



# ***Annual Report 2023***

Curtin University Library



*TL Robertson Library north entrance*

## ***Acknowledgement of Country***

*We are honoured and grateful for the privilege to maintain campuses operating in Boorloo (Perth) and Karlkurla (Kalgoorlie) in Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present as Custodians and Owners of these lands. We recognise their deep knowledge and their cultural, spiritual and educational practices, and aspire to learn and teach in partnership with them. Curtin also acknowledges First Nations peoples connected with our global campuses.*

*We are committed to working in partnership with all Custodians and Owners to strengthen and embed First Nations' voices and perspectives in our decision-making, now and into the future.*



# Message from the University Librarian

The reopening of the Library after nearly two years of decant spaces was a momentous event. The result was a tribute to my predecessor University Librarian Catherine Clark and to everyone who contributed to the refurbishment project over many years. So what was the result? We asked our students what they thought of the new space - you'll see their comments peppered throughout this report.

*'A major SLAY'*

Feedback from a student on the refurbished TL Robertson Library

The refurbished Library has given us a beautiful, light-filled space with newly designed group and individual study facilities. There have also been many new opportunities to engage with students and the Curtin community through artworks, the Makerspace, dedicated exhibition spaces and the popular Level 7 study and event spaces with their inspiring views across the pine trees and cityscapes. The Library's inaugural exhibition 'Finding Your Place and Your People' celebrated the history of the Library from its origins in the early 1970s.

Our early forays into building activation are still gaining focus and momentum as part of our new business as usual. The Library and our services are all about people, and in 2023 we have been working to make sure we are a library for the whole of the Curtin community through initiatives to embed Indigenous perspectives in Library spaces and services,

increase our engagement with students as partners, improve support for incarcerated students, and improve our partnership relationships with Curtin's global campus libraries. To help develop our staff culture we also hosted a very successful 'Festival of Work', focused on work design and job crafting.

We were delighted to see Kalgoorlie Library return to normal operations after a fire in late 2022, which damaged equipment, furniture and building interiors.

*'Love the new space and how there is so much more natural light now! Thank you!'*

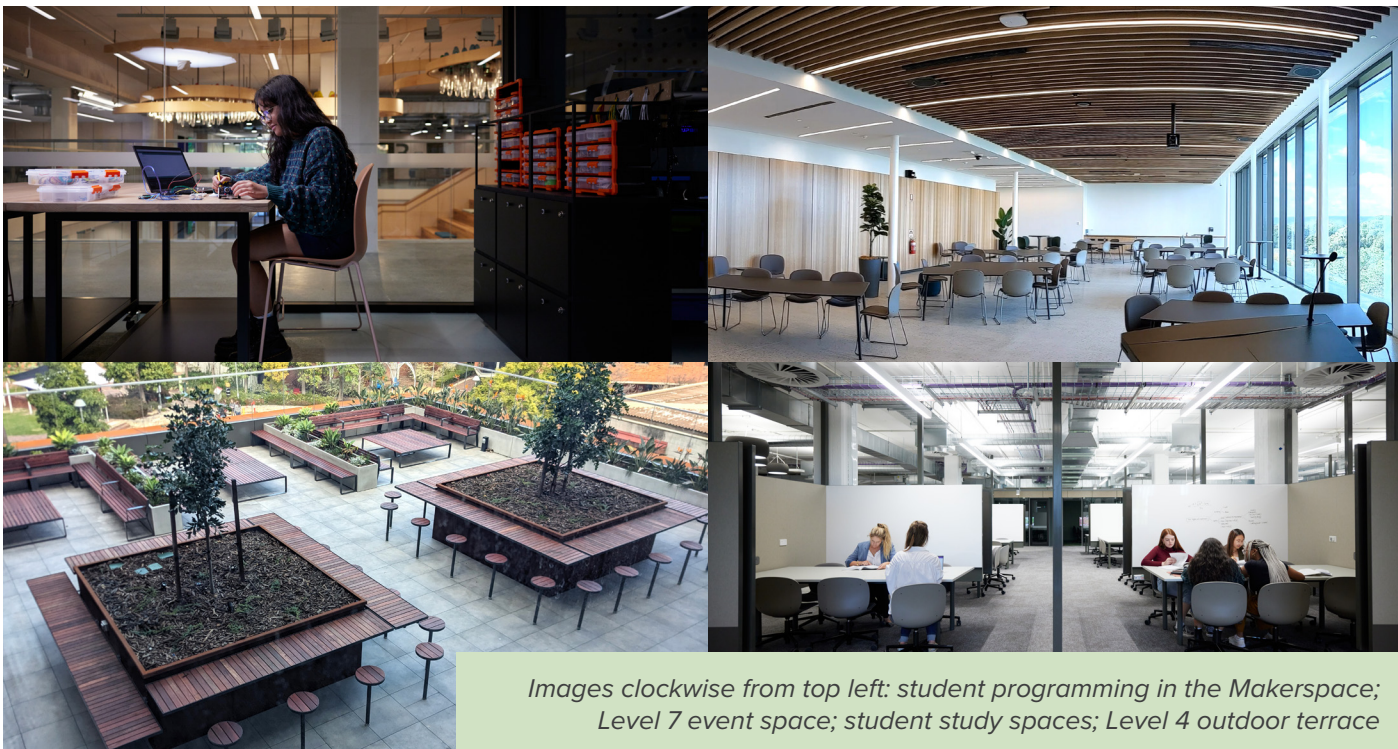
Feedback from a student on the refurbished TL Robertson Library

