

Queensland Cabinet Minutes (1975)

A Report for Queensland State Archives

Jonathan Richards, November 2005

***Research Fellow at the School of Arts, Media and Culture
Griffith University***

1975 was an important year in Australian political and public history. In Canberra, Governor General Sir John Kerr dismissed Prime Minister Whitlam and his Labor government after Coalition Senators refused to pass key financial bills. Thirty years later, public debate about this famous event continues. The imposition of electricity rationing and a letter bomb blast at Parliament House in November were the other notable political events in Queensland during the year.¹

In some regards, the world in 1975 was a very different place from what it is today, but natural disasters, wars and oil price increases dominated news headlines. In other ways, life thirty years ago was full of familiar issues and problems. Queenslanders and Australians responded to Cyclone Tracy's destruction of Darwin on Christmas Day, 1974 by holding fundraising events and hosting the city's evacuees. Outside Australia, international terrorism was increasing and energy costs were rapidly rising. Vietnamese war orphans began arriving in Australia.² Indonesian soldiers killed five Australian journalists covering the Timor war at Balibo in October.

¹ 'Fraser bomb detected after attempt on Premier', *The Courier-Mail* (20 November 1975), 1

² Decision 22205 (7 April 1975); 'State will accept 200 Viet orphans', *The Courier-Mail* (5 April 1975), 3 and 'First of orphans', *The Courier-Mail* (17 April 1975), 1

Queenslanders spent \$2,021 per capita on 'household consumption' in 1973-74.³ Fuel and electricity cost \$35 per annum, the lowest energy cost in Australia. Colour television receivers, first released in 1974, could cost consumers over \$500.⁴ Cabinet banned transformerless colour television receivers after warnings of serious fire risks.⁵ Details such as these emphasise how electricity generation and consumption in Queensland have increased since the 1970s. In 1975, the State's biggest power station at Swanbank near Ipswich generated less than 900 megawatts of power. In 2005, multiple generator sets, each producing over 1400 megawatts, supply a state wide grid.

There were familiar themes and issues in 1975. State and Commonwealth politicians clashed over taxation, States' rights and constitutional matters. There were public debates about childcare and women's employment. The Family Court, accepting 12 months separation as the sole grounds for divorce, was established in May. Some politicians predicted a decline in moral values would result from social changes. Cabinet considered the reduction in the number of babies given up for adoption by women. Commonwealth benefits paid to single women had 'no doubt' helped lengthen waiting times for adoptions, but Cabinet members decided that applications from prospective adoptive parents would continue to be accepted.⁶ The Henderson Inquiry reported 10 percent of Australians were living below the poverty line of \$63 per week for a sole parent with one child.

Calls for the fluoridation of public water supplies were considered by the government and rejected.⁷ Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen persuaded Cabinet to give an inventor \$2500, despite an engineer's report clearly stating the man's perpetual motion machine would never work 'in any way at all' and no funds should be provided.⁸ Brisbane's morning paper, *The Courier-Mail* cost ten cents. The city's last afternoon

³ *Queensland Yearbook* (1975), 563.

⁴ 'Peak-hour bid for color TV', *The Courier-Mail* (6 February 1975), 3

⁵ Decision 21784 (28 January 1975)

⁶ Decision 22801 (15 July 1975); 'Baby dole causes an adoption crisis', *The Courier-Mail* (18 May 1975), 6; 'Adoption wait up to six years', *The Courier-Mail* (16 July 1975), 11 and 'Adoption wait time lengthens', *The Courier-Mail* (24 August 1975), 9

⁷ Decision 22913 (5 August 1975)

⁸ Decision 23044 (25 August 1975)

daily, *The Telegraph*, was still being published. The last private dwelling in central Brisbane, Avon Cottage on North Quay, was demolished.⁹

The Queensland Cabinet, consisting of Premier Bjelke-Petersen, the Treasurer and Deputy Premier, Sir Gordon Chalk, and 16 Ministers, met 50 times in 1975.¹⁰ A State election, held in December 1974, resulted in a 10 percent swing against the Labor Party. The National Party won 39 seats; the Liberal Party held 30 seats, and the Australian Labor Party was reduced to 11 members. One Independent (Ed Casey) and one representative of the North Queensland Party (Tom Aikens) made up the Parliament.

In that 1974 election, Eric Deeral became the first Aboriginal parliamentarian in Queensland, when he was elected as the National Party member for Cook. The Commonwealth Government's *Racial Discrimination Act* came into force during June and the Gurindji people won back part of their traditional country in the Northern Territory.¹¹ Federal Parliament passed the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Act*, designed to overrule Queensland laws.¹² The Commonwealth Government never used this power.

Economic development

Records show that economic development, particularly in the mining and grazing industries, was often the main consideration of Queensland Cabinet meetings. In January, a uranium enrichment plant was proposed for Central Queensland.¹³ It was never built. Mining was becoming one of the State's most important export industries. According to figures supplied by the Queensland Chamber of Mines, \$475 million of minerals (without including coal, gas and oil) were produced in the State during 1974.¹⁴ Several weeks

⁹ 'Cottage is demolished', *The Courier-Mail* (13 April 1975), 3

¹⁰ 'Then there were eighteen Ministers', *The Courier-Mail* (11 March 1975), 3

¹¹ 'Gurindjis win battle', *The Courier-Mail* (21 February 1975), 11 and 'Land titles for aboriginal tribe', *The Courier-Mail* (15 August 1975), 3

¹² 'Racial Bill passed', *The Courier-Mail* (10 April 1975), 9

¹³ 'Queensland applies to enter nuclear age', *The Courier-Mail* (19 January 1975), 1

¹⁴ 'State's mining is worth \$475m', *Sunday Mail* (18 May 1975), 32

later, Mines Minister Ron Camm said total mineral production in the previous year was worth \$690 million.¹⁵

Tourism was also becoming an important part of the Queensland economy. Japanese entrepreneur Yohachiro Iwasaki's resort development at Yeppoon caused controversy in 1975, just as it had in previous years.¹⁶ Opponents said Iwasaki had been offered special assistance, a claim denied by the government.¹⁷ Due to 'strong public interest' in the resort, an Inter-Departmental Committee Report, recommending 'detailed information and a revised plan' be requested from the developer, was tabled in Parliament.¹⁸ The government's policy of helping 'non-Queenslanders', including 'aliens', to own land was noted in December.¹⁹ A Planning Investigation of the Far North coastline between Innisfail and Mossman was authorised in December.²⁰

Cabinet members approved a number of major regional economic studies in 1975. The State and Commonwealth Governments jointly conducted a resource development study of North-West Queensland.²¹ Mines Minister Camm announced in November that one of the report's recommendations was a transport link between the Mt Isa mineral fields and new ports on the Gulf of Carpentaria.²² There were no further discussions of this topic. The Townsville Economic Structure study was authorised in April.²³

