.

¹⁰⁹ *Argus*, 21 April 1944, p. 135.

¹¹⁰ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 9 April 1951.

¹¹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 1944.

¹¹² Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 137.

¹¹³ Elsie Curtin, 'The Curtin Story', *Woman*, 9 April 1951.

¹¹⁴ Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 42.

¹¹⁵ 'Elsie Curtin', in Daphne Popham (ed.), *Reflections: Profiles of 150 Women who Helped make Western Australia's History*, Carroll's, Perth, 1978, p. 118.

¹¹⁶ Records of the Curtin Family. List of memberships, Elsie Curtin, nd. JCPML00398/141, and Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 143.

¹¹⁷ Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, JCPML00399/18.

¹¹⁸ Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography*, p. 388.

¹¹⁹ Langmore, *Prime Ministers' Wives*, p. 145.

Records on Elsie Curtin

Most records relating to Elsie Curtin are held in the [National Archives of Australia](#) (NAA) and the [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#) with smaller quantities of records held elsewhere. Records in the National Archives are listed first, followed by those in the JCPML. Records held in other national and state libraries and archives and in overseas institutions are listed after the entries for the NAA and the JCPML.

RECORDS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Many NAA records relating to Elsie Curtin have been digitised and are available for viewing on the National Archives' RecordSearch database. The following records are listed chronologically as far as possible.

CORRESPONDENCE, 1912-64

SP459/1

Recorded by: 1912-21 2 Military District, NSW (I) (CA 6335)
 1921-39 2 District Base, Australian Military Forces, NSW Headquarters (CA 4334)
 1939-42 Headquarters, Eastern Command (I), Australian Military Forces (AMF) (CA 1876)
 1942-46 Headquarters, NSW Lines of Communication Area, AMF (CA 1877)
 1946-64 Headquarters, Eastern Command (II), AMF (CA 1878)

Quantity: 64.65 metres (Sydney)

This series consists of registered files containing correspondence relating to the administration, function and policy of the Eastern Command, including accounts, allowances, ammunition, Victoria Barracks, camps, casualties, ceremonies, compensation, clothing, deaths, war medals, offences, stores, and transfers and releases.

Sympathy card acknowledgement from Mrs Curtin, E, 1945

SP459/1, 445/1/7001

Telegram - death and funeral of the late Prime Minister, the Rt Honourable John Curtin MP PC, 1945

SP459/1, 445/1/7005

'THE SHEDDEN COLLECTION', 1937-71

A5954

Recorded by: 1937-71 Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden KCMG, OBE (CP 320)
 1937-39 Department of Defence (II) (CA 19)
 1939-42 Department of Defence Co-ordination (CA 37)
 1942-71 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 200.98 metres (Canberra); smaller quantities in other offices of the National Archives

Sir Frederick Shedden was the Secretary of the Department of Defence between 1937 and 1956. This series contains records he collected during his career and collated during his retirement when researching and writing a book (unpublished at the time of his death in 1971) on the history of Australian defence policy from 1901 to 1945. This series contains drafts of this work together with copies of departmental correspondence, files, reports, press cuttings

and copies of War Cabinet and Advisory War Council records.

Mrs Curtin, 1943–45

[A5954, 1945/23](#)

This item contains three press cuttings – ‘Informal chat with PM’s wife’, ‘Mrs Curtin comes East – Happier going West’ and ‘Mrs Curtin says she’s no Eleanor Roosevelt’.

[Press file] Prime Minister’s visit abroad (1944) – press extracts [about] Mrs Curtin, 1944

[A5954, 661/4](#)

[Ministerial] Messages of condolence and tributes on the death of Prime Minister (Mr Curtin), July 1945

[A5954, 1945/25](#)

This item includes a letter to Mrs Curtin from Ben Chifley expressing sympathy from the War Cabinet, a letter of condolence from General Blamey and a telegram from General MacArthur on the death of John Curtin.

[Press cuttings] Pension for Mrs Curtin and suggested retirement allowances for future prime ministers, 1945

[A5954, 2207/4](#)

COPIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN CURTIN, 1938–45

[M1422](#)

Recorded by: The Rt Hon John Joseph Ambrose Curtin (CP 258)

Quantity: 0.54 metres (Perth)

This series consists of 25 black-and-white photographs of John Curtin, taken mainly between 1938 and early 1945. The photographs are primarily of Curtin with other political figures or at official functions, but one includes Elsie Curtin.

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Curtin] John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin with W L Mackenzie King, 1944

[M1422, 10](#)

This photograph shows the Curtins and Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon McKenzie examining one of the Books of Remembrance in the Memorial Chamber, Peace Tower, Parliament Hill, Ottawa.

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN CURTIN AS PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL ALPHABETICAL SERIES, 1941–44

[M1415](#)

Recorded by: 1941–44 The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)

1944 The Rt Hon. Francis Michael Forde PC (CP 81)

1941–44 Prime Minister’s Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 12.6 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises correspondence files maintained in the Prime Minister’s Office from October 1941, when John Curtin became Prime Minister, to December 1944. The series also reflects the extended periods in 1944 when Frank Forde was Acting Prime Minister, but does not include the correspondence for the last six months of Curtin’s term of office until his death in early July 1945.

The files mainly contain representations made directly to Curtin. The earliest of these relate to matters initially raised with Curtin as the Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Fremantle and then with him as Prime Minister, or matters that were passed on to him from the Fadden Government. Some letters are addressed to Mrs Elsie

Curtin, to his Private Secretary, Eric Tonkin, or, in 1944, to Frank Forde.

The correspondence originated from political colleagues, personal friends, branches of political parties (particularly the ALP), trade unions, local government authorities, returned servicemen's associations, business interests, the general public, churches, women's groups and other community organisations.

The subject matter is wide-ranging and deals with requests for exemption or release from military service; pay and conditions for servicemen and their families; pensions; rationing; questions about liquor, censorship, manpower, the effect of particular National Security Regulations, requisitioned property, aliens, internees, war loans, daylight saving and pay-as-you-earn taxation; comments on the government's conduct of the war and expressions of support; American forces in Australia; the 1944 referendum; the appointment of His Royal Highness (HRH) the Duke of Gloucester as Governor-General and the re-appointment of Stanley Melbourne Bruce as High Commissioner in London; and postwar planning and so on.

The series also contains a small amount of official and more personal correspondence dealing with Curtin's travel arrangements and expressions of goodwill and concern about his health. Some policy issues are dealt with, mainly through individual cases, such as the treatment of aliens, wartime regulations, postwar reconstruction, immigration policy, housing, Indigenous Australians and appointments to official positions.

In general, replies were sent out under the signature block of Curtin's main private secretaries (Eric Tonkin and Frederick McLaughlin) or were signed directly by Curtin himself or by Forde.

In addition to letters, telegrams and handwritten notes, items in this series may also contain newspaper clippings, pamphlets, patriotic songs, poems and a few photographs. These items provide considerable insight into Curtin as Prime Minister and into Australia during the war years. Many items in this series have been digitised and can be viewed online on RecordSearch.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin] Correspondence 'C', 1941-42

M1415, 40

This item includes telegrams regarding travel arrangements for Mrs Curtin.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin] Correspondence 'G', 1941-42

M1415, 46

This item includes a poem sent to Elsie Curtin by Dame Mary Gilmore.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin] Correspondence 'S', 1942–43**M1415, 254**

This item includes a personal letter to Mrs Curtin from Miss Jean Sheaffe and a poster for a proposed ball at the Albert Hall, Canberra.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin] Correspondence 'B', 1943**M1415, 272**

This item includes a personal letter from Mrs Curtin to Eric Tonkin, Prime Minister Curtin's Private Secretary.

COPIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS RELATING TO JOHN CURTIN'S TERM AS PRIME MINISTER, 1941–45**M1218**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of 13 black-and-white photographic prints. The photographs are mostly of Prime Minister John Curtin with other political figures or at official functions, taken between 1943 and early 1945. Several images are of Curtin's visit to Washington, London (for the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers) and Ottawa from April to June 1944. Curtin addressed a combined session of the Houses of Parliament in Ottawa. Three photographs were presentation items and have personal inscriptions from President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States of America, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King of Canada and the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Frank Beaurepaire. These photographs can be viewed online on the National Archives' [PhotoSearch](#) database.