In the academic arena we have focused on the further expansion of Read & Publish agreements to facilitate open access publishing. The third annual Thesis Fest in 2023 again boosted motivation and energy for higher degree by research students, and the 2023 John Curtin Prime Ministerial Lecture, by Professor Tom Griffiths, 'The World After John Curtin: Geopolitics and the Planet', provided much food for thought.

Thanks to the dedication of all Library staff the Library continues to beat loudly at the heart of the Curtin community.

**Kylie Percival**  
**University Librarian**

# TL Robertson Library refurbishment



Images clockwise from top left: student programming in the Makerspace; Level 7 event space; student study spaces; Level 4 outdoor terrace

After two years of refurbishment works, we were excited to reopen the TL Robertson Library to staff, students and the public in February 2023.

TL Robertson Library is an iconic building at the heart of the Curtin Perth campus. Originally opened in 1972, the building required significant works to address end-of-life services and ensure reliable and sustainable operations moving forward.

Some highlights of the refurbished TL Robertson Library include:

- More than 3,000 seats for studying across six floors
- 90 bookable study rooms
- 660 quiet individual study spaces

The refurbishment was the perfect opportunity to modernise our facilities and better meet the needs of our students, staff

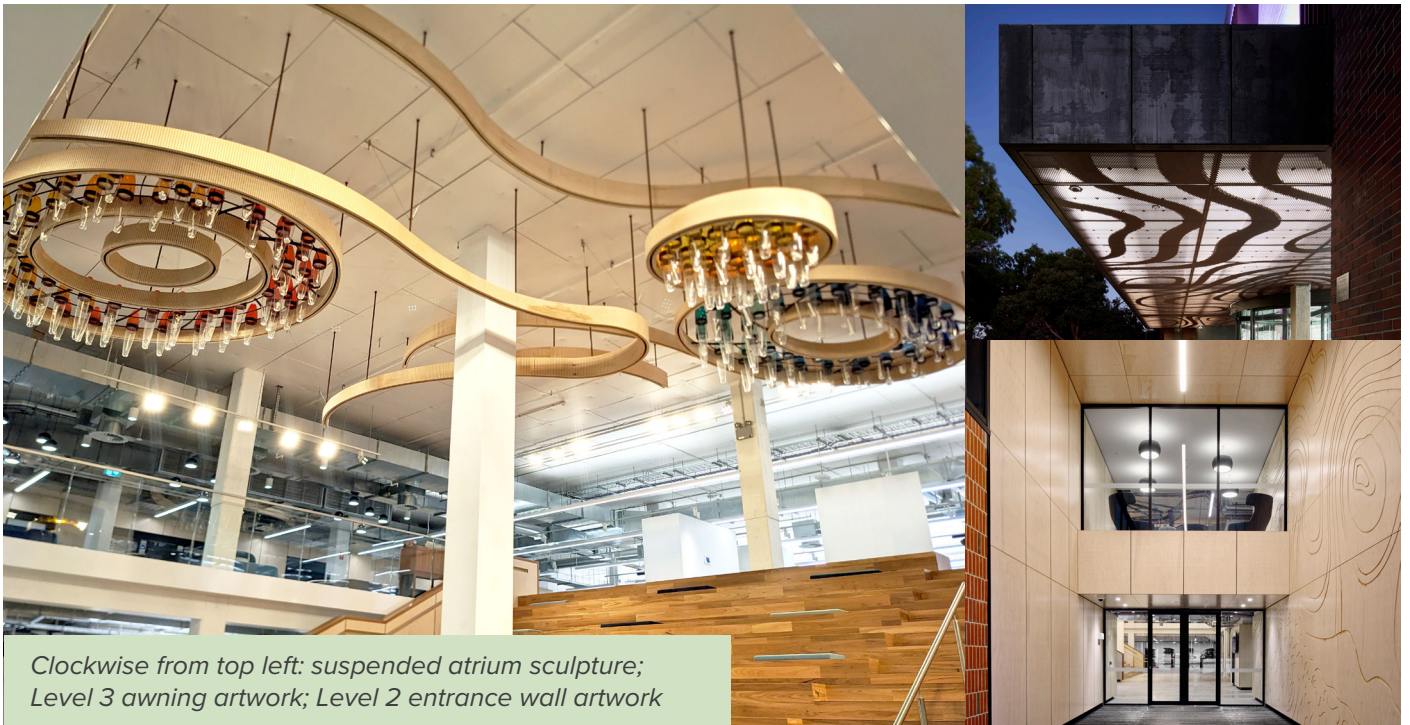
and the community. Students have fully embraced the new spaces, and now enjoy much improved facilities in the building, such as a:

- Student kitchen and cafe
- Outdoor terrace
- Exhibition spaces
- Expanded Makerspace
- Beautiful Reading Room
- Event and function spaces

*'Goodbye home... I live here now!!!'*

Feedback from a student on the refurbished TL Robertson Library

# Indigenous perspectives in the Library



*Clockwise from top left: suspended atrium sculpture; Level 3 awning artwork; Level 2 entrance wall artwork*

The Library has had an ongoing project to better engage with Indigenous perspectives through our collections and services. As a result, we have added an Indigenous Australian content facet in the catalogue and Austlang codes to catalogue records to raise awareness of our Indigenous resources.

Our recent refurbishment enabled several important changes to our spaces. New art inspired by Indigenous themes was created

by Susan Milne and Greg Stonehouse, working with Nyungar artist Justin Martin, Nyungar language was added to facilities signage and we are planning for a dedicated Indigenous student study space to open in 2024.

In late 2023, we established a new Indigenous Learning Advisor role to focus and invigorate our support for Curtin's Indigenous students and work in partnership with existing services across Curtin.

Our work in this space was recognised at 2023 Library Board Award for Innovation and Collaboration with a commendation in the Metro and Large Regional category. We acknowledge that we still have a long way to go on the path to Indigenous reconciliation, but we trust that our efforts will make a difference to the future.



*Nyungar language signage in TL Robertson Library*

# Engagement with global campuses

One of the Library's strategic priorities for 2023 was to strengthen our partnerships with Curtin University's global campus libraries to ensure that high-quality support was being provided to offshore students and staff. This included resuming regular in-person visits to see our library colleagues in Dubai, Mauritius, Malaysia and Singapore, which had been temporarily halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



*Group study tables at the Curtin Mauritius library*

The global campus network is an important aspect of Curtin University's approach to education and research; it increases opportunities for international study, enables cultural exchange and research collaboration, and amplifies Curtin's impact worldwide.

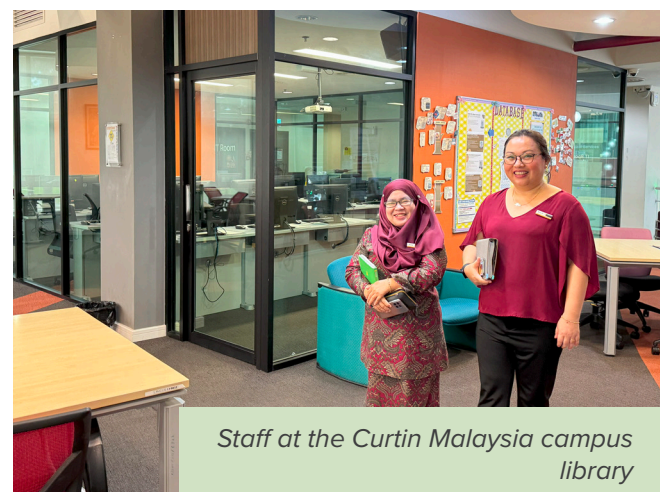


*Students studying at the Curtin Dubai library*



*Study area at the Curtin Singapore library*

The Library's global campus visits include an assessment of the Library facilities provided at each of the campuses to ensure that students have access to excellent spaces and services that will support them through their degree. Travelling to the global campuses is also an opportunity to meet with local staff and hear more about challenges and opportunities for service improvement.