In May, a joint Federal/State study to consider the establishment of steel, aluminium, chemical, gas and oil-from-coal industries in Central Queensland was

¹⁵ 'Minerals earn \$690 mil', *The Courier-Mail* (9 June 1975), 2

¹⁶ 'Demands on Japanese venture', *The Courier-Mail* (2 March 1975), 1; 'Data sought on resort plan', *The Courier-Mail* (6 March 1975), 11; 'Resort claim was wrong', *The Courier-Mail* (15 June 1975), 8; 'Anger over Yeppoon resort lull', *The Courier-Mail* (20 November 1975), 2; and 'Mr Iwasaki wants more', *The Courier-Mail* (24 November 1975), 5

¹⁷ 'Government deal claim over island', *The Courier-Mail* (21 December 1975), 3

¹⁸ Decisions 21851, 21906 and 21980 (11 February 1975, 18 February 1975 and 3 March 1975)

¹⁹ Decision 23672 (15 December 1975)

²⁰ Decisions 22605 (17 June 1975) and 23605 (15 December 1975)

²¹ Decisions 21692 (14 January 1975), 22439 (20 May 1975) and 23322 (20 October 1975)

²² 'Isa link to Gulf ports proposed', *The Courier-Mail* (10 November 1975), 3

²³ Decision 22238 (14 April 1975)

announced.²⁴ In September, the Premier claimed seven big mining and development projects, blocked by the Federal Government, could, if begun, ‘absorb a big percentage of the State’s 50,000 unemployed’.²⁵

Education

Griffith University, Brisbane’s second university, started teaching classes in 1975.²⁶ University libraries began using computers to keep track of loans.²⁷ During the 1970s, the Society to Outlaw Pornography (STOP) and the Committee Against Regressive Education (CARE) actively campaigned in Queensland.²⁸ According to these groups, schools were using ‘obscene’ books like *Lolita*, *The Tin Drum*, *Catch 22* and *The Group* to teach literature.²⁹ Cabinet resolved the issue of religious education in schools, first raised in March 1974, in April 1975.³⁰ One teacher, with ‘an interest and expertise in religious education’, was delegated to work with the Churches Committee to develop a syllabus on religious education that could be used by all denominations. School dental services, including the purchase of 15 dental caravans and five prime movers, were discussed at five Cabinet meetings.³¹

Brisbane

In the 1970s, most of Southeast Queensland’s electricity was supplied by the coal-fired Swanbank power station. The loss of four Ipswich mines during the 1974 floods and diminishing stockpiles forced Cabinet to approve the carriage of coal from Central

²⁴ ‘Study for big industry on coal fields’, *The Courier-Mail* (23 May 1975), 1

²⁵ ‘Jobs if mine plans allowed says Premier’, *The Courier-Mail* (15 September 1975), 7

²⁶ ‘Griffith: It will be a new-style university’, *The Courier-Mail* (8 February 1975), 13

²⁷ ‘Computer control on university library loans’, *The Courier-Mail* (25 February 1975), 12

²⁸ ‘Opposes text book regulation’, *The Courier-Mail* (22 March 1975), 5

²⁹ ‘MPs get obscene pamphlets’, *The Courier-Mail* (21 March 1975), 11

³⁰ Decisions 20304 (25 March 1974), 21551 (2 December 1974), 21561 (9 December 1974) and 22169 (7 April 1975)

³¹ Decisions 22082 (17 March 1975), 22128 (24 March 1975), 22763 (7 July 1975), 23032 (25 August 1975) and 23218 (6 October 1975)

Queensland to Swanbank.³² In April 1974, Cabinet members decided that power stations in Southern Queensland would continue to be supplied with Central Queensland coal.³³ Industrial disputes in mid-1975 led to coal shortages and electricity rationing from 30 July.³⁴ Restrictions were lifted five days later, but reimposed briefly from 28 August.³⁵ Rises in the cost of electricity and the construction of new power stations were announced soon after.³⁶

In 1975, Cabinet members discussed a number of other issues affecting Brisbane, including the redevelopment of Anzac Square, traffic congestion, future port developments, flood mitigation and river dredging. In January, Brisbane City Council plans for the commercial redevelopment of Anzac Square were abandoned.³⁷ Increasing inner city traffic congestion attracted some innovative but ultimately impractical solutions, including an elevated automatic 'horizontal lift' system.³⁸ There were calls for the river to be used as a transport corridor.

At a meeting in February, Cabinet gave approval to the Port of Brisbane strategic plan.³⁹ Further decisions in April and December authorised the preparation of a Bill to create the Port of Brisbane Authority and the payment of \$617,000 for the master

³² Decisions 20137 (19 February 1974), 22386 (13 May 1975), 22458 (27 May 1975) and 22716 (1 July 1975)

³³ Decision 20435 (16 April 1974)

³⁴ Decision 22869 (22 July 1975); 'Power cuts loom closer', *The Courier-Mail* (19 July 1975), 1; 'Toughest power cuts for 25 years', *The Courier-Mail* (26 July 1975), 1 and 'Electricity Restriction's (advertisement), *The Courier-Mail* (30 July 1975), 5

³⁵ 'Power curbs relaxed', *The Courier-Mail* (5 August 1975), 1; 'Coal crisis power cuts: 3 days a week on job', *The Courier-Mail* (28 August 1975), 1 and 'Full power hopes', *The Courier-Mail* (4 September 1975), 3

³⁶ Decisions 22840 (22 July 1975), 22876 (29 July 1975), 23119 (15 September 1975) and 23174 (29 September 1975); 'Electricity bill tipped to rise' *The Courier-Mail* (22 September 1975), 8 and '\$312m power projects for State', *The Courier-Mail* (1 October 1975), 3

³⁷ 'Square project axed by Govt', *The Courier-Mail* (8 January 1975), 3

³⁸ 'Plan for city transit network here soon', *The Courier-Mail* (18 May 1975), 20

³⁹ Decision 21827 (4 February 1975) and 'New port, new board' and 'Super port for the giant ships', *The Courier-Mail* (5 February 1975), 2 & 4

planning study.⁴⁰ In October, approval was given for the design of rail and road access to the new port site at Fisherman Islands.⁴¹

Cabinet members considered flood control and mitigation measures in Brisbane at a number of meetings.⁴² A review of development in flood-prone areas and relevant legislation was announced in January.⁴³ All Brisbane creeks were listed for assessment, but investigations of rivers in other parts of the state were deferred as 'less urgent'. In July, the Premier announced that \$12 million had been granted to Queensland homeowners for repairs or replacement after the January 1974 floods.⁴⁴ The committee administering the scheme would 'be wound up' after a review in December 1975. A detailed survey of the 1974 floods and 18 new 'comprehensive' flood maps of Brisbane were due to be released in January 1976.⁴⁵

