



Cabinet Minutes 1977 – Important Decisions

Short summary of some of the major decisions of the 1977 Queensland Cabinet

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Listed below, and outlined briefly, are the most important/relevant decisions contained in the Cabinet minutes of 1977.

State election 1977

The State election was held on 12 November 1977. On 7 April Cabinet, following an oral submission by the Premier, approved the appointment of members of an Electoral Commission to carry out a redistribution of electoral boundaries because many electorates in the South-eastern Zone were above or below the 20 per cent allowable variation from the quota. [Dec. 26218] On 31 October Cabinet agreed to security arrangements for the Executive Building and Tally Room for the election. [Sub. 24310, Dec. 27261]

Federal/State issues

Aboriginal issues: Cabinet on a number of occasions agreed that the Premier should write to the Prime Minister explaining Queensland's objections to various policies adopted by the Federal Government concerning Aboriginal people.

Two concerned the purchase of land in Queensland by the Federally funded Aboriginal Land Fund Commission [Sub. 23391, Dec. 26232, 12 April, and Sub. 23500. Dec. 26364, 10 May]

Another objected to a Federal grant to an ATSI Community Health Service [Sub. 24540, Dec. 27525, 19 December] Another concerned a long-standing dispute over the ratification by Australia of ILO Convention 107, concerning Indigenous and Tribal Populations and their rights of ownership over land [Sub 23501, Dec. 26365, 10 May]

Cabinet made a decision adopting formal State Aboriginal Welfare Policies. [Sub. 23174, Dec. 25977, 1 March]

The Minister, Claude Wharton, reported opposition in other States, sometimes unanimous, to Federal policies in this area. [Subs. 24183, 29 September and 23098, 3 February] Following an oral submission by the Premier, Cabinet decided on a process to involve the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement in any Commonwealth/State discussions or negotiations concerning Aboriginals. [Dec. 26409, 17 May]

Fraser Island: Following the Commonwealth's decision in December 1976 to ban mining on Fraser Island, the Commonwealth offered \$10 million in compensation to stimulate economic activity in the region.

Cabinet discussed a number of submissions following discussions with Commonwealth Ministers and officials. It refused to withdraw its threat to challenge the validity of the Commonwealth's ban. [Sub. 22959, Dec. 25726, 11 January; Sub. 23059, Dec. 25843, 1 February; Sub. 23093, Dec. 25884, 8 February].

It adopted a management plan for the island, having decided not to seek Commonwealth financial assistance because it feared the Commonwealth would want to be part of the planning group. [Sub 24330, Dec. 27284, 7 November]

It also agreed to extend logging contracts, effectively in perpetuity. [Sub. 23820, Dec. 26722, 5 July]

Environment: Cabinet was concerned at the continued intervention by the Commonwealth under the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act in major developments in the State following its decision to ban mining on Fraser Island.

Cabinet was told of nine major projects involving export licenses or foreign investment where "duplication and conflict" could arise. It decided to proceed to deal with the companies concerned on environmental issues and to provide the Commonwealth, for information only, the results of any State-company discussions, decisions or studies, and to inform the Commonwealth of its decision. [Sub. 24125, Dec. 27061, 19 September]

Australian National Line: In 1976 Cabinet agreed to a request from the Commonwealth Minister for Transport that the Australian National Line should be allowed to engage in intra-state trading in Queensland on a non-restricted basis. The ANL had been transporting bauxite between Weipa and Gladstone following an agreement made in 1971. The main issue was the way in which the ANL's operations in Queensland could be legalised.

Cabinet was concerned not to enhance the Commonwealth's powers and eventually agreed to pass a special Act to deem the ANL to be a corporation for

the purposes of Queensland law entitled to engage in intra-state trade. [Sub. 23252, Dec. 26066, 14 March; Dec. 26313, 26 April; Sub. 23992, Dec. 26914, 15 August; Sub. 24089, Dec. 27021, 5 September; Dec. 27084, 19 September]

Corporations: In response to moves by the Federal Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, Mr Howard, to introduce national companies and securities legislation, the Queensland Minister for Justice, Mr Lickliss, proposed he negotiate a scheme that would maximise State involvement. Cabinet agreed. [Sub. 23280, Dec. 26101, 21 March]

Casinos at airports: Cabinet noted legal advice that it would probably not be able to challenge a Commonwealth decision to allow casinos to be established at airports in Queensland. [Sub. 22999, Dec. 25769, 18 January and Sub. 23073, Dec. 25865, 6 February]

Commonwealth inquiry into drugs: After initially refusing to cooperate with a proposed Commonwealth Royal Commission into drugs, Cabinet approved revised terms of reference and agreed to authorise the inquiry under the State Commissions of Inquiry Act. [Sub. 24176, Dec. 27120, 3 October]