[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin] William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada [photographed sitting at desk], 1944**M1218, 2**

The photograph is inscribed 'To the Rt Hon John Curtin, MP, PC, Prime Minister of Australia and Mrs (Elsie) Curtin. With warm appreciation of their visit to the capital of Canada and with all good wishes, W L Mackenzie King, Ottawa, 31 May 1944'.

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Curtin] John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin with General Sir Thomas Blamey, 1944**M1218, 5**

This photograph shows Mr Curtin, Mrs Curtin and General Blamey onboard the *Lurline* before leaving Sydney for the US. A copy of this image is on p. 204.

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Curtin] John Curtin with Cordell Hull (US Secretary of State), 1944**M1218, 10**

This photograph was taken in Washington DC and shows Mrs Curtin in the background behind her husband and Cordell Hull.

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Curtin] John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin with William L Mackenzie King, 1944**M1218, 12**

This photograph shows Mr Curtin, Mrs Curtin and Mr Mackenzie King examining one of the Books of Remembrance in the Memorial Chamber, Peace Tower,

Parliament Hill, Ottawa. A copy of this image appears on p. 161.

CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN CURTIN AS PRIME MINISTER, SPECIAL SUBJECT SERIES, 1941–44

M1416

Recorded by: 1941–44 The Rt Hon. John Joseph Ambrose Curtin PC (CP 258)
1944 The Rt Hon. Francis Michael Forde PC (CP 81)
1941–44 Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Quantity: 1.98 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises special subject correspondence files maintained in the Prime Minister's Office from 1942 to the end of 1944. In general the files relate to major public issues or aspects of government business. The 1944 files also reflect the increasing role of Frank Forde as Acting Prime Minister in the latter period of the Curtin Government. However, there are no files covering the last six months of Curtin's term of office until his death in July 1945.

Most files contain representations from community groups, local government authorities, trade organisations or individuals on a particular issue – eg wartime restrictions on alcohol, the legalisation of the Communist Party, John ('Jack') Lang, racing and so on. Rather than being sent directly to Prime Minister Curtin, these letters were often forwarded to his office by the correspondent's local member of Federal Parliament. Other files contain material relating to general government business, eg the Defence Act, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, invitations accepted and declined, correspondence with state premiers and so on. Many of these items contain copies of correspondence from departmental files kept by the Prime Minister's Department. A few files cover more personal matters such as birthday and Christmas greetings, and two files (items 28 and 54) contain material relating to Mrs Elsie Curtin.

Most letters received a generic reply relating to the particular issue, which was sent out under the signature block of one of Curtin's private secretaries, Eric Tonkin or Frederick McLaughlin. Many of the file copies of the replies are on recycled paper, a wartime austerity measure. Wartime considerations are also reflected in the date of some replies, in particular 25 December or 1 January, days which in normal circumstances would have been public holidays.

This fascinating series consists of items that, like those in [M1415](#), provide considerable insight into John Curtin as Prime Minister and Australia during the war years. Items in this series have been digitised and can be viewed online on RecordSearch.

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Curtin] Invitations accepted [and declined by Mrs Elsie Curtin], 1941–42

M1416, 28

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Curtin] Mrs Elsie Curtin's personal file, 1941-43**M1416, 54**

This item includes letters sent and received, drafts of telegrams and a list of callers at The Lodge for December 1941. Correspondence includes appeals from women's organisations devoted to the performance of good works, to speak to meetings or rallies or to take on various offices, and letters containing offers, advice or information about austerity measures.

CORRESPONDENCE FILES, 1942-64**K1256**

Recorded by: Sub-Treasury, Western Australia (CA 1008)

Quantity: 0.18 metres (Perth)

This series consists of the first general correspondence files series of the Treasury Department, Western Australian Office. The files cover both administrative and operational matters.

Parliamentary retiring allowances - Mrs Elsie Curtin - held for 'collector interest', 1945-52**K1256, 50****CORRESPONDENCE OF JOSEPH CHIFLEY AS PRIME MINISTER, 1945-49****M1455**

Recorded by: The Rt Hon. Joseph Benedict Chifley PC (CP 268)
Prime Minister's Department - Prime Minister's Office
(CA 12)

Quantity: 12.6 metres (Canberra)

This series comprises correspondence files maintained in the Prime Minister's Office when Joseph Benedict ('Ben') Chifley was Prime Minister. It also includes some papers relating to Chifley in his capacity as Treasurer and Acting Prime Minister during John Curtin's final illness.

Correspondence in this series includes reports and memoranda from political colleagues and representations from individuals, unions, returned servicemen's associations, community organisations, local government authorities and so on. The items are arranged alphabetically in eight chronological sequences. These items are digitised and can be viewed online on RecordSearch.

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Chifley] Correspondence 'C', part 3, 1945-46**M1455, 12**

This item includes telegrams from Frank Forde (Acting Prime Minister) to members of the Curtin family on the death of John Curtin.

SUBJECT FILES OF THE RT HON JOHN GREY GORTON AS PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, 1968–71**M3787**

Recorded by: 1968–71 Rt Hon. Sir John Grey Gorton GCMG, AC, CH, PC (CP 136)
1968–71 Prime Minister's Department – Prime Minister's Office (CA 12)
1971 Department of Defence (III) (CA 46)

Quantity: 1.98 metres (Canberra)

This series consists of subject files maintained by John Gorton while he was Prime Minister (1968–71) and subsequently Minister for Defence (1971–72).

[Personal papers of Prime Minister Gorton] Correspondence with the Hon. L H E Bury (Treasurer), 1969–70**M3787, 34**

This item includes correspondence regarding pensions payable to wives (Dame Enid Lyons and Mrs Elsie Curtin) of former prime ministers.

RECORDS IN THE JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY

The [John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library](#) (JCPML) holds significant records relating to Elsie Curtin. Most of these records have been digitised and are available for viewing online through the JCPML's [Electronic Research Archive](#) (ERA). Photographs are also available through PictureAustralia (www.pictureaustralia.org). The record listing is representative rather than comprehensive and researchers are referred to ERA for a complete view of the records held in the JCPML.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY – WA BRANCH. CORRESPONDENCE OF PERTH LABOR WOMEN'S ORGANISATION, 1906–67**SER0340**

Quantity: 42 items

This series comprises selected records copied from original material held by the Western Australian Branch of the ALP. The records comprise correspondence, minutes of meetings and conferences, annual reports, newspaper cuttings, labour songbooks and records relating to the formation and history of the Perth LWO.

Circular regarding luncheon for Mrs Elsie Curtin, 17 October 1941**JCPML00474/26****'Women's Sphere', *Westralian Worker*, 14 November 1941****JCPML00474/32**

This item includes an article on a reception held for Mrs Curtin by the Lady Mayoress of Melbourne.

Minutes of Labor Women's Conference, October 1945**JCPML00474/9**

Mrs Elsie Curtin, then President of the LWO, was chairperson of this conference.

CURTIN, ELSIE. PERSONAL POSSESSIONS OF ELSIE CURTIN, 1942–70**SER0284**

Quantity: 3 items

This series comprises personal possessions of Mrs Elsie Curtin, including her Commander of the British Empire (CBE) medal and patent, and a silver tray presented to her

when she launched HMAS *Fremantle* in 1942. Some of the objects remain in private hands.

CURTIN FAMILY. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1885–1979**SER0128**

Quantity: 430 photographs

Photographs in this series include many images of the family of John Curtin and of his wife Elsie (nee Needham) as well as images of John Curtin taken in the course of his private and parliamentary careers.

