'Bless my soul if it isn’t Honest John Curtin and Bert Evatt’ (Bulletin, 31 May 1944).
Praise for *Curtin’s Empire*

‘An original and compelling contribution to Australian historical knowledge. In this book James Curran sheds new light on the Labor party and its relationship to Britain and the Empire. Drawing on a rich vein of previously unseen archival material, he explains how John Curtin, in facing up to the post-war world, reconciled his anti-conscription and anti-imperialist past to the need for a common defence and foreign policy for Greater Britain, one that would never allow another Singapore disaster. In so doing, Curran has filled an important gap in our understanding of this iconic Labor prime minister.

‘He also complicates the popularly accepted picture of a decisive Australian move in 1941 to the United States as Australia’s principal ally. That change awaited later developments. The story of the 1940s was a quiet drift back to Empire defence.’

Kim Beazley
Ambassador to the United States of America

‘Curran’s fine book shows how Curtin’s complex ideas of Australia and Empire were driven not by a mythic choice between loyalty and independence, but by the strategic imperative to find whatever means would best secure Australia in a fast-changing Asia. In doing so it sheds much light on the big strategic choices we face today.’

Hugh White
Professor of Strategic Studies and Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University
Curtin’s Empire

John Curtin remains a venerated leader. His role as Labor’s wartime supremo is etched deep in the national psyche: the man who put Australia first, locked horns with Churchill, looked to America and became a national saviour. For many he remains the epitome of an anti-British Australian nationalism.

This book breathes new life into the Curtin story by revealing a dimension of his leadership that, until now, has been largely ignored – his vision for Australia’s place in the British Empire: an Empire that he wanted to see endure in the post-war world.

This British world vision was not imposed from abroad, rather it animated him from deep within. Since entering politics, Curtin had fought with many inside and outside his party over issues of loyalty and national security. At stake was how Curtin and Labor related to the core idea of Australian politics for their times: Britishness.

James Curran is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History and the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. He is the author of *The Power of Speech: Australian Prime Ministers Defining the National Image* (2004) and the co-author, with Stuart Ward, of *The Unknown Nation: Australia After Empire* (2010).
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Curtin’s Empire

James Curran
For Priscilla, Pia and Ella
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James Curran
Washington, DC
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