The city's skyline began to change during 1975 as riverfront properties were built. The Kangaroo Point shipbuilding yards were closed.⁴⁶ The purchase of land for the new Cultural Centre at South Brisbane was approved during the year.⁴⁷ The Methodist Church sold the St Helen's hospital site at South Brisbane to the government and planned a new hospital on Coronation Drive.⁴⁸ An aerial photo of the Southbank cultural centre site was published in October.⁴⁹ Development also proceeded on the river's northern banks. Builders demolished the nineteenth century Parliament House stable building in

⁴⁰ Decisions 21928 (18 February 1975), 22185 (7 April 1975), 22271 (21 April 1975) and 23546 (1 December 1975); 'Local firm plans port', *The Courier-Mail* (23 April 1975), 17

⁴¹ Decision 23370 (27 October 1975) and 'Port access funds sought', *The Courier-Mail* (7 November 1975), 3

⁴² Decisions 21743, 22313, 22670, 22830, 23259 and 23321 (21 January 1975, 29 April 1975, 24 June 1975, 22 July 1975, 13 October 1975 and 20 October 1975)

⁴³ 'Review of flood legislation', *The Courier-Mail* (23 January 1975), 2

⁴⁴ Decision 22781 (15 July 1975) and '\$12m payout in flood funds aid', *The Courier-Mail* (18 July 1975), 2

⁴⁵ 'Flood maps for sale in January', *The Courier-Mail* (30 November 1975), 16

⁴⁶ 'Evans Deakins to shut shipyards', *The Courier-Mail* (19 July 1975), 2

⁴⁷ '\$2.6m in southside land for State Government office blocks', *The Courier-Mail* (11 February 1975), 3

⁴⁸ 'Hospital site is for new library', *The Courier-Mail* (18 March 1975), 3 and 'New hospital to be best in Australia', *The Courier-Mail* (8 May 1975), 3

⁴⁹ 'Our culture complex could top \$100 million', *The Courier-Mail* (8 October 1975), 5; 'Arts centre no Opera House, says Sir Gordon', *The Courier-Mail* (22 October 1975), 2 and 'Culture on the South Bank', *The Courier-Mail* (23 October 1975), 5

preparation for a new multi-storey office block. Work continued on the Riverside Expressway, the Captain Cook Bridge and the Southeast Freeway to Holland Park. The electrification of suburban railway lines and construction of Brisbane's first cross-river railway bridge began.⁵⁰ The government called for submissions about pedestrian malls in the inner city.⁵¹ The city's freeway programme was reduced to the Western, Southeast and Northern Freeways later in the year.⁵²

Cabinet members first considered Brisbane River dredging in February. Once, the river was kept open for shipping, but now the riverbed was being mined for construction materials. The Premier said there was 'no reasonable economic alternative' to sand and gravel supplies from river dredging.⁵³ 'It is, therefore, essential that the sand and gravel industry remain on the River despite complaints over noise.'⁵⁴ Operating hours, downstream from the Moggill Ferry, were 'urgently' reduced from 17 hours per day to 15 hours, although upstream, dredges were still permitted to operate 24 hours per day.⁵⁵ An expert Committee recommended that river-based industries should be controlled by Brisbane City Council ordinances, but the Cabinet decided to wait until Parliament passed new anti-noise legislation before considering the matter further.⁵⁶

Gold Coast and Nerang River

In January, Cabinet members decided that canal estate subdivision applications for the Nerang Basin would not be considered until the Gold Coast City Council and the Albert Shire Council adopted an overall development plan.⁵⁷ Three developments that had already been approved were exempt. A second decision confirmed this exemption.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ 'The Premier reports', *The Courier-Mail* (27 March 1975), 7; 'First electric trains in 77', *The Courier-Mail* (27 March 1975), 14 and 'Over the river, across the drive, into Roma Street', *The Courier-Mail* (13 June 1975), 3

⁵¹ 'New moves for mall for Brisbane', *The Courier-Mail* (13 July 1975), 12

⁵² 'Long-term freeway projects uncertain', *The Courier-Mail* (28 September), 5

⁵³ Decision 21909 (18 February 1975)

⁵⁴ Decision 21909 (18 February 1975)

⁵⁵ Decision 22292 (29 April 1975)

⁵⁶ Decision 23193 (29 September 1975)

⁵⁷ Decisions 21699 and 21751 (14 January 1975 and 21 January 1975)

⁵⁸ Decision 21963 (24 February 1975)

A fourth canal development was granted exemption in December.⁵⁹ In September, Cabinet decided to warn the developers of six canal estates that they would be prosecuted if they continued work without first gaining final approvals for subdivision.⁶⁰

The development and subdivision of Andy and Griffin Islands at Paradise Point was approved in March despite 636 objections.⁶¹ Planning restraints on certain portions of land at South Stradbroke Island were lifted in September.⁶² Prospective developers could now lodge applications for the expansion of tourist facilities. An overall development plan for the future use of the Southport Spit was approved in October.⁶³ The plan included provision for three marinas, road works and a recreation reserve. A pedestrian mall at Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise, was approved at a Cabinet meeting in November.⁶⁴ In April, Cabinet members endorsed the release of a press statement stating a planned Nerang-Burleigh freeway had been deleted due to financial limits.⁶⁵ Some Brisbane City freeway proposals, 'which appeared viable three or four years ago', were to be 'deferred indefinitely, or dropped', said Minister for Main Roads and Local Government, Russ Hinze. He proposed a 'start' be made on the Brisbane/Gold Coast railway using Japanese investment funds.⁶⁶ In October, there were complaints about noise from an Upper Coomera quarry owned by Hinze, who was responsible for new anti-noise legislation.⁶⁷ At the final meeting for the year, Cabinet members approved the rezoning of land for a second quarry owned by Hinze at Coomera.⁶⁸

⁵⁹ Decision 23642 (15 December 1975)

⁶⁰ Decision 23047 (1 September 1975)

⁶¹ Decision 22037 (10 March 1975)

⁶² Decision 23120 (15 September 1975)

⁶³ Decision 23323 (20 October 1975)

⁶⁴ Decision 23389 (3 November 1975)

⁶⁵ Decision 22332 (29 April 1975) and 'Coast freeway section out', *The Courier-Mail* (3 May 1975), 2

⁶⁶ 'Brisbane-Coast rail link move', *The Courier-Mail* (5 May 1975), 17; 'Gold Coast rail move', *The Courier-Mail* (27 December 1975), 3 and 'Restore Coast rail link', *The Courier-Mail* (31 December 1975), 4

⁶⁷ 'Noise: he hates it', *The Courier-Mail* (13 October 1975), 4 and 'A loud protest on Hinze noise', *The Courier-Mail* (18 October 1975), 7

⁶⁸ Decision 23667 (15 December 1975)