Abraham and Annie Needham and their family – William, 20 years; Leslie, at left, 18 years; and Elsie, 14 years, Cape Town, South Africa, 1904

[JCPML00381/4](#)

Elsie Needham aged 22-and-a-half, Melbourne, March 1913

[JCPML00004/3](#)

Elsie and John Curtin, October 1917

[JCPML00004/4](#)

The Curtin family, 1929

[JCPML00004/14](#)

Mrs Curtin – ‘Home away from home’, The Lodge, Canberra, 1941

[JCPML00376/20](#)

Elsie Curtin at [a] Labor Congress, 1941

[JCPML00376/127](#)

Mrs Elsie Curtin in a Lancaster Bomber, 1943

[JCPML00376/26](#)

Elsie and John Curtin with Mrs Franklin D Roosevelt, US, 1944

[JCPML00004/34](#)

Elsie Curtin, President of the WA LWO, 1945

[JCPML00381/28](#)

Elsie Curtin being presented with the CBE by Governor Kendrew, 1970

[JCPML00381/47](#)

Elsie Curtin aged 79, 1969

[JCPML00004/38](#)**CURTIN FAMILY. SCRAPBOOKS, 1941–95****SER0191**

Quantity: 9 volumes

Three of these scrapbooks of press clippings were wholly compiled by the Curtin family (volumes 1A, 2A and 4A) and cover the years between 1918 and 1993. The remainder were originally compiled by the Prime Minister's Office and presented to the Curtin family on John Curtin's death in July 1945. These originally covered the years from 1941 to 1945 but the family added entries after July 1945.

CURTIN FAMILY. CONDOLENCES ON DEATH OF JOHN CURTIN, 1945–95**SER0193**

Quantity: 67 items

This series comprises letters and telegrams of condolences sent to Mrs Elsie Curtin and her family on the death of John Curtin. Correspondents include Bessie Rischbieth; HRH the Duchess of Gloucester; Harry S Truman; Dame Mary Gilmore; Winston Churchill; General Douglas MacArthur; Robert Menzies; the Brunswick Football Club; the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA); Sir Earle Page; the Australian Railways Union; and the City of Sydney.

CURTIN FAMILY. MEMORABILIA COLLECTED BY JOHN CURTIN FAMILY, 1916-91**SER0203**

Quantity: 34 items

This series contains a wide variety of memorabilia, including drawings made by Elsie Needham, programs for official dinners and other functions, memorial services for John Curtin, speeches made at the opening of the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the Australian National University, sketches and paintings of John Curtin, poems and memorial lectures.

Pen-and-ink drawings by Elsie Needham, 1916

JCPML00403/1**CURTIN FAMILY. PERSONAL PAPERS, 1906-88****SER0207**

Quantity: 245 items

This series contains a wide range of records, including:

- cuttings from various newspapers and magazines (eg the *Socialist*, the *West Australian*, the *Daily News*, *Cavalcade*, the *Labor Digest* and the *Herald*);
- World War I anti-conscription campaign material;
- correspondence, including letters to John Curtin from John Willcock, Tom Mann, Mary Gilmore, William Morris ('Billy') Hughes, E G Theodore, Lord Gowrie, Walter Murdoch and Harold Butler (of the International Labour Office); and letters to Elsie Curtin from Mary Gilmore, Katherine Susannah Throssell, Gough Whitlam, Irene Dowsing, Reverend Jim Payne, Irene Greenwood, Alan Chester, Ben Chifley and Tom Fitzgerald;
- letters from John Curtin to his daughter Elsie and to Robert Menzies, Abraham Needham and Henry Boote;
- documents and correspondence relating to the AJA, including information about a course of study at the University of Western Australia (UWA) c1920;
- testimonials and references relating to John Curtin;
- conference reports, including the 1927 Special Conference of Unions to Consider Child Endowment;
- ALP election material;
- biographical notes written by Elsie Macleod (nee Curtin) about John Curtin; and
- articles written by John Curtin.

Signed souvenir program of John and Elsie Curtin's Silver Wedding Anniversary Dinner, 21 April 1942

JCPML00398/32

Letter from Dame Mary Gilmore to Mrs Elsie Curtin, 10 July 1942

JCPML00398/35

This letter deals with Mrs Curtin's presentation of a portrait of Dame Mary to the Commonwealth.

- Note to Elsie Curtin and annotated typescript of poem 'To Uncle Sam' by Dame Mary Gilmore, 6 May 1944** [JCPML00398/50](#)
- Proposed script of ABC broadcast by Irene Greenwood, 'Mrs John Curtin - A personal sketch', 27 July 1945** [JCPML00398/74](#)
- Mrs John Curtin - Yours sincerely, Elsie Curtin, by Katharine Susannah Prichard, 1945** [JCPML00398/125](#)
Transcript (probably of a radio talk) on the occasion of the Curtins' twenty-eighth wedding anniversary.
- Letter from Katharine Susannah Throssell (Prichard) to Mrs Elsie Curtin, 9 July 1953** [JCPML00398/79](#)
In this letter Mrs Throssell expresses her admiration for Elsie's father, Abraham Needham, and his book of verse, *The Radicals*.
- Letter from Association of Civilian Widows to Elsie Curtin, 20 August 1971** [JCPML00398/84](#)
This letter is about the award of life membership of the association to Elsie Curtin.

JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED FOR J S BATTYE LIBRARY AND JCPML, 1994-95

[SER0014](#)

Quantity: 2 oral histories

This series includes oral history interviews with John Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod, and with Frances Shea, a family friend and colleague of John Curtin at the *Westralian Worker*.

Interview of Elsie Macleod, 10 May 1994 to 20 February 1995

[JCPML00012/1](#)

In this interview, John Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod, shares her memories of a happy and close family upbringing, providing many insights into life in the Curtin household and the personality and character of both her parents.

Interview of Frances Shea, 12 June 1995

[JCPML00013/1](#)

Frances Shea was a family friend and colleague of John Curtin from his time with the Labour Movement in Western Australia. Mrs Shea worked at the *Westralian Worker* from 1926 to 1931 and she recalls Curtin as the Editor of the paper. Her oral history covers many events and impressions, including an account of playing the piano before Curtin spoke in the 1928 Fremantle election campaign and her opinion of him as prime minister.

JOHN CURTIN PRIME MINISTERIAL LIBRARY. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED FOR JCPML, 1995-

[SER0093](#)

Quantity: 53 oral histories

This series includes oral history interviews of family, friends, acquaintances and colleagues of John Curtin.

Interview of Mrs Beverley Lane, 1998

[JCPML00306/1](#)

Beverley Lane is the daughter of Elsie Macleod and granddaughter of John Curtin. This interview concerns the Curtin family home at 24 Jarrad Street, Cottesloe.

FITZGERALD, TOM. CORRESPONDENCE AND CONVERSATION NOTES, TOM FITZGERALD AND ELSIE MACLEOD, 1975–92**SER0482**

Quantity: 1 file

This series consists of copies of letters and conversation notes exchanged between Fitzgerald and John Curtin's daughter, Elsie Macleod, relating to Tom Fitzgerald's proposed biography of Curtin. As far as possible, the material is arranged chronologically. Items in this series were selected by the JCPML from originals contained in Fitzgerald's series 'Research notes for a biography of John Curtin – Files.'

Biographical notes regarding John Curtin by Elsie Macleod, nd**JCPML00399/18**

This item comprises eight typed pages of biographical information about John Curtin written by Elsie Macleod.

Letter, Elsie Macleod to Margaret and Tom Fitzgerald, 1 August 1984**JCPML00705/1/92**

This item includes Elsie Macleod's recollections of her parents' marriage, their time at The Lodge and other matters.

Letter, Elsie Macleod to Tom Fitzgerald, 3 January 1989**JCPML00705/1/33**

This item includes Elsie Macleod's recollection of her mother's reaction to Lord Gowrie asking if she would accept the award of Dame.

McLAUGHLIN, FREDERICK. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1941–45**SER0085**

Quantity: 48 photographs

Frederick McLaughlin was the departmental Private Secretary to Prime Minister John Curtin from 1941 to 1945 and accompanied him overseas in 1944. Although the photographs in this series mainly relate to Prime Minister Curtin's trip to the US, Canada and the UK, several include Elsie Curtin.

Elsie Curtin alighting from US train helped by Frederick McLaughlin and US aide, Curtin behind, 1944**JCPML00018/1****Curtin and Elsie on board US train, 1944****JCPML00018/5****NEEDHAM, ANNIE. PERSONAL POSSESSIONS OF ANNIE NEEDHAM, 1895****SER0586**

Quantity: 1 object

The series comprises a small wooden jewellery box that belonged to Annie Needham, Elsie Curtin's mother.

