on the up

NEWSLETTER OF PROPERTIES
Properties can feel justifiably proud of its considerable achievements in 2009, a year that can be characterised by personal and team commitment with high levels of productivity in the face of significant challenges.

All directorates of Properties, Planning & Project Management, Asset Management and Facilities Management achieved their respective annual objectives while dealing professionally with the intensive day-to-day demands. While there have been many outstanding achievements throughout the year those that are most notable include:

- The development of a concept for a Curtin Town which provides a means of creating long-term wealth for the University through our land asset and at the same time creates a vital learning environment that will make Curtin a university of choice.
- The planning of new capital facilities on the campus including the Engineering Pavilion and the refurbishment of Buildings 108, 303/304 and 305.
- The completion of the Resources & Chemistry Precinct and Curtin Stadium.
- Refurbishment projects including the CBS replan and Building 103 (Housing Service and International Office) both of which achieved a highly effective upgrade and efficient use of space.
- The introduction of new Security initiatives including the printing of a number of bi-lingual banners, pamphlets and business cards to promote personal security among international students, operation, on request, of a wheelchair accessible courtesy bus for staff and students and the trial of the Virtual Observer CCTV System on the Bentley campus.
- The establishment of the Environmental Sustainability Committee and implementation of the 2009 Environmental Management Plan addressing the increasing requirements of environmental and sustainable development.

There have been many challenges throughout 2009, principle among them being the rapidly changing economic environment. While the economic downturn was short-lived, the pressures associated with recruitment and cost escalations remain.

I would like to make special mention of the many people in Properties who may not be involved in high profile projects, but who nevertheless work with constant dedication, often without acknowledgement, to achieve outstanding results for our University.

Properties looks forward to again meeting the challenges and achieving great things for Curtin in 2010.
Engineering Pavilion Complex

Providing a non-traditional, innovative, learning environment

Comprising two building wings located around an exhibition plaza, the new “Engineering Pavilion Complex” currently under construction at Curtin University is a state-of-the-art, student-focused learning centre delivering world-class facilities for engineering students of all disciplines.

Conceptually it is a natural extension of the ‘First Year Studio’ that formed part of Curtin’s Carrick award-winning ‘engineering Foundation Year Program’ which demonstrated the benefits of a non-traditional, innovative, learning environment.

With areas for both structured and self learning; higher-degree research; and a three-storey exhibition hall for large scale experiments and exhibitions, its key feature is an open ‘studio’ style that facilitates peer learning and combines laboratories, amenities, and areas for interaction into a suite of integrated spaces.

The lead consultant and architect is Taylor Robinson, the builder is DORIC (Australia), and the project is being managed by the University’s Properties Office with completion likely in August 2011. This project was successful in obtaining an Education Infrastructure Fund (EIF) Round Two grant.

PROJECT PROGRESS TO DATE

Work on phase one of the Engineering Pavilion, comprising Building 215 is progressing well, and despite its location at the heart of the campus, issues of noise, access and safety continue to be well managed without major concern or disruption.

With construction works due for completion in August, occupation is planned for September 2010.

Planning has also commenced for phase two, comprising Building 216 providing academic offices, research and structured learning facilities. A detailed brief is now being finalised, construction is scheduled to commence late-2010 and completion expected by May 2012.

The Engineering Pavilion has provided an opportunity to explore and implement innovative strategies in all aspects of the development, from planning to construction. Sustainability, contracting and teaching and learning initiatives being the main areas of focus and reform.
SECURITY INITIATIVES Bring impressive results

NEW INITIATIVES BRING IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Continued efforts by both the Security Office and the Security Upgrade Project Team in 2009 to improve the safety and security of the Curtin Community have reaped considerable benefits for students, staff and visitors to Curtin University’s campuses.

Increased installation and use of CCTV technology as well as the introduction of Virtual Observer and changes to security patrols have resulted in significant reductions in the number of security incidents on our campuses with a 94% reduction in robbery (from 17 incidents in 2008 to just 1 in 2009) and a 52% reduction in thefts (from 138 incidents in 2008 to 67 incidences in 2009) on the Bentley Campus alone.

CASS results from 2009 also showed a 7% improvement in students’ sense of safety on campus indicating that they are beginning to feel the effects of the University’s endeavours in this area.

BI-LINGUAL SECURITY INFORMATION

In an effort to promote better personal security and the services of the Security department amongst the International students, a number of bi-lingual banners, pamphlets and business cards have been printed. This form of communication was first introduced at open day 2009 and has continued to receive positive feedback.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE COURTESY BUS

The Security department now operates, on request, a wheelchair accessible courtesy bus for staff and students. The operation of facilities on this bus is now part of the training program for all Security Officers.

VIRTUAL OBSERVER

Virtual Observer has been created out of a partnership between industry leader Digital Technology International and Curtin University. The pilot project, running for 12 months from October 2009 to October 2010, currently involves 3 vehicles that form part of Curtin Security’s fleet. A pod has been added to the top of each vehicle housing camera equipment linked to a recording device and a GPS unit held on the vehicle.

The system captures the location of the vehicle as it moves around the campus, and takes footage at the same time. Where an incident is noted by the security patrol officers, or otherwise reported to Curtin Security, footage which may assist in identifying what happened can be accessed from the system using the location as a reference.

SECURE BIKE COMPOUND

In order to encourage more staff and students to use bicycles, a secure bike compound with Cardax access and CCTV surveillance has been installed adjacent to the security building to monitor the compound.
Environmental Sustainability

Curtin University has always been, and will continue to be, committed to reducing the University’s ecological footprint. Late-2008 saw the appointment of an Environmental Sustainability Development Officer, which initiated a renewed emphasis on Environmental Sustainability at all Curtin’s campuses.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

In 2009 the Environmental Sustainability Committee was established with its Terms of Reference being to:

» Advise on, support, and make recommendations in relation to, the Environmental Management Plans and Environmental Sustainability Plan.