Southeast Queensland

The Moreton Region Growth Strategy Investigations, approved in August 1974, continued to work towards producing ‘a comprehensive regional plan looking forward to the year 2000’.⁶⁹ In September, Cabinet members approved the establishment of the Moreton Regional Water Authority to provide for ‘the provision and storage of existing and future water supplies’.⁷⁰ The authority’s first task was the construction of Wivenhoe Dam. According to the *The Courier-Mail* in November, Southeast Queensland faced ‘a disturbing water shortage in 2000’.⁷¹ Hinze ‘laughed’ at predictions that shortages would be so severe ‘there was a possibility some people would die of thirst’. In December, the Gold Coast’s new dam at Advancetown, which was to ‘solve the city’s water storage problems’, began filling.⁷²

Environment and conservation

Environmental issues were important issues in Queensland throughout the 1970s.⁷³ Cabinet members approved the creation of a National Parks and Wildlife Service.⁷⁴ The Premier announced that Queensland’s national parks were among the most ‘extensive and varied’ in the world.⁷⁵ Conservationists were not convinced, condemning limestone mining at Mt Etna near Rockhampton as ‘Government vandalism’.⁷⁶

In 1974, Cabinet approved the creation of a National Park at Cooloola after a long-running fight with conservationists opposed to government mining plans.⁷⁷ Nearby Fraser Island became the next ‘green’ battleground as opposition to sand mining grew.

⁶⁹ Decisions 22624 (17 June 1975), 22790 (15 July 1975), 22880 (29 July 1975), 23449 (17 November 1975) and 23544 (1 December 1975)

⁷⁰ Decisions 22791 and 23083 (15 July 1975 and 8 September 1975) and ‘Body to control Moreton water’, *The Courier-Mail* (12 September 1975), 3

⁷¹ ‘Water shortage feared by 2000’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 November 1975), 48

⁷² ‘New Coast dam starts to fill’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 December 1975), 3

⁷³ ‘The conservation battlefronts’, *The Courier-Mail* (20 March 1975), 5

⁷⁴ ‘Park Service accelerated’, *The Courier-Mail* (25 February 1975), 19 and ‘New body for parks, wildlife’, *The Courier-Mail* (1 April 1975), 3

⁷⁵ ‘Parks to be the biggest and best’, *The Courier-Mail* (1 May 1975), 11

⁷⁶ ‘Mt Etna mining attacked’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 January 1975), 21

⁷⁷ Decision 19963 (Submission 17845) of 22nd January 1974; ‘Cooloola safe area gets a lift’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 April 1975), 3 and ‘House endorses Cooloola Park’, *The Courier-Mail* (4 December 1975), 13

Protestors climbed the exterior walls of a Queen Street office building to unfurl a banner.⁷⁸ The Commonwealth announced that a Commission of Inquiry would be held into land use and development on Fraser Island.⁷⁹ Cabinet members discussed the matter at nine meetings throughout 1975. When the Commonwealth Government decided that no further export contracts for mineral sands from Fraser Island would be considered until the Inquiry was finished, the Premier was authorised to write to the Prime Minister.⁸⁰ '[C]onditions now being attached to the granting of sand mining leases are adequate, if properly observed'. In July, Cabinet members approved a Queensland submission to be made to the Inquiry.⁸¹ However, in September, this decision was reversed and the State government submission was retracted to avoid the questioning of public servants.⁸² Proposals to make Fraser Island a National Park were condemned by Lands Minister Ken Tomkins as 'nonsense'.⁸³

Relations with the Commonwealth Government

Records show Bjelke-Petersen devoted much time to the fight with Canberra but relations with the Commonwealth Government in 1975 were not, as they often seemed in 1974, the major topic of discussion. Some ministerial submissions to the Cabinet were very critical of the Whitlam government, as they had been in previous years. Nevertheless, Queensland Cabinet members sought and accepted Commonwealth funds. A new Commonwealth/State sugar agreement was authorised in January.⁸⁴ Whitlam and Bjelke-Petersen 'courteously' signed three agreements for urban and regional development in February.⁸⁵ Money for the Queensland Housing Commission was

⁷⁸ 'Daring protestors leave their mark', *Sunday Mail* (1 June 1975), 3

⁷⁹ 'Sand mining inquiry', *The Courier-Mail* (26 March 1975), 2; and 'The golden sands', *The Courier-Mail* (19 May 1975), 4 and 'Which way for Fraser Island?', *The Courier-Mail* (11 June 1975), 5

⁸⁰ 'Canberra halts beach mine export from Island', *The Courier-Mail* (14 May 1975), 1; Decisions 22539 (3 June 1975) and 22627 (17 June 1975)

⁸¹ Decision 22775 (7 July 1975)

⁸² Decisions 23049 (1 September 1975) and 23104 (8 September 1975)

⁸³ 'Island plan blasted', *The Courier-Mail* (29 October 1975), 10

⁸⁴ Decision 21798 (28 January 1975)

⁸⁵ 'Sweetheart agreement', *The Courier-Mail* (15 February 1975), 1

requested in May.⁸⁶ Commonwealth funds for sewerage were discussed on three occasions, and Cabinet members approved an agreement for ‘Sewerage Backlog Progress’ works in December.⁸⁷

Archaic legal devices, Privy Council appeals, were contentious sticking points between State and Commonwealth Governments. Members of Cabinet discussed the services of an Oxford University law professor at several meetings during 1975. The legal expert had been hired in 1974 at a cost of \$20,000 per year to provide legal and constitutional advice on States’ rights issues to the Queensland Government.⁸⁸ In May, approval was given for the payment of \$10,000 per annum with an expenses allowance of \$5,000 per year to the same professor for ‘his services assisting the Treaties Commission’.⁸⁹ The Premier went to London in January to ask the British government to ‘keep out of the constitutional battle’ between the Queensland and the Commonwealth Governments, and to confer with his legal expert.⁹⁰ Whitlam claimed Bjelke-Petersen and Western Australia Premier Sir Charles Court were misrepresenting his position on appeals to the Privy Council.⁹¹

Treasurer Chalk reported to Cabinet after a special Premiers’ Conference to discuss unemployment and inflation in February. Queensland was offered \$10.5 million, which would ‘enable us to cover our deficit’ and partly meet expenditure needs.⁹² From February, the Premier used a five-minute television segment ‘Joh Bjelke-Peterson Speaking’ to attack the Federal Government.⁹³ A half-hour programme was broadcast in December.⁹⁴ In March, the Premier attended a meeting to establish the Australian Council of States, which would ‘not include the Commonwealth either as a member or an

⁸⁶ Decision 22378 (13 May 1975)

⁸⁷ Decisions 22322 (29 April 1975), 20986 (24 November 1975), 23530 (1 December 1975) and 23598 (8 December 1975)

