Make tomorrow better.

If they could see us now - JCPML Anniversary Lecture

The Hon Chief Justice Robert French AC, will present the 14th John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Anniversary Lecture on Thursday 18 July 2013.

The lecture, entitled ‘If they could see us now - what would the founders say?’, will focus on the evolution of our Federation. The Chief Justice will approach the founders’ intentions by reference to perceptions of the federal system at the turn of the 19th/20th Century and contemporary writings.

Robert French was appointed Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia on 1 September 2008. At the time of his appointment he was a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia, having been appointed to that office in November 1986. He is a graduate of the University of Western Australia in science and law. He was admitted in 1972 and practised as a barrister and solicitor in Western Australia until 1983 when he went to the Independent Bar.

From 1994 to 1998 he was President of the National Native Title Tribunal. At the time of his appointment he was an additional member of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory and a member of the Supreme Court of Fiji.

He was also Deputy President of the Australian Competition Tribunal and part time member of the Australian Law Reform Commission. From 2001 to January 2005 he was President of the Australian Association of Constitutional Law.

In 2012 he was made a Companion in the Order of Australia and Fellow of the Academy of Social Science in Australia.

Your invitation to the 2013 Anniversary Lecture is enclosed.

Right: Hon Chief Justice Robert French AC, photo taken by Klaus Schmechtig.
John Curtin’s great grandson, Dr Toby Davidson is the 2013 John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Visiting Scholar. He is an Australian poetry researcher and editor who has recently published his first book *Christian Mysticism and Australian Poetry*. Dr Davidson is also a lecturer at Macquarie University.

Dr Davidson will visit the JCPML to conduct his research and present his research findings at the Visiting Scholar Lecture early in 2014.

Toby will research the relationship between Curtin and poetry, interviews conducted with John Curtin regarding his love of poetry, identify what poetry was included in his personal library and why, the use of Australian poetry in John Curtin speeches and by other Curtin Family members, Abraham Needham and Elsie Macleod, who have also written poetry.

Poetry has played an important role in the life of John Curtin and his family. This research will explore an interesting aspect of Curtin’s life and the fact that the research will be conducted by the great grandson of John Curtin, who is also a published poet, is very special.