Family Court: After extensive negotiations and at the invitation of the Commonwealth, Cabinet agreed to enter preliminary negotiations to create a State Family Court. [Sub. 23659, Dec. 26544, 7 June]

Referendums: Cabinet decided not to adopt a recommendation that it decide its attitude towards four proposed amendments to the Commonwealth Constitution, deciding instead that it would do so at “an appropriate time”. [Sub. 23199, Dec. 26000, 1 March]. It later decided it would oppose a further proposed amendment. [Sub. 24180, Dec. 27124, 3 October]

Economic issues

Queensland Permanent Building Society: Following the collapse of the State’s second biggest building society, Cabinet agreed to urgent legislation and then to a takeover by the SGIO, to guarantee loans and to waive stamp duties. [Sub. 24197, Dec. 27142, 6 October; Sub. 24243, Dec. 27190, 13 October; Sub. 24419, Dec. 27392, 29 November]

State Trading Bank: Cabinet considered a Treasury submission on the ramifications of creating a trading bank. It decided to refer the issue to the Premier “for further consideration and subsequent discussion with” the Treasurer. [Sub. 23102, Dec. 25892, 6 February]

Prices and Wages Freeze: The Premiers Conference on 13 April committed all governments to a three-month Prices and Wages Freeze. Cabinet decided

Ministers responsible for Statutory Authorities should ensure no prices were increased by them during the period. It decided to intervene in the national wages case to support the policy.

Cabinet also considered ways of ensuring that Local Authorities did not increase rates, and indicated it was prepared to delay new valuations to assist this process. [Sub. 23425, Dec.26270, 19 April; Sub. 23475, Dec. 26332, 3 May; Sub. 23591, Dec. 26464, 23 May]

Commonwealth financial decisions: Cabinet decided it would not put added financial resources into programs where the Commonwealth was cutting back on its Section 96 grants to the States. This would impact on hospitals, sewerage and school dental schemes. [Sub. 23838, Dec. 26740, 5 July]

Industry and mining

Coal: Cabinet agreed to release land under an Authority to Prospect in the Central Queensland Coal areas and the Oaky Creek Coal Area. It also agreed to construct spur rail lines for the BHP Gregory Coal Mine. [Sub. 23806, Dec. 26710, 5 July; Sub. 23310, Dec. 26131, 21 March; Sub. 23308, Dec. 26129, 21 March]

Nickel: Cabinet agreed to legislation to provide financial backing for the Greenvale nickel project, which was facing a liquidity problem following a fall in demand for nickel. [Sub. 23134, Dec. 25927, 15 February; Sub. 23171, Dec. 25974, 1 March; Sub. 23303, Dec. 26124, 21 March]

Shipyard: Cabinet rejected a proposal by Evans Deakin Industries that it should be given a developmental lease at its Kangaroo Point site when it closed its shipyard. It called for a report on the development of the site. [Sub. 23420, Dec. 26265, 19 April]

Infrastructure

Water: Cabinet decided not to proceed with a decision it had made in 1975 to establish a Moreton Water Authority to control urban water supply in the region, including the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of new and future water supply facilities including dams, treatment works and trunk mains. The scheme had been resisted by local authorities. [Sub. 23185, Dec. 25987, 1 March; Sub. 23241, Dec 26089, 21 March]

Sewerage: Cabinet agreed to a five-year plan to help fund the Gold Coast Region Sewage Disposal scheme. [Sub. 23164, Dec. 25967, 1 March; Sub. 23993, Dec. 26915, 15 August]

Urban transport

Trains: Cabinet agreed to legislation concerning the use of land associated with the duplication of railway tunnels between Roma St and Brunswick St [Sub. 23109, Dec. 25931 and 25956, 22 February and 1 March] and for preparation of tunnels for electrification. [Sub. 23533, Dec. 26397, 17 May]. It accepted a \$19.481 million tender for the construction of 39 electric passenger cars for Brisbane's suburban rail electrification, despite the Federal Government's failure to help finance it. [Sub. 23368, Dec. 26203, 4 April; Sub. 23532, Dec. 26396, 17 May]

Buses: Cabinet agreed to provide \$5.5 million to subsidise urban bus services in Brisbane, Rockhampton and elsewhere. [Sub. 23594, Dec. 26467, 23 May; Sub. 24172, Dec. 27115, 26 September]

Police and criminal law matters

Criminal Law Inquiry: Cabinet released the report of the committee established the previous year to inquire into enforcement of the criminal law. This inquiry was a substitute for an inquiry into police corruption. The committee complained in a covering letter at the absence of helpful submissions. [Sub. 23537, Dec. 26412, 23 May; Dec. 26507, 31 May]