⁸⁸ Decisions 19999 (22 January 1974), 22052 (10 March 1975), 22063 (17 March 1975)

⁸⁹ Decision 22492 (27 May 1975)

⁹⁰ ‘State resources hint in battle for rights’, *The Courier-Mail* (23 January 1975) and ‘Joh talks with Oxford experts’, *The Courier-Mail* (25 January 1975)

⁹¹ ‘Premiers using Goebbels style tactics’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 January 1975), 3

⁹² Decision 21949 (18 February 1975)

⁹³ ‘Premier’s premiere’, *The Courier-Mail* (27 February 1975), 3 and ‘The Premier’s Report’ (advertisement), *The Courier-Mail* (26 March 1975), 3

⁹⁴ ‘Joh Show was premier viewing’, *The Courier-Mail* (23 December 1975), 2

observer'.⁹⁵ According to Attorney General Knox, 'the imposition of conditions by the Commonwealth reduced the State's ability to spend monies in the way in which the State wished'.⁹⁶ A draft agreement was approved at later meetings.⁹⁷

In June, Bjelke-Petersen threatened to 'campaign against all Federal Labor Members and Senators in Queensland individually' as long as the Prime Minister continued to reject calls from the States for a better financial deal.⁹⁸ After the annual Premiers' Conference, Chalk advised Cabinet members that the Commonwealth's financial allocation was \$181 million short of Queensland's requests.⁹⁹ Chalk viewed the budget prospects as 'frightening' and foresaw further difficulties, including higher taxes and the dismissal of government employees.¹⁰⁰ 'The year now closing will undoubtedly result in the biggest deficit this State has had, probably to the order of \$10 million'.¹⁰¹

Cabinet members apparently believed the Commonwealth Government threatened Queensland. In May, they advised the Chairman of the Commonwealth's Law Reform Commission that they would 'assert their rights'.¹⁰² '[I]f there was any intention to extend regulation beyond Commonwealth and Territorial spheres the States should be consulted in the proper way and at the appropriate levels'. In June, Cabinet issued guidelines for Queensland officers attending a Sydney meeting on 'Co-operative Planning and Regionalism'.¹⁰³ The Queensland Government, they said, was 'opposed to co-operative planning and regionalism as interpreted by the present Commonwealth Government'. In August, Cabinet members gave authority for the Premier to write to the Prime Minister.

⁹⁵ 'Council formed by 4 States', *The Courier-Mail* (8 March 1975), 3 and 'Leaders to plan Labor attack', *The Courier-Mail* (25 March 1975), 3; Decisions 22078 & 22079 (17 March 1975) and 22431 (20 May 1975)

⁹⁶ Decision 22078 (17 March 1975)

⁹⁷ 'States' body to watch threats', *The Courier-Mail* (13 May 1975), 8; 'Agreement on States Council', *The Courier-Mail* (20 September 1975), 7; 'States uniting', *The Courier-Mail* (10 December 1975), 10; Decisions 22850 (22 July 1975), 23043 (25 August 1975), 23092 (8 September 1975) and 23198 (29 September 1975)

⁹⁸ 'Premier: I'll fight against ALP Members', *The Courier-Mail* (14 June 1975), 9

⁹⁹ Decision 22673 (24 June 1975)

¹⁰⁰ 'State faces tax rises and dismissals: Treasurer's Forecast', *The Courier-Mail* (21 June 1975), 3

¹⁰¹ Decision 22673 (24 June 1975)

¹⁰² Decision 22493 (27 May 1975)

¹⁰³ Decision 22581 (10 June 1975)

Queensland's attitude is that a fundamental change of attitude on the part of the Commonwealth Government is required before any meaningful improvements in Commonwealth-State relations can be made.¹⁰⁴

One month later, Cabinet members endorsed the Premier's action in Parliament four days earlier.¹⁰⁵ Bjelke-Petersen had successfully moved that Queensland delegates would not attend a meeting of the Australian Constitutional Convention.¹⁰⁶

In July, the Police Minister reported to Cabinet on what he called the 'intrusion of Commonwealth Police into State police matters'.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, Bjelke-Petersen launched a 'get fair dinkum' campaign to beat the Federal Labor Party, saying 'the country faced a great battle against Communism'.¹⁰⁸

The enemy is within our shores and the Labor Party is the great Trojan horse endeavouring to overthrow our free way of life.¹⁰⁹

The Premier and the Parliament defied political convention in September when ALP nominee Mal Colston was rejected to replace a deceased Labor senator, Bert Milliner.¹¹⁰ An unknown anti-Whitlam Labor Party novice, Pat Field, was sent to Canberra as a Queensland Senator. Field was immediately expelled from the Party, granted extended

¹⁰⁴ Decision 23010 (18 August 1975)

¹⁰⁵ 'State will boycott convention', *The Courier-Mail* (5 September 1975), 8

¹⁰⁶ Decisions 22239 (14 April 1975) and 23075 (8 September 1975); 'Non-Labor States block convention', *The Courier-Mail* (13 September 1975), 28

¹⁰⁷ Decision 22901 (29 July 1975)

¹⁰⁸ 'NP set sights on million', *The Courier-Mail* (19 August 1975), 14

¹⁰⁹ 'NP set sights on million', *The Courier-Mail* (19 August 1975), 14

¹¹⁰ 'Senator dies at his desk', *The Courier-Mail* (1 July 1975), 3; 'Senate vacancy mischief', *The Courier-Mail* (18 July 1975), 4; 'Colston is vetoed', *The Courier-Mail* (28 August 1975), 1; and 'Senator Who? Won't have a bar of him', *The Courier-Mail* (4 September 1975), 1

leave from the Senate and played no part in Kerr's dismissal of Whitlam as Prime Minister. Field came last at the subsequent election, only receiving 2500 votes.¹¹¹

After Field's appointment, Whitlam called Bjelke-Petersen a hypocrite and a 'Bible-bashing bastard'.¹¹² Bjelke-Petersen described newspaper editorial writers as 'a pious lot of hypocrites' who criticised him for appointing Field to the Senate but never attacked Whitlam when he 'breaks the Constitution to try to take away our future way of life'. Newspaper advertisements for 'NPA Freedom Bonds' to 'fight against socialism' and the Labor Party were published.¹¹³ Hinze, calling Whitlam 'the greatest egotistical megalomaniac Australia had seen', claimed Commonwealth agents were listening to his phone calls.¹¹⁴

Cabinet agreed to oppose what members saw as a dangerous attempt to alter the Constitution, the *Constitution Alteration (Interchange of Powers) Bill*. The Premier would contact the Premiers of New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia to warn them of the 'drastic consequences' that the Bill would have on 'the Federal system and the exercise of State Powers'.¹¹⁵