*Staff at the Curtin Malaysia campus library*

Since these visits were undertaken, Library staff have continued to connect with their colleagues at the global campus libraries online, and are looking forward to future constructive in-person visits.

# Support for incarcerated students



Approximately 100 incarcerated students currently study at Curtin University from prisons across Australia. These students face considerable barriers not only within the prison environment, but in higher education as well, and part of our role at the Library is facilitating easy access to learning materials and the support they need for their course.

The Library has continued to build on our 2022 efforts to deliver peer-tutoring in prison. Initial attempts resulted in online tutoring sessions for a physics unit supervised by prison education staff. This was followed in 2023 by face-to-face tutoring at Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, which involved an arduous induction processes for our staff involved. In both cases it provided a huge amount of academic and social support for the students and proved to be a truly rewarding and educational experience for the staff members themselves.

In 2024, the Library will be attempting to further combat these issues with a project to

evaluate and improve the Library's services for incarcerated students, in collaboration with University partners. The project will seek to identify all of the barriers to service provision and identify solutions in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

***'Working directly with incarcerated students was an eye-opening experience. These students are expected to work at the same level as students on campus, but they have no access to standard aids like the internet, tutors, and peer support.'***

***I was so glad and honoured to supply the support we have all come to expect.'***

***- Connor Davidson, Peer Learning Facilitator***

Offering incarcerated students access to university education increases the chance of a brighter future on release from prison. Given the challenging educational environment experienced in prisons, the Library is proud to support this worthy effort.