» Involve and report to the Curtin community and the wider community on environmental and sustainability issues.

» Assist in meeting Curtin’s reporting requirements on the university’s environmental sustainability performance.

» Affirm the University sustainability ethos through the signature and implementation of international and national declarations.

» Develop alliances and collaboration with other universities and other like minded organisations at the highest level on sustainability issues.

» Develop and monitor the University’s Environmental Sustainability Policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

An Environmental Management Plan was developed and implemented in 2009 with a number of key initiatives including introduction of environmental procedures into the Contractors Safety Handbook and introduction of an e-waste recycling program at the Bentley campus.

A waste audit was undertaken with students and a waste assessment of the whole of the Bentley campus was finalised.

The Curtin Water Efficiency Management Program team assessed current water usage on site and identified inefficiencies and potential water conservation measures, including savings. The project will better manage the water usage by incorporating best practice technologies and more efficient AAA-rated equipment in our cooling towers, toilet facilities, wash down facilities, food service locations, laboratories and student laundries.

University Master Plan

2008 saw the development of a Strategic Master Plan and the concept of Curtin Town with the purpose of creating a University of excellence of international standing to place Curtin in the top 20 universities in Asia by 2020.

In 2009 the first stage of this plan came to fruition in the form of the Curtin Development Plan - encompassing technical and strategic aspects of the plan; exploration of alternative Statutory Planning Frameworks and Financial Viability Assessments.

The principal aim of the Curtin Town project is to provide a vital physical environment in which innovation, communication, interaction, research and learning will thrive. It provides the necessary information to ensure the means are available to provide the right environment for the attainment of the University’s strategic objectives, and to access economic opportunities offered by its inner city location.

The plan has been lodged for consideration with the Department of Planning and will inform subsequent discussions on the statutory framework. The Financial Viability Assessments to date confirm the feasibility of the project with projected revenue expected to be far in excess of the development costs.

The next phase of the project will be rolled out in 2010 and the key areas for attention have been identified as: continued consultation with the government regarding the precise form of the statutory framework; facilitating the process of consideration of the plan by the West Australian Planning Commission; detailed planning and costing for the first development sites; commencement of preparation for presentation to the market of first development parcels; more detailed identification of administration and governance implications for Curtin arising from the Curtin Town project and the statutory framework.
Additional Car Parking

In 2009, the University approved the construction of two additional car parks at the Bentley Campus to meet current demand for parking and to offset the loss of existing car parking that may be subsumed in future developments.

The first of the new car parks is located adjacent to the Resources and Chemistry Precinct Building and is sized at 180 bays. A contract for the construction of the new car park was awarded and works completed in March 2010.

The second car park is to be located immediately north of Barblett Oval to meet the car parking demands from the Academic Precinct, Technology Park and future development at the northern boundary of the Campus.

The car park has been nominally sized at 650 bays and is currently going out to tender. Construction will commence in 2010 and completion of the project is expected in late-2010.

Kalgoorlie Library

KALGOORLIE LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT - STAGE 1

A new computer-training laboratory has been created at the Kalgoorlie Library, Building 715.

The space previously occupied by the Reserve Collection has been enclosed with a glass partition and power, data and audio-visual services installed to support a 17-seat computer training facility. A new dedicated air-conditioning unit has also been installed to service this room.

Primarily used as a teaching facility for Eastern Goldfields SHS students it also provides an open access computing facility for all students at other times.

Muresk

MURESK WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE

This project involves the upgrade of the sewerage treatment plant facility. The existing Imhoff system is old and past its use by date. The population growth, along with new and refurbished facilities on campus, has placed stress on the infrastructure and resulted in ongoing environmental issues due to its close proximity to the Avon river.

A consultant was engaged in 2009 to design and document a new system for tender in 2009 and construction in 2010.

Recreation & Events Centre

(CURTIN STADIUM) AND KENT STREET CAR PARK

Stage 2 of this project, consisting of the multi-purpose Sports Hall (for use in recreation, graduations, examinations, etc.), was handed over in mid-May 2009.

The facilities are fully operational and the Sports Hall was the venue for a set of mid-year graduations and examinations for Semesters One and Two.
Properties will focus on achieving a number of key objectives and face significant challenges throughout 2010.

Perhaps the most significant challenge will be to deploy the resources required to meet the demand for services and to respond to the increasing complex operational and compliance environment. The difficulties associated with resourcing will be made more acute as a result of budget reductions in the areas of staffing and contracting.

To help meet this challenge the work done throughout 2009 on policies and processes will improve workforce efficiency. The skills and resources audit also assisted in the best utilisation of the skills and knowledge of existing staff while assisting in winning support for a number of critical appointments.

The continued development of the Strategic Asset Plan together with the objectives identified will provide the focus for action in 2010. Properties operational objectives for the year are:

- Align management and development of physical facilities and services to the objectives of the Strategic Asset Plan and the strategies and initiatives within the University’s Strategic Plan.
- Develop and manage high-quality physical facilities and services that deliver a functional, safe, secure and attractive environment.
- Attract develop and retain appropriately skilled and motivated workforce.
- Operate in a financially and environmentally sustainable way.

Specifically, our focus in 2010 shall be on the following strategic priorities:

- Ensure infrastructure is sufficient to support the development plans for the Bentley campus.
- Progress the University Master Plan.
- Improve parking and access satisfaction ratings.
- Achieve buy-in for sustainability initiatives.