There are no references in the Queensland Cabinet records to the Governor-General's dismissal of the Labor Government on 11 November 1975. After the election of Malcolm Fraser's Coalition government in December, Bjelke-Petersen said 'now there was a Federal Government which he did not always have to keep on looking over his shoulder, Queensland's development could 'push ahead'.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ 'Further leave for Field', *The Courier-Mail* (6 November 1975), 2; 'Break the party monopoly' (advertisement), *The Courier-Mail* (12 December 1975), 14 and 'Field to form new party', (15 December 1975), 15

¹¹² 'Gough says Joh is a b..b..b..', *The Courier-Mail* (8 September 1975), 1; 'An intemperate Mr Whitlam', *The Courier-Mail* (9 September 1975), 4 and 'PM: I was a bit strong on Joh', *The Courier-Mail* (22 September 1975), 3

¹¹³ 'Act Now: Invest in your freedom' (advertisement), *Sunday Mail* (12 October 1975), 6

¹¹⁴ 'Hinze blasts Whitlam', *The Courier-Mail* (22 October 1975), 7

¹¹⁵ Decision 23560 (1 December 1975)

¹¹⁶ 'Premier turns to state issues', *The Courier-Mail* (16 December 1975), 7

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

In January, Cabinet gave approval for the name of the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs to be changed to the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement.¹¹⁷ Relevant Acts and Regulations were subsequently amended.¹¹⁸ Two important studies of race relations and frontier conflict in Queensland were published.¹¹⁹ There were growing calls for Aboriginal people in Australia to be granted land rights.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, Claude Wharton, told Cabinet members he had received 'identical typewritten letters' from seven Aboriginal communities 'requesting some type of formal lease'.¹²⁰ This, he said, was proof that the Commonwealth was attempting to 'superimpose their policies on the Department'.

Cabinet members noted in February that \$26 million had been requested from the Commonwealth Government for 'Aboriginal Advancement' for the 1975/76 financial year.¹²¹ In August, Wharton advised Cabinet that the Commonwealth had only approved \$9.8 million.¹²² At the same meeting, Cabinet endorsed the Minister's submission regarding Aurukun and Mornington Island.¹²³ The Presbyterian Church would be informed that the Queensland Government disapproved of the 'apparent intent' to develop the communities on 'separate and apparently isolationist lines thereby departing from the established Queensland policy'.

Members of Cabinet passed the Aurukun bauxite development agreement in November, under which the Director of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement would receive three percent of the net profit from mining as compensation for 'the loss of surface occupation rights'.¹²⁴ According to the Presbyterian Church, the Queensland

¹¹⁷ Decision 21693 (14 January 1975)

¹¹⁸ Decisions 21849 (4 February 1975) and 22792 (15 July 1975)

¹¹⁹ Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Exclusion, exploitation and extermination* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1975) and LE Skinner, *Police of the Pastoral Frontier* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1975); 'Four new views of the past', *The Courier-Mail* (19 November 1975), 20

¹²⁰ Decision 21730 (21 January 1975)

¹²¹ Decision 21944 (18 February 1975)

¹²² Decision 22970 (11 August 1975)

¹²³ Decision 22971 (11 August 1975)

¹²⁴ Decisions 23029 (25 August 1975), 23318 (20 October 1975) and 23493 (17 November 1975)

Government prevented residents of the Aurukun Reserve from directly negotiating with the mining company.¹²⁵

Cabinet members approved increases in Training Allowances of \$6 per week for Aboriginal and Islander employees not receiving award wages.¹²⁶ A funding request from the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service was rejected in October.¹²⁷ Members of Cabinet believed that officers of the Public Defender's Office were adequately representing Aboriginal and Islander people. In December, changes in the funding of Aboriginal programs were considered.¹²⁸ According to Minister Wharton, the Commonwealth had attempted to 'bypass the authority and to erode the status' of his department, had curtailed some projects and attached conditions to others. Cabinet members decided that the Treasury, with advice from the Department, should handle financial arrangements with the Commonwealth.¹²⁹

Medibank and hospitals

Another Commonwealth-State issue that concerned Cabinet members was funding for health services and hospitals.¹³⁰ In June, the Commonwealth government's controversial Health Insurance Act (Medibank) agreement was approved.¹³¹ Cabinet members discussed financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the development of community health services at five meetings in 1975.¹³² Progress on major hospital building projects was discussed in May.¹³³ In October, approval was given for

¹²⁵ 'Church criticises Government', *The Courier-Mail* (16 December 1975), 4

¹²⁶ Decision 23317 (20 October 1975)

¹²⁷ Decision 23354 (27 October 1975)

¹²⁸ Decision 23588 (8 December 1975)

¹²⁹ Decision 23612 (15 December 1975)

¹³⁰ Decisions 21711 (14 January 1975), 22031 (10 March 1975), 22276 (21 April 1975), 22577 (10 June 1975), 22674 (24 June 1975), 22979 (11 August 1975) and 22980 (14 August 1975)

¹³¹ 'Storm on Medibank, but we're in', *The Courier-Mail* (25 June 1975), 1

¹³² Decisions 22085 (17 March 1975), 22502 (3 June 1975), 22565 (10 June 1975), 22932 (5 August 1975) and 23624 (15 December 1975)

¹³³ Decision 22433 (20 May 1975)

reconstruction of the Mater Public Hospital at South Brisbane, with the full cost of the work to be funded by the State Government.¹³⁴

Coal mining and exports

The release of coal exploration areas was the subject of seven separate Cabinet decisions throughout the year.¹³⁵ Water supplies to existing and proposed coalmines were discussed at two meetings.¹³⁶ In February, Bjelke-Petersen announced that increasing quantities of coking coal would be exported to Japan through Hay Point in Central Queensland.¹³⁷ In a move described by *The Courier-Mail* as ‘one of the biggest political gambles in Queensland’s history’, the Premier said the scheme would not be ratified ‘unless Japan agrees to buy Queensland beef’.¹³⁸ It is unclear what eventually happened, but the newspaper described Bjelke-Petersen’s action as ‘resources blackmail’.¹³⁹

A promotional article by the Premier was published in the *The Courier-Mail*.¹⁴⁰ Despite unemployment and inflation caused, he said, by Federal Government ‘fiscal and monetary policies’, the world energy crisis had ‘put a premium on Queensland’s extensive coal reserves’. Increased coal exports meant more money in State coffers because coal export royalties were lifted from five cents to \$1 per tonne in the 1974 Budget.¹⁴¹ The proposed export of coal from the Hail Creek mine through Hay Point, approved by Cabinet in May, was abandoned by July.¹⁴² In May, Bjelke-Petersen told

¹³⁴ Decision 23363 (27 October 1975) and ‘Mater will be rebuilt’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 October 1975), 8

¹³⁵ Decisions 21762 (21 January 1975), 22589 and 22590 (17 June 1975), 22682 and 22685 (1 July 1975), 22786 (15 July 1975), and 23209 (6 October 1975)