# 2023 key figures

Visits to TL  
Robertson Library

**1,307,900**  
total visits

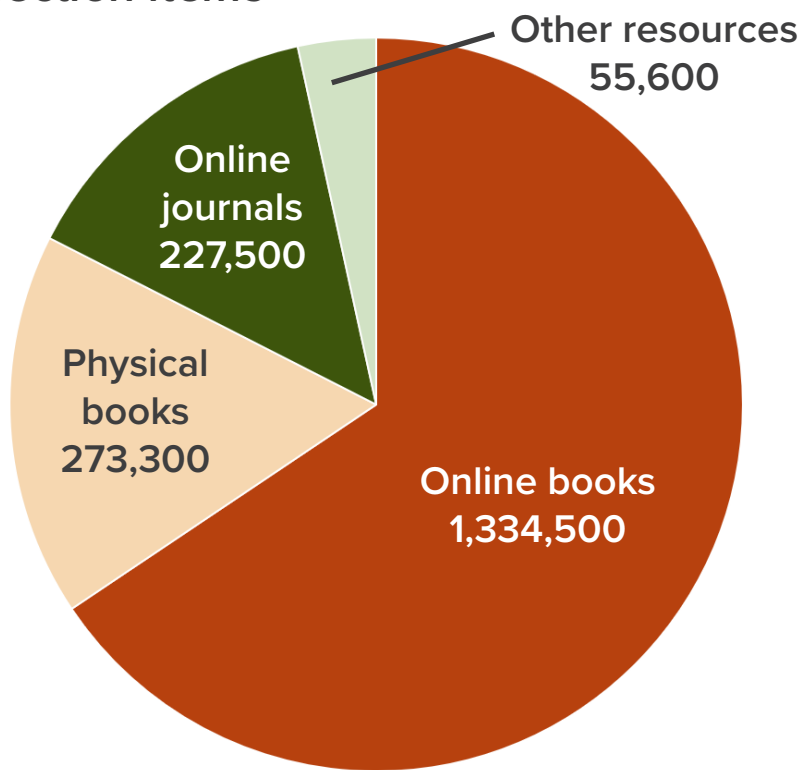
**10,600**  
visits on busiest day

Library staff

**60.73**  
full-time equivalent staff

**94**  
casual staff

## Collection items



**1,930**  
unit reading  
lists curated



**71,700**  
study room bookings

**12,000**  
unique users of study room  
bookings



## Open Access works in the institutional repository

Research outputs 19,000	Theses 4,900	Total 23,900
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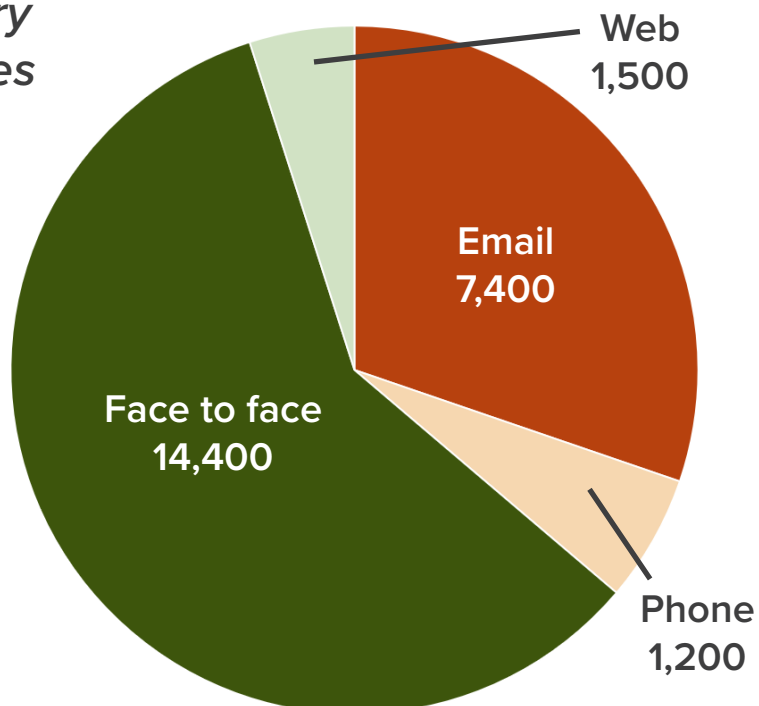
## Downloads of Open Access works from the institutional repository

Research outputs 1,387,200	Theses 423,300	Total 1,810,500
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**24,500**  
total Library enquiries



### Enquiry sources



**4,582,600**  
catalogue searches



**610**  
skills development  
workshops



# Students as partners

Each year, the Library employs approximately 100 students to undertake various roles throughout the Library. This approach involves creating opportunities for students to work collaboratively with Library staff to co-deliver the student experience.



## UniPASS

The UniPASS (University Peer Assisted Study Success) program improves academic content knowledge, study skills and social integration through peer-led collaborative study sessions for students in targeted units.

In 2023, 28 Peer Learning Facilitators supported thousands of students in 27 units across all faculties with 56 sessions a week. Beyond the benefits to the students who attend the engaging sessions, the Peer Learning Facilitators themselves gain skills and experience which support their future employability. They also report enjoying the positive and collegial team culture.

## Peer Academic Mentoring

Introduced in 2021, the Peer Academic Mentoring program aimed to fill a gap in peer-directed, individual academic support for students. Our Peer Academic Mentors

are high-achieving students who have demonstrated strong study skills and are employed to share their knowledge with others.



The Peer Academic Mentors have helped shape the program since its inception via extensive feedback and experimentation. They receive training and develop skills that benefit them in the workforce in future. When asked what the best part of being a Peer Academic Mentor was, one Mentor responded 'the ability to feel you are making a difference by helping others - just as I needed during my early years of University'.

## Project work

Students also assist with project work as needed. In 2023 the Library's Research and Copyright team employed a Higher Degree by Research student to collaborate on several projects, including Thesis Fest, research skills program GRASP and online learning platform Research Toolkit. They provided valuable insights into the student experience which helped improve these programs, and they gained a deeper understanding of research support and research across different disciplines - important for their future research.

# 2023 John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Anniversary Lecture



L - R: Emeritus Professor Tom Griffiths; Vice Chancellor Harlene Hayne; Hon Kim Beazley AC

Delivered on 24 October at Curtin University's Tim Winton Lecture Theatre in Perth. Emeritus Professor Tom Griffiths' 2023 John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML) Anniversary Lecture was a courageous call to action, worthy of its namesake.

In a lecture entitled '*The World After John Curtin: Geopolitics and the Planet*', Professor Griffiths constructed a careful picture of the disruptions to our old understanding of an unchanging planet since John Curtin's death in 1945 and the urgency of the current climate situation.