Jewellery box [wooden] inscribed 'Annie Needham 1895'**JCPML00841/1****NICHOLSON, ALASTAIR. PERSONAL PAPERS OF ALASTAIR NICHOLSON, 1943****SER0303**

Quantity: 3 items

This series contains a press cutting and two photographs relating to Mrs Elsie Curtin's flight in a Lancaster Bomber – 'Q' for *Queenie* – over Canberra in 1943.

PERRIN, PEG. PERSONAL PAPERS OF PEG PERRIN, 1942-91**SER0484**

Quantity: 14 items

This series includes an anecdote of Elsie Curtin written by Peg Perrin, biographical information about the Needham family and copies of correspondence between Elsie Curtin and members of the Perrin family, mainly about family history.

SHEA, FRANCES. PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTED BY FRANCES SHEA, 1942**SER0134**

Quantity: 1 photograph

This series contains a photograph of John and Elsie Curtin at the wedding of Frances Shea's brother, Mr Sydney Gray.

SOLOS, BETTY. PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTED BY BETTY SOLOS, 1941**SER0137**

Quantity: 1 photograph

This series comprises a photograph of Elsie Curtin with the Fremantle LWO, celebrating John Curtin becoming Prime Minister in October 1941.

'WOMAN' MAGAZINE. 'THE CURTIN STORY', 1951**SER0403**

Quantity: 5 articles

This series contains five articles by Elsie Curtin published in *Woman* magazine in 1951 as the 'Candid life story, with all his faults and virtues, of John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, 1941-45, by the woman who knew him best.'

RECORDS IN OTHER COLLECTIONS*National Library of Australia*

The National Library of Australia holds manuscripts, films, oral history recordings and pictures relating to Elsie Curtin. The manuscripts include small collections of John Curtin's papers received from various sources that contain letters or other materials relating to Elsie Curtin. The oral history recordings include interviews about Elsie Curtin, or those in which reference is made to her. Some material about Elsie Curtin in the manuscript collections listed below is also available online through the [JCPML ERA](#), as is a transcript of Don Rodgers' oral history interview.

Manuscripts

The following manuscript collections are arranged alphabetically. Many of them have descriptive lists of their contents, which can be viewed online at www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids plus the manuscript number (eg www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/2919.html).

CROWLE, PIGEON – PAPERS, 1822-1962**MS 2785**

Quantity: 0.10 metres

Pigeon Crowle was an illustrator and his papers contain publications, photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets and a letter from Elsie Curtin (1954).

CURTIN, JOHN – PAPERS, 1942**MS 5213**

Quantity: 0.01 metres

Items in this collection consist of minutes from meetings of the Melbourne City Council and the Sydney City Council relating to the 100th anniversary celebrations of both cities. Other items include letters and clippings concerning John Curtin and Elsie Curtin.

FISHER, ANDREW – PAPERS, 1855–1983**MS 2919**

Quantity: 2.36 metres

Andrew Fisher was Prime Minister of Australia three times (1908–09, 1910–13 and 1914–15). The papers in this collection include correspondence about family and official matters, and document Fisher's political career, especially his terms as Prime Minister and his work as the Australian High Commissioner in London. The correspondence includes one letter from John Curtin and one letter from Elsie Curtin.

GOWRIE, ALEXANDER GORE ARKWRIGHT HORE-RUTHVEN, EARL OF – PAPERS, 1835–1987**MS 2852**

Quantity: 8.54 metres

Alexander Gowrie was Governor of South Australia (1928–34), Governor of New South Wales (1935–36) and Governor-General of Australia (1936–44). Lord Gowrie's papers comprise official and private correspondence, cables, genealogical and biographical papers, speeches, broadcasts, photographs, newspaper cuttings and memorabilia relating to his personal life as well as his military and public career.

Gowrie was a close friend of John Curtin, which is reflected in his extensive correspondence with both John and Elsie Curtin. Series 5 of this collection includes a record of an interview as well as correspondence with Curtin (c1942–44). Other material in the collection includes Lady Gowrie's correspondence with Elsie Curtin and correspondence with her daughter, Elsie Macleod.

HARRISON, HECTOR, REVEREND – PAPERS, 1915–78**MS 6277**

Quantity: 5.18 metres

Reverend Hector Harrison was the Minister at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Forrest in the Australian Capital Territory from 1940 to 1978; Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales from 1950 to 1951; and Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia from 1962 to 1964. Papers in this collection record Harrison's career and include personal and business correspondence, circulars, journal articles, brochures, leaflets, newspaper cuttings, newsletters, notes, pamphlets, sermons and service sheets.

Harrison was a close friend of John and Elsie Curtin. Series 1, folder 6 contains correspondence between Harrison and Elsie Curtin (1945–60). It also includes biographical

notes on Curtin, a note containing instructions from Curtin about his funeral service, newspaper cuttings and other miscellaneous memorabilia. Series 4 also contains newspaper cuttings (1920–76), including cuttings on Curtin's death. Harrison conducted the Memorial Service for Curtin held at Parliament House, Canberra on 6 July 1945 and the burial service held in WA on 8 July 1945.

HUGHES, WILLIAM MORRIS – PAPERS, c1875–1979**MS 1538**

Quantity: 1.21 metres

William Morris Hughes' papers include correspondence, diaries and notebooks, newspaper cuttings, photographs, and family and political papers. The political papers comprise official and personal records dating from his time as Prime Minister (1915–23). The collection also includes extensive correspondence with Curtin, including a significant amount of correspondence while Curtin was Prime Minister. It includes 23 letters from, and 27 letters to, Curtin. Two letters from Elsie Curtin are also included in the collection. A card index to the correspondence is available.

MAHON, HUGH – PAPERS, 1880–1936**MS 937**

Quantity: 0.60 metres

Hugh Mahon was an Irish-born journalist and politician. This collection consists of correspondence and press cuttings relating to Mahon's political career and his interest in Catholic and Irish affairs. Correspondents include Alfred Deakin, Andrew Fisher and John and Elsie Curtin.

MENZIES, SIR ROBERT GORDON – PAPERS, 1905–78**MS 4936**

Quantity: 80.92 metres

Robert (later Sir Robert) Menzies was the MHR for Kooyong (1934–66), Leader of the Opposition (1943–49) and Prime Minister of Australia (1939–41 and 1949–66).

This extensive collection of personal papers includes correspondence, press cuttings, speeches, diaries and research material. The collection includes quite an extensive correspondence with John Curtin, including seven letters from Curtin to Menzies and three letters to Curtin from Menzies (dating from around 1940 to 1945). The collection also contains correspondence about World War II, as well as eight letters to, and four letters from, Curtin (dating from 1941 to 1944). Correspondence from 1974 consists of twelve letters about John Curtin as well as a letter from Elsie Curtin. A card index to the correspondence is available.

Oral histories

RODGERS, DONALD KILGOUR – INTERVIEW BY MEL PRATT, 1971

ORAL TRC 121/14

Don Rodgers was Press Secretary to both Ben Chifley and John Curtin. In this interview he discusses Curtin in Opposition, Elsie Curtin, and Curtin's relationships with political figures such as Winston Churchill, Stanley Melbourne Bruce and Ben Chifley.

The Australian National University Archives Program

Photographs

PHOTOGRAPHS AND SLIDES – PEOPLE AND EVENTS AND THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, 1948–87

2000/12

This series includes photographs of the ceremony held on 24 October 1949 to lay the foundation stones of the first three buildings of the Australian National University in Canberra. Prime Minister Ben Chifley and John Dedman, Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, laid the stones. Mrs Elsie Curtin attended the ceremony and appears in several of the photographs, which were taken by a photographer from the Department of Information. (See items CU 1026/2 to CU 1026/8.)

Australian War Memorial

Photographs

Many of the following photographs are available online through the Australian War Memorial (www.awm.gov.au) and PictureAustralia (www.pictureaustralia.org). The following images are listed chronologically.