¹³⁶ Decisions 20014 (13 May 1975), and 23576 and 23578 (8 December 1975)

¹³⁷ ‘\$2000m deal on coal for Japan: Contract over 17 years’, *The Courier-Mail* (1 February 1975), 1

¹³⁸ ‘Premier’s \$2000m Japanese gamble’, *The Courier-Mail* (16 February 1975), 1

¹³⁹ ‘Coal projects hold-up’, *The Courier-Mail* (27 June 1975), 4

¹⁴⁰ ‘Minerals, coal put State in box seat’, *The Courier-Mail* (28 January 1975), Queensland ’75 Supplement 3

¹⁴¹ ‘\$3.7m from coal royalties’, *The Courier-Mail* (22 March 1975), 2

¹⁴² Decision 22380 (13 May 1975)

Cabinet members the Commonwealth Government was undertaking a detailed industrial development study of the Bowen Basin region.¹⁴³

The State and Federal governments co-operated on some projects and disagreed on others. According to the Minister for Industrial, Fred Campbell, the Federal Government's refusal to grant coal export licences for two Central Queensland mines was contributing to his 'recurring sense of frustration'.¹⁴⁴ Campbell claimed that 'irresponsible politicking masquerading as policy' in Canberra meant Queensland would 'miss out' on \$40 million in royalties and hundreds of jobs. Soon after, Minister Camm insisted several mining projects were 'under a cloud'.¹⁴⁵ The Federal Government's proposed Petroleum and Minerals Authority would not 'alter the situation'.

An environmental planning study of the Hay Point coal loading facility was authorised at a July meeting.¹⁴⁶ Campbell blamed the Federal Government for the withdrawal of Western Mining from the Hail Creek project and warned other proposed mines might be 'called off'.¹⁴⁷ Treasurer Chalk declared the State Government would help coal mining companies 'if the Federal Government did not alter its export coal policy'.¹⁴⁸ In August, Camm claimed the \$6 per tonne levy on coal exports was 'the most savage imposition ever placed on a single industry' and meant Queensland lost 'about \$6 million per year'.¹⁴⁹ New projects were 'threatened'. The Utah Development Company, once described by Federal Minerals and Energy Minister Rex Connor as 'a standing disgrace to Australia and Queensland', closed several Central Queensland mines during September in response to industrial action by mining unions.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ 'Study for big industry on coal fields', *The Courier-Mail* (23 May 1975), 1 and Decision 22486 (27 May 1975)

¹⁴⁴ 'Budget could slow inflation', *The Courier-Mail* (26 June 1975), 8

¹⁴⁵ 'Mining at risk due to cost rises', *The Courier-Mail* (30 June 1975), 2

¹⁴⁶ Decision 22683 (1 July 1975)

¹⁴⁷ '\$600m coal projects in danger, says Camm', *The Courier-Mail* (9 July 1975), 15

¹⁴⁸ 'State may help to develop coalfields', *The Courier-Mail* (11 August 1975), 1

¹⁴⁹ 'Coal levy savage', *The Courier-Mail* (25 August 1975), 3

¹⁵⁰ 'Minister: Utah A Disgrace. Huge rip-off', *The Courier-Mail* (16 April 1975) and 'Utah sees no early coal truce', *The Courier-Mail* (11 September), 2

The Federal Government relaxed coal export controls in October; a move that the Mines Minister said would create ‘thousands’ of jobs.¹⁵¹ A revised policy on exploration and development of coal resources was approved.¹⁵² Extensive deposits between Bowen and Bundaberg had been proven and were considered ‘to have special significance for the future supply of coal’. In November, Cabinet members considered a report on discussions held in Tokyo between Japanese coal importers and Australian representatives.¹⁵³ Treasurer Chalk and Bjelke-Petersen predicted ‘a quick recovery’ after the coalition won office.¹⁵⁴ By the end of the year, however, coal exports were threatened by a recession in the Japanese steel industry caused by a worldwide slump in steel prices.¹⁵⁵

Other minerals

In January, the Premier announced he was ‘confident’ that Weipa bauxite-miner Comalco would build an aluminium smelter at Gladstone.¹⁵⁶ He had good reason to be. Under the existing agreement between Comalco and the Queensland Government, the company would be forced to pay \$2 million per annum for the next 30 years if it decided to withdraw from Gladstone.¹⁵⁷ The government was determined to overcome infrastructure and planning problems but would not ‘commit itself for further costs’. Cabinet acted to ‘reduce the Company’s financial risk’ by agreeing to accept a payment of \$14 million compensation if the smelter project was abandoned by Comalco.¹⁵⁸ In August, Bjelke-Petersen said he and Mines Minister Camm held talks with Conzinc Riotinto and Broken Hill Pty Ltd about the building of a steel mill near the Central Queensland coalfields.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵¹ ‘Way cleared for big mines boost: Jobs for thousands’, *The Courier-Mail* (13 October 1975), 1

¹⁵² Decision 23368 (27 October 1975)

¹⁵³ Decision 23526 (24 November 1975)

¹⁵⁴ ‘Chalk forecasts minerals boom’, *The Courier-Mail* (15 December 1975), 12

¹⁵⁵ ‘Slump could affect big coal projects’, *The Courier-Mail* (29 December 1975), 3

¹⁵⁶ ‘Comalco intends to build smelter: Premier confident’, *The Courier-Mail* (22 January 1975), 3

¹⁵⁷ Decision 21899 (11 February 1975)

¹⁵⁸ Decision 21969 (24 February 1975)

¹⁵⁹ ‘Premier told of steel projects’, *The Courier-Mail* (22 August 1975), 7

In May, the Greenvale nickel mine and Yabulu treatment plant near Townsville were threatened with closure due to financial difficulties.¹⁶⁰ Treasurer Chalk was involved in ‘rescue talks’ for the project in June.¹⁶¹ Soon after, he announced a successful conclusion to negotiations between the Queensland Government, mine owner Freeport Minerals and mine operator Metals Exploration Ltd.¹⁶² In August, Treasurer Chalk said the ‘real problem’ at Greenvale was ‘its escalating fuel bill’ and he would ask for help from the Federal Government to ‘ensure the livelihood of 1500 men’.¹⁶³ Government backbenchers blamed ‘Communist-controlled unions’ for the project’s problems.¹⁶⁴

Cabinet members gave approval for Mines Minister Camm to negotiate with companies searching for gas in the Cooper Basin.¹⁶⁵ After the Commonwealth’s Petroleum and Minerals Authority took control of oil and gas areas outside the Cooper Basin, Bjelke-Petersen was angry, claiming ‘one of the tragedies of the Federal Government’ was the ‘driving out of Australia’ of oil exploration companies.¹⁶⁶ In May, Camm announced that Queensland would ‘lead the way’ in converting coal into synthetic fuel.¹⁶⁷ According to Minister Camm, the Julia Creek oil shale could supply 10 percent of Australia’s oil needs if the Federal Government encouraged research into oil extraction from coal.¹⁶⁸

