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MEDIA STATEMENT

Australia's competitiveness in the 21st Century

Curtin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Deborah Terry will explore the critical role of research, innovation and new technologies and its impact on Australia's competitiveness at the National Trust of Western Australia's 2015 CY O'Connor Lecture.

This year marks the 11th anniversary of the lecture and Professor Terry will reflect on the parallels between CY O'Connor's leading and risk taking infrastructure projects and the approach to research, innovation, commercialisation as well as industry-university links required to realise a similar quantum shift in the Nation's prosperity.

Professor Terry will present the National Trust's 2015 CY O'Connor Lecture at Curtin University's Bankwest Theatre, on its Bentley Campus at 6.30pm on Tuesday 3 March, and at the WA School of Mines, (Curtin University's Kalgoorlie Campus) at 5.30pm on Wednesday 4 March.

Professor Terry said that CY O'Connor is remembered as a visionary, with the persistence, drive and technical ability to reshape the State through the creation of physical infrastructure projects of enormous scope.

"He was a game-changer who had long-term vision and commitment, and this draws many parallels with the leading scientific infrastructure projects Curtin is playing a key role in," Professor Terry said.

"In the 1890s it would have been hard for most people to envision how a harbour at Fremantle and a pipeline in the Goldfields would shape the development of our State.

"But having benefited from the bold thinking of previous generations, we owe it to future generations to embrace bold projects such as the \$2 billion radio telescope project, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), which will be the largest and most international scientific facility that Australia has hosted.

"Much like CY O'Conner's flagships projects, many of the current infrastructure projects Western Australia is involved with are equally hard to visualise, but they also have the potential to shape our State and directly impact the nation."

Professor Terry is also current President of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) and previous Chair of the Australian Council of Learned Academies. She has had a distinguished research career in psychology spanning more than 25 years.

Perth event goers have the opportunity to view the current John Curtin Gallery exhibition, *The Visitors*, part of the *Perth International Arts Festival*, which is adjacent to the lecture theatre.

In addition to the lecture, Goldfields residents will also have the opportunity to hear about the status of conservation works of heritage buildings on the Curtin University campus at Kalgoorlie.

The CY O'Connor Lecture is held every year on or about the anniversary of O'Connor's death – 10 March 1902. The lecture, while not about O'Connor himself, recognises and celebrates his legacy by considering notions of creativity, sustainability and humanity in pursuit of excellence.

For more information contact Gina Pickering, National Trust Communication Officer on 9321 6088 or 0408 58 4404.