Mrs Curtin at luncheon following her launch of HMAS <i>Bengal</i> , 7 July 1942	012815 to 012817
Group on dais (including Mrs Curtin) for combined march past by members of the Australian Women's Army Service and the Women's Australian Air Force in support of new Austerity Loan, 6 November 1942	028764
Commander Gene Tunney, US Navy, formerly world heavyweight champion boxer, in the company of John Curtin, Mrs Curtin and US Minister to Australia, Nelson Johnson, The Lodge, Canberra, 18 March 1944	077690
Lady Zara Gowrie, Mrs Forde and Mrs Curtin at farewell function for Lady Gowrie, Canberra, 19 July 1944	141461
Lady Zara Gowrie walking along a corridor of Parliament House with Mrs John Curtin, Canberra, 19 July 1944	141456
Mrs Elsie Curtin and son John arriving for the memorial service for the late John Curtin in King's Hall, Parliament House, Canberra, 6 July 1945	110533

Film***Blamey and Curtin in the USA, 1944*****F01752**

This is a US Signal Corps black-and-white silent film dating from May to June 1944. It features General Thomas Blamey and John Curtin, accompanied by an aide-de-camp and Mrs Curtin, on a train and arriving at a railway station during their tour of the US. It runs for 2 minutes, 14 seconds.

'VE Day Australian War Memorial Canberra', 9 May 1945**F01439**

This footage is of a thanksgiving service held at the Australian War Memorial. Many dignitaries, including the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, Acting Prime Minister Ben Chifley and Mrs Curtin, attended the service. The film runs for 51 seconds.

*ScreenSound Australia****'Personalities living at the Federal Capital', 1941*****Title No: 89268**

This newsreel item features foreign and Australian dignitaries, including the Governor-General Lord Gowrie, Prime Minister Mr Curtin and diplomatic representatives from Britain (Sir Ronald Cross), the US (Mr Nelson Johnson), Japan (Tatsuo Kawai) and China (Dr Hsu Mo) at their homes in Canberra. The film includes a shot of the front of The Lodge, with Prime Minister Curtin and Mrs Curtin walking in the garden and posing for the camera. The item concludes with a shot of Mr Curtin walking through the front garden of The Lodge on his way to work. An access copy is available.

Prime Minister Curtin welcomed to Canada, c1944**Title No: 53067**

This film shows Prime Minister John Curtin addressing the Canadian press and thanking the Canadian people for their hospitality and help in training visiting Australian troops. Curtin also mentions the Imperial Conference of Empire Prime Ministers in London and thanks the Prime Minister of Canada, William Lyon Mackenzie King. Prime Minister King also speaks to the press, thanking Prime Minister John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin for visiting. No access copy is available.

Prime Minister Curtin welcomed to Canada - out-takes, c1944**Title No: 594410**

In this film Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King is seen shaking hands with Prime Minister John Curtin and Mrs Elsie Curtin after the press conference at which they were welcomed to Canada. Prime Minister Curtin and Prime Minister King leave the press conference and walk in and around Canadian Parliament House grounds. Finally they shake hands for the camera on the Parliament House staircase and Prime Minister Curtin leaves in an Australian High Commission car. No access copy is available.

Cinesound Review, No. 0692 – ‘HRH [The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester] Sydney, Canberra’, 1945**Title No. 249863**

This newsreel shows Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, and Princess Alice, the Duchess of Gloucester, being greeted in Sydney by Lord Mayor Alderman Harding and federal and state ministers.

After the Duke’s speech, the royal party travels by car to place a wreath on the Cenotaph. At Admiralty House they pose for photographs with their children, the princes William and Richard. They are next seen arriving in the rain at Parliament House, Canberra, for the swearing-in ceremony to make the Duke the new Governor-General. The ceremony is held inside the Senate chamber and is witnessed by Chief Justice Sir John Latham, Prime Minister John Curtin, Mrs Curtin and foreign diplomats. The film runs for 5 minutes, 53 seconds. No access copy is available.

‘Duke sees Western Approaches’, 1945**Title No: 83916**

This newsreel shows guests at the premiere in Canberra of the film *Western Approaches*. The dignitaries include Senator Joseph Collings, Mrs Elsie Curtin and Sir Ronald Cross (the UK High Commissioner) and Lady Cross, as well as consular officials. Special guests, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, are greeted in the foyer as they arrive. The segment runs for 52 seconds. An access copy is available.

*State Library of Western Australia***J S Battye Library of Western Australian History**

Some ALP records listed below are also available online through [JCPML ERA](#), as are digitised transcripts of the oral history interviews.

Manuscripts**ALP – WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH – RECORDS, 1899–1989****MN 300**

Quantity: 32 metres

This collection contains records of the State Executive of the ALP and of its parliamentary wing and various branches. Access to this collection is partly restricted. Records include minutes, correspondence, conference proceedings, election campaign material, financial records, membership lists and subject files under a wide range of headings. The subject files relate to particular people, unions and topics, including the Household Workers’ Union, the Fabian Society, Abraham Needham (Elsie Curtin’s father), Labor Day, one ‘big’ union, unemployment, the bulk handling of wheat, ‘socials’ (parties) in 1921–22 and the seamen’s dispute of 1924. These records contain a wealth of material relevant to John Curtin.

The following is a selection of records relating to Elsie Curtin. They include records of the LWO, of which she was a long-time member.

- Correspondence files of the ALP Metropolitan Council, WA organisations of Labor women, 1922–24** MN 300 1319A/194
- ALP Fremantle LWO – minutes of meetings, 1930–35** MN 300 1198A/23
- Correspondence files of the ALP State Executive – Labor Women's [Organisation], 1930–36** MN 300 A1668A/454
- ALP Fremantle LWO – minutes of meetings, 1936–38** MN 300 1198A/24
- State election, 1943** MN 300 1719A/30/12
- This item includes a reference to Elsie Curtin overcoming ill health to speak at numerous women's meetings organised at the homes of members of the LWO's Central Committee. It includes a speaking schedule.
- Miscellaneous correspondence – ALP State Executive – personal congratulations and condolences, 1945–48** MN 300 1719A/45
- This item includes a card from Mrs Curtin and the Curtin family expressing thanks for a message of sympathy on the death of John Curtin as well as numerous letters and telegrams from a range of people and organisations regarding condolences and arrangements for Curtin's funeral.

Oral histories

- [Macleod, Elsie] Interview, 1994–95** OH2612/1
- In this interview Elsie Macleod, nee Curtin, speaks at length about her parents, John and Elsie Curtin, and about Curtin family life.
- [Shea, Frances] Interview, 1995** OH2612/2
- In this interview Frances Shea recalls John Curtin from 1918 onwards as a family friend and work colleague on the staff of the *Westralian Worker*.

Film

- Sir Frederick Samson – personal film – reel 6, 'Air raid wardens, Fremantle', 1940–45** E1100
- This film includes footage of John and Elsie Curtin.

Photographs

Some of the following images of Elsie Curtin can be viewed online through the State Library of Western Australia's Pictorial Collection catalogue (www.henrietta.liswa.wa.gov.au and follow links). The following items are arranged chronologically.

- Family and mourners at funeral of late Prime Minister John Curtin at Karrakatta Cemetery, 1945** 8076B
- Women's Service Guild Silver Jubilee dinner, 1945** BA1272/42
- Elsie Curtin is among the guests pictured.
- Curtin family home, Jarrad Street, Cottesloe, [photograph] by George Russo, 1987** BA1130/67

*United States of America***Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum**

The Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is currently digitising key elements of its collection and it is possible to view many items online (www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu). Most of the material related to Elsie Curtin in this collection is also available for viewing online through [JCPML ERA](#).