Gold Coast prostitution: Cabinet was informed the law was inadequate to deal with the proliferation of escort services and call girl operations on the Gold Coast. [Sub. 24257, Dec. 27207, 17 October]

Police Arts and Sciences Course: Cabinet decided that the practice of granting police study leave in relation to the Police Arts and Sciences Course and permitting police to attend lectures in departmental time be discontinued. This was the recommendation of the new Police Commissioner, Terry Lewis. [Sub. 23924, Dec. 26840, 20 July, Dec. 27467, 13 December]

Public Service

Flexible working hours: After authorising initial discussions in July 1975 for the introduction of flexible working hours, and following various trials, Cabinet agreed to adopt a scheme recommended by the Public Service Board. [Sub. 23289, Dec. 26110, 21 March, Dec. 26137, 28 March] This was later extended to Railways employees. [Sub. 23398, Dec. 26243]

Employment of women: Cabinet endorsed the Public Service Board's policy of giving preference to college leavers over married women in the Public Service generally, including the teaching service. [Sub. 24516, Dec. 27502, 13 December]

Union membership: Cabinet decided not to change its policy of requiring government employees to become members of registered Industrial Unions. [Sub. 23042, Dec. 25827, 1 February]

Tourism

Hamilton Island: Cabinet agreed to a request by the leaseholder for the establishment of a tourist resort on Hamilton Island. The existing lease, over the whole island, was for grazing purposes only and prohibited the establishment of a tourist resort. The Treasurer was concerned about the process, and lack of any tenders. [Sub. 23784, Dec. 26677, 28 June, and 26853, 26 July; Sub. 24035, Dec. 26960, 22 August]

Iwasaki resort: Following an oral submission by the Premier, Cabinet agreed to approve the preparation of a franchise agreement for the establishment of the Iwasaki resort at Yeppoon. Details of the project are contained in earlier submissions considered by Cabinet in November. [Sub. 24447, Dec. 27420, 29 November; Dec. 27552, 19 December]

Bridge toll: Cabinet refused to allow a toll to be reimposed on use of the Bribie Island Bridge. [Sub. 23723, Dec. 26614, 21 June]

Property issues

Littoral or foreshore reserves: Cabinet adopted the Minister's recommendation that Local Authorities be not permitted by bylaw to require subdividers of land abutting foreshores, rivers or creeks to provide part of the foreshore or littoral land free of cost for public garden and recreation purposes. [Sub. 24216, Dec. 27161, 10 October]

Foreign ownership of land: Cabinet decided to take no action to monitor foreign ownership of land. [Sub. 23358, Dec. 26193, April 4] It informed the Commonwealth there was nothing in Queensland law to prevent a private person, including an alien, from seeking to develop freehold land on Barrier Reef islands, subject to Local Authority requirements. [Sub. 23490, Dec. 26354, 10 May]

Transferable Development Rights: Cabinet rejected a suggestion by the Brisbane Lord Mayor that several senior public servants should go to the United

States with him to study the use of Transferable Development Rights. Instead it decided to send its own delegation, headed by a Minister, once it received the Lord Mayor's report on his trip. [Sub. 23592, Dec. 26465, 23 May]

Miscellaneous

Commonwealth Games: Cabinet agreed the Government would contribute one-third of the cost of the sporting facilities for the 1982 Commonwealth Games, to a maximum of \$10 million. [Sub. 23311, Dec. 26139, 28 March] It proposed that there be discussions about the provision of accommodation facilities. [Sub. 23956, Dec. 26874, 1 August]

Car number plates: Cabinet decided to adopt new, reflectorised number plates for Queensland vehicles, green-on-white with the words, "Queensland – Sunshine State". [Sub. 23016, Dec. 25817, 1 February, and 25851, 8 February]. After indication of strong demand, Cabinet decided to increase the charge for replacing old number plates from \$5 to \$10. [Sub. 23693, Dec. 26577, 14 June]

Queensland Film Corporation: Cabinet agreed to establish a Queensland Film Corporation. [Sub. 23209, Dec. 26174, 4 April; Sub. 23426, Dec. 26238, 19 April; Sub. 23440, Dec. 26295, 26 April]

Traders exploiting the public: Cabinet rejected a recommendation that Consumer Affairs be authorised to prepare lists of traders exploiting the public and to make the information available to the public. [Sub. 24250, Dec. 27200, 17 October]

UQ Vice-Chancellor: Following Sir Zelman Cowen's retirement to become Governor-General, Cabinet considered the conditions of employment of his replacement, rejecting a proposal that flexibility be available in fixing a salary. [Sub. 24102, Dec. 27036, 12 September; Dec. 27188, 10 October]

Late-night shopping: Cabinet was presented with a paper outlining the pros and cons of late-night shopping. It decided the matter should be held over till a later date. [Sub. 23978, Dec. 26899, 8 August]