The development of phosphate deposits at Duchess near Mount Isa was considered in May.¹⁶⁹ According to Camm, the mining company should not be ‘meddled around with by Federal Government domination’.¹⁷⁰ Cabinet members agreed and authorised work on the mine and on a new railway.¹⁷¹ Treasurer Chalk claimed the

¹⁶⁰ ‘3000 jobs hanging on big loan: Nickel project closure feared’, *The Courier-Mail* (29 May 1975), 1; (30 May 1975), 1; and (31 May 1975), 3

¹⁶¹ ‘Time factor obstacle for Greenvale rescue’, *The Courier-Mail* (3 June 1975), 13

¹⁶² ‘All-night talks end Greenvale crisis’, *The Courier-Mail* (5 June 1975), 1 & 11

¹⁶³ ‘Rising fuel cost problem’, *The Courier-Mail* (11 August 1975), 1

¹⁶⁴ ‘Strikes hit nickel site’, *The Courier-Mail* (27 August 1975), 17

¹⁶⁵ Decision 21763 (21 January 1975)

¹⁶⁶ ‘Driving out oil firms – Premier’, *The Courier-Mail* (3 February 1975), 1

¹⁶⁷ ‘State lead in synthetic fuel forecast’, *The Courier-Mail* (30 May 1975), 13

¹⁶⁸ ‘Julia Creek oil shale backed’, *The Courier-Mail* (6 October 1975), 10

¹⁶⁹ Decision 22349 (6 May 1975)

¹⁷⁰ ‘Mine rail tender of \$6.3m’, *The Courier-Mail* (10 May, 1975), 4

¹⁷¹ Decision 22349 (6 May 1975)

project was hampered by the Federal Government's 'unfortunate' insistence on one-year export contracts.¹⁷²

Police and crime

In November, a letter bomb addressed to Bjelke-Petersen exploded at the Executive Building on George Street.¹⁷³ According to one news report, the Premier's 'free and easy days' were over.¹⁷⁴ Regular threats to Bjelke-Petersen in the past had not resulted in injuries to staff. A \$20,000 reward was announced.¹⁷⁵ According to Mrs Bjelke-Petersen, 'radical Communist extremists in some of the unions' sent the bomb.¹⁷⁶ A second bodyguard and a bulletproof vest were allocated to the Premier and a special bomb squad was formed.

In March, Cabinet was advised that there had been a request for permission to establish a 'shop for the retailing of adult novelties'.¹⁷⁷ Alternatively, the promoter asked for permission to hold an 'erotic art exhibition at a public hall'. Cabinet members approved the preparation of a Bill to amend the Vagrants Act to 'preclude the operation in Queensland of sex shops and the distribution or furnishing of information in relation to items which are sold in such shops'.¹⁷⁸

At meetings in September and October, Cabinet members considered the Police Commissioner's concerns about increasing prostitution in massage parlours.¹⁷⁹ Convictions could only be obtained if police officers 'submitted' themselves to 'so called massages'.¹⁸⁰ The possibility of organised crime becoming established in Queensland and the subsequent 'intrusion' of Commonwealth police 'into State fields' were important

¹⁷² 'Export curb unfortunate', *The Courier-Mail* (31 October 1975), 22

¹⁷³ 'Tightest clamp follows assassination attempt', *The Courier-Mail* (20 November 1975), 2

¹⁷⁴ 'For Joh, no more free and easy days', *The Courier-Mail* (20 November 1975), 4

¹⁷⁵ '\$20,000 postal reward offered', *The Courier-Mail* (20 November 1975), 7

¹⁷⁶ 'They're radicals, says Flo', *The Courier-Mail* (20 November 1975), 10

¹⁷⁷ Decision 22121 (24 March 1975)

¹⁷⁸ Decision 22121 (24 March 1975)

¹⁷⁹ 'Crackdown on massage dens', *The Courier-Mail* (1 October 1975), 1

¹⁸⁰ Decision 23169 (22 September 1975)

issues.¹⁸¹ Cabinet members decided to license massage parlours and investigate applicants for registration.¹⁸² A further submission from the Ministers for Health and Police would be submitted to Cabinet at a future date. The first Police computers were installed in 1975.¹⁸³ A new headquarters, costing \$7.7 million, was approved in June.¹⁸⁴ More police officers were approved in July and recruitment advertisements stated, 'Laws are the very bulwarks of Liberty'.¹⁸⁵

In February, Police Minister Max Hodges recommended that police should be allowed, with the Commissioner's permission, to own 'race horses, coursing dogs and trotting horses'.¹⁸⁶ Cabinet members disagreed, confirming the existing ban on police owning horses or greyhounds for racing purposes. In August, the Police Minister announced that two Scotland Yard detectives would investigate claims of corruption in the Queensland Police.¹⁸⁷ One year later, Commissioner Ray Whitrod, frustrated by government interference and inaction, resigned. According to Whitrod, the Police Union executive regularly bypassed the Police Minister and the Commissioner, and went directly to Bjelke-Petersen.¹⁸⁸

Roads

In October, Cabinet decided to ask a committee from the Main Roads, Police and Transport Departments look at the issue of slow-moving traffic on two-lane highways.¹⁸⁹ Advisory signs would be erected, asking motorists to keep left unless overtaking.

¹⁸¹ 'Secret Federal check on Qld police', *The Courier-Mail* (18 May 1975), 5

¹⁸² Decisions 23181 (29 September 1975) and 23328 (20 October 1975)

¹⁸³ 'Two cybers to aid crime fight', *The Courier-Mail* (30 May 1975), 10

¹⁸⁴ Decision 22535 (3 June 1975) and 'Request for police ideas on new city headquarters', *The Courier-Mail* (22 June 1975), 12

¹⁸⁵ 'Budget to allow for more police', *The Courier-Mail* (8 July 1975), 9 and 'Queensland's Police Force' (advertisement), *The Courier-Mail* (25 October 1975), 2

¹⁸⁶ Decision 21897 (11 February 1975)

¹⁸⁷ 'Yard men have free hand', *The Courier-Mail* (23 August 1975), 1; 'Yard men won't check on entire police force', *The Courier-Mail* (26 August 1975), 3; 'Scotland Yard men on the inquiry job', *The Courier-Mail* (13 September 1975), 3

¹⁸⁸ Ray Whitrod, *Before I Sleep: Memoirs of a Modern Police Commissioner* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 144

¹⁸⁹ Decision 23292 (13 October 1975)

Amendments to the Traffic Regulations, eliminating the exact equivalents of imperial measurements, were passed in November.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Decision 23522 (24 November 1975)