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT – RECORDS, 1933–45

This series includes the following files relating to Elsie Curtin's visit to the US in 1944:

Dinner, Prime Minister of Australia John Curtin, 25 April 1944

Luncheon, Mrs Curtin, 3 May 1944

Appendix 1 Timeline

1885	Jan	John Joseph Curtin born in Creswick, Victoria.
1890	Oct	Elsie Needham born in Ballarat, Victoria.
c1899		Curtin's family moves to Brunswick in Melbourne. Curtin leaves school.
1906		Curtin joins the Victorian Socialist Party.
1911	Mar	Curtin becomes Secretary of the Victorian Timber Workers' Union.
1912		First meeting of Curtin and Elsie Needham in Hobart.
1914	Aug	Outbreak of World War I.
	Sep	Curtin unsuccessfully contests the Victorian seat of Balaclava in the federal election won by the ALP.
1915	Nov	Curtin resigns as the Secretary of the Timber Workers' Union.
1916	May	Curtin appointed Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council anti-conscription campaign.
	Oct	Defeat for Prime Minister William Morris ('Billy') Hughes in the first conscription referendum campaign.
1917	Feb	Curtin arrives in Perth to take up post as Editor of the <i>Westralian Worker</i> in the same month as Billy Hughes forms a Nationalist Government.
	Apr	Curtin marries Elsie Needham.
	Dec	The Curtins' daughter Elsie is born.
1918	Dec	Second conscription referendum proposal also defeated.
1919	Dec	Curtin decisively defeated as ALP candidate for federal seat of Perth.
1921	Jan	The Curtins' son John is born.
1923		Purchase of land and construction of the family home at Cottesloe.
1924	May	Curtin travels overseas as official delegate to the International Labour Organisation Conference in Geneva – returns to Fremantle in August.
1925	Nov	Curtin defeated at his first attempt to win the federal seat of Fremantle.
1927	Sep	Curtin appointed member of the Commonwealth Royal Commission on Child Endowment.
1928	Nov	Curtin elected as the Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Fremantle but the Bruce–Page Coalition Government is returned to power.

1929	Oct	Scullin Labor Government comes to power after election victory. Onset of the Great Depression.
1931	Dec	Scullin Government swept from office and Lyons Government takes power. Curtin loses his seat in Parliament.
1933	cJan	Curtin appointed Chairman of the advisory council preparing Western Australia's case before the Commonwealth Grants Commission.
1934	Sep	Curtin re-elected as MHR for Fremantle but Lyons Government retains power.
1935	Oct	Curtin elected to lead the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party following the resignation of Scullin.
1939	Apr	Death of Lyons. Robert Gordon Menzies becomes Prime Minister.
	Sep	Outbreak of World War II.
1940	Sep	Federal election leaves Menzies Government dependent on support of Independents. Curtin wins Fremantle by only 641 votes.
	Oct	Curtin appointed to the newly established Advisory War Council.
1941	Aug	Resignation of Menzies as Prime Minister to be succeeded by Arthur Fadden.
	Oct	Following defeat of the Fadden Government in a no-confidence motion Curtin becomes Prime Minister.
	Dec	Bombing of Pearl Harbour. Australia declares war on Japan.
1942	Feb	Bombing of Darwin. Cablegram dispute between Curtin and Churchill over the return of soldiers of the 6 th and 7 th Divisions of the Australian Military Force.
	Mar	General Douglas MacArthur arrives in Australia as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the South-West Pacific.
	May	Battle of the Coral Sea removes first immediate threat of Japanese invasion of Australia.
	Nov	Australian troops recapture Kokoda in Papua.
1943	Jan	Introduction of the National Welfare Fund as part of large-scale scheme of social service benefits.
	Feb	Parliament accepts legislation for conscription of Australian soldiers in limited area south of the Equator.
	Aug	Curtin Government wins landslide election victory. Curtin's own majority increased to over 20 000 votes.

- | | | |
|-------------|------|---|
| 1944 | May | Curtin leaves for his only overseas visits as Prime Minister – to the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, where he attends the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. |
| | Nov | Curtin suffers his first heart attack. |
| 1945 | Jan | Curtin returns to duties after his illness. |
| | Apr | Death of US President Franklin Roosevelt. |
| | May | War against Germany ends. |
| | Jul | Curtin dies at The Lodge and is buried at Karrakatta Cemetery in Perth. |
| | Aug | Japanese surrender after atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. |
| 1970 | | Elsie Curtin is awarded the CBE. |
| 1975 | June | Elsie Curtin dies. |

Appendix 2 Who's who

Francis George Anstey (1865–1940), socialist and friend and associate of John Curtin dating from early in his eight-year term (1902–10) in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Anstey then entered federal politics representing the Victorian seat of Bourke in the House of Representatives for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) from 1910 until his retirement in 1934.

Stanley Melbourne Bruce (1883–1967) headed a Nationalist–Country Party coalition federal government from 1923 until it was defeated and he lost his own seat in Parliament in October 1929. After a short term in the House of Representatives from 1931 to 1933, he was Australian High Commissioner in London until 1945.

Arthur Augustus Calwell (1896–1973) was the Member of the House of Representatives (MHR) for Melbourne from 1940 until 1972 and leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party from 1960 to 1967. He was Minister for Information in the Curtin Government from 1943 to 1945 and then Minister for Immigration in the Chifley Government from 1945 to 1949.

Richard Gavin Gardiner Casey (1890–1976) was the MHR for Corio (for the United Australia Party) from 1930 to 1931 and the MHR for La Trobe (for the Liberal Party) from 1949 to 1960 when he became a life peer as Baron Casey of Berwick. From 1965 to 1969 he was Governor-General of Australia. He was a minister in the Lyons and Menzies governments in the 1930s, including a term as Treasurer from 1935 to 1939, and again from 1949, serving as Minister for External Affairs from 1951 to 1960. Between 1924 and 1930 he was Australia's Liaison Officer in London; from January 1940 until March 1942, he was Australian Minister to the United States (US); he then held posts with the British Government, including two years as the Governor of Bengal from 1944.

Joseph Benedict Chifley (1885–1951) served as Treasurer in the Curtin Government from 1941 to 1945, and was Prime Minister and Treasurer from July 1945 to December 1949 and then Leader of the Opposition until his death in 1951. First elected to the House of Representatives in 1928, he lost his parliamentary seat in 1931 but was returned in 1940.

Winston Spencer Churchill (1874–1965) served in the British House of Commons from 1900 until 1955 with only minor interruptions of service. He was a minister in several governments between 1906 and 1929 and then sat on the backbenches in government, and opposition until his recall to the ministry in 1939 and his elevation to Prime Minister in May 1940. His party was swept from power in 1945 but he was again Prime Minister from 1951 until his retirement in 1955.

Sir Arthur William Coles (1892–1982), one of two independents who voted to bring down the Fadden Government in October 1941, was the MHR for Henty from 1940 to 1946, following a two-year term as the Mayor of Melbourne. From 1936 to 1944 he was Managing Director of G J Coles and Company.

Philip Collier (1873–1948), the Leader of the Western Australian Parliamentary Labor Party from 1917 until his retirement in 1936, was Premier from 1924 to 1930 and from 1933 until 1936. He represented the electorate of Boulder in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly from 1905 until his death.

Dr Herbert Vere Evatt (1894–1965) left New South Wales State politics in 1930 following his appointment to the Full Bench of the High Court of Australia, only to step down from the judiciary to enter the House of Representatives in September 1940. He was Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs in the Curtin and Chifley governments from 1941 to 1949, and Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party from 1951 until his appointment as Chief Justice of the New South Wales Supreme Court in 1960. From 1948 to 1949 he was President of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Sir Arthur William Fadden (1895–1973), Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Country Party from 1941 until 1958, was Curtin's immediate predecessor as Prime Minister from August to October 1941. First elected to the House of Representatives in 1936, he was Federal Treasurer in the Menzies governments from 1940 to 1941 and from 1949 until his retirement in 1958.

Francis Michael Forde (1890–1983) served as Prime Minister for eight days after the death of John Curtin in July 1945. After five years in the Queensland Parliament, he sat in the House of Representatives from 1922 until 1946 and again in the Queensland Parliament from 1955 to 1957. He was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Army in the Curtin Government and in the Chifley Government until he lost his seat in the 1946 election. He then became the Australian High Commissioner to Canada until 1953.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, Prince Henry William Frederick Albert Windsor (1900–74), was the third son of King George V and Queen Mary, brother of King George VI and uncle of Queen Elizabeth II. Appointed on the initiative of Prime Minister Curtin, he served as Governor-General of Australia from January 1945 until March 1947.