The lecture also marked the 25th anniversary of the opening of the JCPML. The Anniversary Lectures have been delivered almost every year since the Library opened in 1998, with the first given by former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam.



Tom Griffiths presents the JCPML Anniversary Lecture

Professor Griffiths' lecture is now available online:

[bit.ly/jcpml-anniversary-lec](https://bit.ly/jcpml-anniversary-lec)

# Thesis Fest - a boost for Higher Degree by Research students

Thesis Fest is a two-day annual event hosted by Curtin University Library and supported by Curtin's Graduate School of Research, offering a range of tailored presentations, workshops and networking opportunities to help Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students engage with their research and support their wellbeing. In 2023, the event was held for its third year running.



Peer networking opportunities were plentiful during Thesis Fest

In June 2023, over 100 HDR students both online and in-person were welcomed with an opening address by Curtin University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Harlene Hayne. Attendees enjoyed coffee vouchers, door prizes, fabulous lunches and, above all, the opportunity to make new connections as they heard from local, national and international experts in academia and wellbeing.



Thesis Fest featured several knowledgeable presenters

Feedback highlighted an increase in student motivation due to attending Thesis Fest and indicated that students now feel significantly motivated, energised and re-engaged.

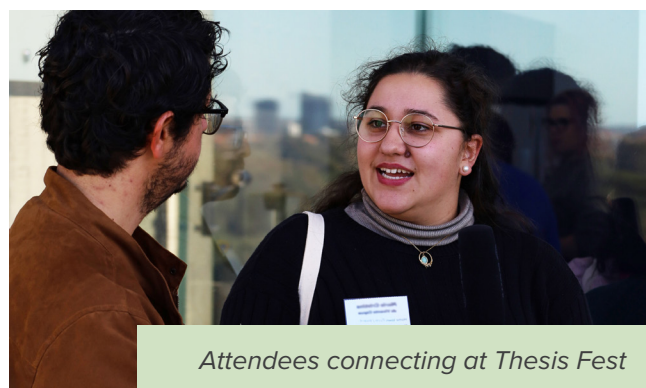
***'I walked away from Thesis Fest not feeling alone, feeling as though everyone else is feeling and experiencing similar things as myself.'***

***'The stories and tips from the day were exactly what I needed to hear. The experience and learnings were tenfold on what I was expecting.'***

***- Thesis Fest attendee***

Our efforts in improving student wellbeing were recognised at Curtin University's 2023 VC Excellence Awards, winning in the Excellence in Health, Safety and Wellbeing category. It was encouraging for our efforts to be acknowledged, and confirmed the impact we were having on HDR students through Thesis Fest.

There are many challenges that HDR students face and it can feel like a long, lonely journey. Highlighting the connection and commonalities between people is key to the success of Thesis Fest and we hope that our work will continue to empower students to complete their PhD.



Attendees connecting at Thesis Fest

# ***Read and Publish agreements – a new model for publishing Open Access***



Open access publishing is increasingly important for academics – it’s a great way to make research more discoverable and increase the equity of article access. However it can come with a hefty price tag for the author via Article Processing Charges (APCs).

Through the Library’s participation in Read and Publish Agreements, Curtin University academics have increased opportunity to get their research published open access without having to pay APCs. The agreements repurpose existing subscription expenditure to cover both reading and publishing in selected journal titles from that publisher.

Participating in the agreements has resulted in notional APC savings of over 1.8 million dollars between January 2022 and July 2023.

The list of publishers participating is growing each year, and we are currently a participating

institution with the following publishers:

- American Institute of Physics
- Cambridge University Press
- CSIRO Publishing
- Elsevier
- Institute of Physics
- Karger
- The Royal Society
- Sage
- Springer-Nature
- Taylor & Francis
- Wiley & Hindawi

*‘This library makes me smarter.  
Thank you Curtin Library.’*

Feedback from a student on the  
refurbished TL Robertson Library



# ***Our staff in 2023***



*Staff based at the Curtin University  
Perth campus*

## ***Library locations***



**TL Robertson  
Library**  
Perth campus



**Kalgoorlie  
Library**  
Kalgoorlie campus



**John Curtin Prime  
Ministerial Library**  
Perth campus



**Curtin Graduate School  
of Business Library**  
Murray Street campus