Lord Gowrie (1872–1955) was born Alexander Gore Arkwright Hore-Ruthven, and after distinguished service in the British Army was Governor of South Australia from 1928 to 1934 and of New South Wales from February 1935 to January 1936, when he became the Governor-General of Australia. He left Australia in September 1944, although his appointment continued until January 1945, completing a record nine-year term in the vice-regal post.

Sir Paul Meernaa Caedwalla Hasluck (1905–93) wrote the two homefront volumes for the official history of Australia during World War II. He represented the Liberal Party as member for Curtin in the House of Representatives from 1949 to 1969, during which period he served as Minister for Territories, Defence and External Affairs. From 1969 to 1974 he was the Governor-General of Australia.

William Morris ('Billy') Hughes (1862–1952) was Labor and then Nationalist Prime Minister from 1915 until 1923. He served seven years in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and then over 50 years continuously in the Australian Parliament from 1901 until his death.

Francis William Hyett (1882–1919), a close personal friend of John Curtin during his Victorian socialist days, held various posts in the Victorian socialist movement and played a major role in the development of Victorian railway unions.

Herbert Victor Johnson (1899–1962) was the MHR for Kalgoorlie from 1940 until 1958, and served as Minister for the Interior in the Chifley Government from 1945 to 1949.

John ('Jack') Thomas Lang (1876–1975) was Premier of New South Wales from 1925 to 1927 and 1930 to 1932. He led the New South Wales Parliamentary Labor Party from 1925 and, after a party split during the Depression, the Lang Labor Party from 1932 until 1939. He later served one term (1946–49) in the House of Representatives.

Dame Enid Muriel Lyons (1897–1981), wife of Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, became the first woman MHR (for the Tasmanian electorate of Darwin) in 1943 and then the first woman in a federal ministry in December 1949. She retired from politics in 1951.

Joseph Aloysius Lyons (1879–1939), a former Labor Premier of Tasmania, entered federal politics in 1929 and served in the Scullin Ministry before leaving the ALP in March 1931 to join the United Australia Party. He was Prime Minister from January 1932 until his death in April 1939, the first Australian Prime Minister to die in office.

General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), after distinguished service with the US Army in World War I, became Superintendent of West Point Military Academy in 1919, was promoted to General in 1923 and appointed Chief-of-Staff of the US Army in 1930. He retired in 1937 but was recalled in June 1941 to help mobilise the Philippines Army. Following the Japanese invasion he was ordered to leave the Philippines and go to Australia and was appointed Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area. In 1945 he became the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, in which position he received the Japanese surrender and then headed the Allied occupation of Japan. In 1950 he was appointed the Commander of the United Nations Forces in Korea but was recalled in April 1951.

Tom Mann (1856–1941), a leader in the London dock strike of 1889, came to Australia in 1902 and founded the Victorian Socialist Party in 1906. He returned to the United Kingdom (UK) in 1910.

Sir Robert Gordon Menzies (1894–1978) left Victorian politics to enter the House of Representatives in 1934 and became Australia's longest serving Prime Minister with two terms – 1939 to 1941 and 1949 until his retirement in January 1966. He had earlier served in the Lyons Government and led the Federal Parliamentary Liberal party from 1944 to 1966.

Abraham Needham (1860–1922), the father of John Curtin's wife Elsie Needham, was born in Victoria but took his family first to South Africa in the 1890s and then to Tasmania in 1908. An active socialist thinker, he befriended Curtin during a visit by the latter to Tasmania on union business in 1912. In 1919, two years after his daughter's marriage, Needham came with his wife to Perth and assisted Curtin with his editorial duties at the *Westralian Worker* until his death in August 1922.

Annie Needham, nee Hosking, (1858–1944) married Abraham Needham in 1883. She and her husband followed their daughter and son-in-law to Perth in 1919. After Abraham's death, Annie lived with the Curtin family until her own death in 1944.

Sir Earle Christmas Grafton Page (1880–1961) entered the House of Representatives in 1919, led the Federal Parliamentary Country Party from 1921 to 1939 and was Treasurer in the Bruce–Page Government from 1923 to 1929. He served as a minister in the Lyons Government from 1934, was Prime Minister for nineteen days after the death of Lyons in April 1939, Australian minister resident in London from September 1941 until June 1942, and again a minister in the Menzies Government from 1949 to 1956.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945), the only man to win four successive US presidential elections, was inaugurated as President in 1933 and served continuously until his death in April 1945. He was previously Governor of New York from 1928 to 1932.

John Scaddan (1876–1934) became the youngest-ever Premier of Western Australia when elected to office in October 1911. His Labor Government remained in power until defeated on the floor of the House in July 1916. Scaddan left the party the following year over the conscription issue and, despite broken parliamentary terms, served in non-Labor governments from 1919 to 1921 and 1930 to 1933.

James Henry Scullin (1876–1953) led the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party from 1928 until 1935 and was Prime Minister from October 1929 until January 1932. He was the MHR for Corangamite from 1910 to 1913 and the MHR for Yarra from 1922 until 1949.

Dame Dorothy Margaret Tangney (1911–85) was the first woman to enter the Australian Senate when elected from Western Australia to a casual vacancy in August 1943 representing the ALP. She remained in the Senate until July 1968.

Edward John Ward (1899–1963) sat in the House of Representatives in 1931 and from 1932 to 1963 representing first the Lang Labor Party and then the ALP. He was Minister for Labour and National Service in the Curtin Government until 1943 and then Minister for Transport and External Territories in both the Curtin and Chifley governments until 1949.

Alexander Wilson (1880–1954), one of two Independents who voted to bring down the Fadden Government in October 1941, served in the House of Representatives from 1937 to 1946.

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- van Konkelenberg, Jude Nicholas, 'General MacArthur and the Subversion of Australia during the Pacific Campaign 1942–1945', BA (Hons) thesis, University of Adelaide, 2000.
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Internet sources

[National Archives of Australia](#)

Australia's Prime Ministers: Meet a PM: John Curtin

Website: primeministers.naa.gov.au/meetpm.asp?pmId=14

This website provides detailed biographical information about John Curtin before, during and after his term as prime minister. It also includes a biography of Elsie Curtin; details of all elections in which Curtin stood for parliament; and links to a 'Who's who' of significant people in Curtin's life and to a 'Research map' to find archives on John Curtin.

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

John Curtin: a biography

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/resources/biography/details.html

This website provides a brief illustrated history of John Curtin's life, with links to a timeline of significant dates and a bibliography.

John Curtin: a good sport

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/sport/

Australians are known for their obsession with sport and John Curtin shared this national passion, both as a participant and as a spectator. In this web publication, images, letters, newspaper cuttings and video and audio clips combine to tell the story of the Prime Minister well regarded as 'fairest and best'.

John Curtin: a man of peace, a time of war

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/manofpeace/

This online exhibition tells the story of John Curtin, the poor country boy who rose to become prime minister, the revolutionary young socialist-turned-political pragmatist, the pacifist called upon to lead Australia during wartime. It features key material from the original exhibition developed by the National Archives of Australia in conjunction with the JCPML. Panoramas provide a view of the exhibition in its original form.

John Curtin: a prime minister and his people

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/letters/cover.html

This selection of about 500 letters documents the relationship between Prime Minister John Curtin and the general public during the years 1941–45 and is the result of a joint project between the National Archives of Australia and the JCPML. The letters are indexed for easy access by subjects (eg, 'censorship', 'Communist Party', 'defence' and 'unions').

John Curtin: fairest and best

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/jcexhibition/

This online exhibition reflects a current display in the [JCPML](#) reading room and tells the story of Curtin's life from his early days to his time as Prime Minister.

John Curtin: from revolutionary firebrand to journalist in spirit

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/journalist/

This online exhibition explores John Curtin's development as a journalist and his special relationship with the media as Prime Minister. Photographs, audio clips and selections from Curtin's own writings bring the story to life.

Investigating John Curtin: the research papers of Tom Fitzgerald

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/fitzgerald/

Tom Fitzgerald, respected economist and journalist, planned to write a biography of John Curtin but became so enmeshed in his investigations that the work was still in progress when he died in 1993. The research papers, now held by the JCPML, provide new and intriguing insights into Curtin the 'inner man' as well as Curtin the Prime Minister. This web publication explores the research papers and the life and work of Tom Fitzgerald.

On track: John Curtin's railway journeys

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/railway/

This online publication explores John Curtin's lifelong link with train travel, including experiences of train travel as it was from 1917 when the Trans-Australia line first spanned the continent until the mid-1940s. Images, film clips and the memories of the people who travelled with John Curtin bring this story alive.

Shaping the nation: John Curtin and Australia

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/shapingthenation/

In following the development of John Curtin's political thinking and career, this exhibition traces the development of Australia from Federation to adulthood – to the time in World War II when Australia had to stand apart from Britain and defend its own soil. The exhibition is an exploration, through the eyes of one of Australia's most prominent early citizens, of what it means to be a nation.

Visiting John Curtin at home: 24 Jarrad St, Cottesloe

Website: john.curtin.edu.au/curtinhouse/

Houses and their furnishings can suggest a great deal about the people who inhabit them. This online publication visits John Curtin at home in his Jarrad Street house, built in 1923 and purchased by the Federal and Western Australian Governments in 1999. Photographs, video and sound help to bring to life the story of Prime Minister John Curtin's modest home in Cottesloe.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*Historical documents: Documents on Australian foreign policy*

Website: www.info.dfat.gov.au/historical

This website provides access to thousands of pages of key historical documents from the published volumes of 'Documents on Australian Foreign Policy'. The documents can be browsed chronologically or searched by keyword. Volumes 5 to 8 cover John Curtin's years as Prime Minister.

Appendix 4 Contacting the National Archives

National Reference Service

All reference inquiries

Tel: 1300 886 881
(Overseas callers: 61 2 6212 3900)
Fax: 1300 886 882
(Overseas callers: 61 2 6212 3999)
TTY: (02) 6212 3689
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
Website: www.naa.gov.au

Postal address:
PO Box 7425
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Defence Service Records

PO Box 7425
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Tel: 1300 886 881
Fax: (02) 6212 3499
Email: servicerecords@naa.gov.au

Reading Room addresses

Canberra

Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6212 3900
Fax: (02) 6212 3999
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Postal address:
PO Box 7425
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Sydney

120 Miller Road
Chester Hill NSW 2162
Tel: (02) 9645 0110
Fax: (02) 9645 0108
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
TTY: (02) 9743 8419

Postal address:
Locked Bag 4
Chester Hill NSW 2162

Sydney Records Centre

2 Globe Street
The Rocks NSW 2000

Victorian Archives Centre

99 Sheil Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
Tel: (03) 9348 5600
Fax: (03) 9348 5628
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

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PO Box 8005
Burwood Heights VIC 3151

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16 Corporate Drive
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Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: (08) 8409 8400
Fax: (08) 8409 8499
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

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PO Box 6536
Adelaide SA 5000

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Fax: (03) 6230 6134
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

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Hobart TAS 7000

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Millner NT 0810
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Appendix 5 Addresses of other institutions

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
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Curtin University of Technology
Kent St
Bentley WA 6102
Tel: (08) 9266 4205
Fax: (08) 9266 4185
Email: jcpml@curtin.edu.au
Website: john.curtin.edu.au
Electronic Research Archive (ERA): dtl.lis.curtin.edu.au

Postal address:
GPO Box U1987
Perth WA 6845

Other Australian institutions

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian National University
Archives Program
Noel Butlin Archives Centre
Menzies Building 2
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Tel: (02) 6125 2219
Fax: (02) 6125 0140
Email: butlin.archives@anu.edu.au
Website: www.archives.anu.edu.au

The Australian National University Archives
Contact details as above.

Australian War Memorial
Treloar Cres
Campbell ACT 2612
Tel: (02) 6243 4315
Fax: (02) 6243 4325
Email: info@awm.gov.au
Website: www.awm.gov.au

Postal address:
GPO Box 345
Canberra ACT 2601

National Library of Australia
Parkes ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6262 1111
Fax: (02) 6257 1703
Website: www.nla.gov.au

Old Parliament House
Parkes ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6270 8222
Fax: (02) 6270 8111
Email: info.oph@dcita.gov.au
Website: www.oph.gov.au

PictureAustralia
National Library of Australia
Parkes ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6262 1641
Fax: (02) 6257 1180
Email: pictaust@nla.gov.au
Website: www.pictureaustralia.org

ScreenSound Australia
(including the National Film and Video Lending Service)
McCoy Circuit
Acton ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6248 2000
Fax: (02) 6248 2222
Email: access@screensound.gov.au (collection inquiries)
and enquiries@screensound.gov.au (general inquiries)
Website: www.screensound.gov.au

Postal address:
GPO Box 2002
Canberra ACT 2601

New South Wales

Powerhouse Museum
500 Harris Street
Ultimo NSW 2007
Tel: (02) 9217 0111
Website: www.powerhousemuseum.com

Postal address:
PO Box K346
Haymarket NSW 1238

State Library of NSW
Mitchell Library
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9273 1414
Fax: (02) 9273 1255
Email: library@sl.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.sl.nsw.gov.au/

University of New England and Regional Archives
Heritage Centre
CB Newling Library building
Corner of Dangar and Kentucky Streets
Armidale NSW 2351
Tel: (02) 6773 6555
Fax: (02) 6773 6444
Website: www.une.edu.au/archives/

Victoria

State Library of Victoria
La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection
328 Swanston Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Tel: (02) 8664 7007
Fax: (02) 9639 6829
Website: www.statelibrary.vic.gov.au

University of Melbourne Archives
3rd Floor, Baillieu Library
University of Melbourne
Parkville Vic 3010
Tel: (03) 8344 4122 or 8344 6848 (general inquiries)
Fax: (03) 9347 8627
Email: archives@archives.unimelb.edu.au
Website: www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/archives/archgen

Western Australia

State Library of Western Australia
J S Battye Library of Western Australian History
Alexander Library Building
Perth Cultural Centre
Perth WA 6000
Tel: (08) 9427 3111
Fax: (08) 9427 3256
Website: www.liswa.wa.gov.au
Pictorial catalogue: henrietta.liswa.wa.gov.au and follow links

The University of Western Australia Archives
The University of Western Australia
35 Stirling Highway
Crawley WA 6009
Ph: (08) 6488 6000
Fax: (08) 6488 1380
Email: general.enquiries@uwa.edu.au
Website: www.uwa.edu.au

South Australia

Flinders University Library
The Flinders University
Sturt Road
Bedford Park SA 5042
Tel: (08) 8201 2131
Fax: (08) 8201 2508
Website: www.lib.flinders.edu.au

Postal address:
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001

Overseas institutions

United Kingdom

Churchill Archives Centre
Churchill College
Cambridge CB3 0DS
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 1223 336087
Fax: +44 1223 336135
Email: archives@chu.cam.ac.uk
Website: www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives

John Rylands University Library of Manchester
The Labour History Archive and Study Centre
The People's History Museum
Head Office
103 Princess Street
Manchester M1 6DD
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (161) 228 7212
Email: LHASC@fs1.li.man.ac.uk
Website: www.nmlhweb.org/archive.htm

Imperial War Museum
Lambeth Road
London SE1 6HZ
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Tel: +44 (20) 7416 5320
Fax: +44 (20) 7416 5374
Email: mail@iwm.org.uk
Website: www.iwm.org.uk

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Kew Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU
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Tel: +44 (20) 8876 3444
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Website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

United States of America

Franklin D Roosevelt Presidential Library
and Museum
4079 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, New York 12538
United States of America
Tel: +1 (845) 486-7770
Email: roosevelt.library@nara.gov
Website: www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu

MacArthur Memorial Library and Archives
MacArthur Square
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
United States of America
Tel: +1 (757) 441-2965
Fax: +1 (757) 441-5389
Website: www.macarthurmemorial.org

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national archives of australia

john curtin

GUIDE TO ARCHIVES OF
AUSTRALIA'S PRIME MINISTERS



1941
-
1945

This guide describes the archival records on John Curtin and Elsie Curtin held by the National Archives of Australia, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library and other institutions.

John Curtin, Australia's Prime Minister during the darkest days of World War II, died in office within six weeks of the final victory over Japan. A Victorian by birth, he was the only Prime Minister to represent a Western Australian seat in the House of Representatives.

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