

Queensland State Archives

Department of Public Works

Cabinet Minutes 1979 – Selected Highlights

An overview of some of the major decisions of the 1979 Queensland Cabinet

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Cyclone ‘Peter’

As residents in far north Queensland prepared to greet the New Year, Tropical Cyclone ‘Peter’ made landfall between Aurukun and the Edward River mission at roughly 8pm on 31 December. Moving steadily south-east and with winds of up to 160 km/hr, the season’s first cyclone dumped up to two metres of rain on some regional centres (including Cairns) and rural areas over the following week. After noting early reports of the damage (estimated to be over \$10 million in flood and agricultural damage combined), the Government promptly declared parts of the region a Natural Disaster Area. [Dec. 29793, Sub. 26550, 9 Jan; Dec. 29796, 9 Jan.; see reports in the *Courier-Mail*, 2 Jan., p. 1; 8 Jan., p. 3; 9 Jan., p. 3] One week later, Cabinet endorsed a submission by the Minister for Primary Industries, Vic Sullivan, that joint State/Federal Natural Disaster Assistance Arrangements be enacted, whereby low-interest loans were offered to primary producers adversely affected by the loss of crops and livestock (although Cabinet preferred a 7% interest rate on loans rather than the 3% recommended by the Minister). [Dec. 29839, Sub. 26590, 16 Jan.]

State/Federal Issues

- (a) Great Barrier Reef. Ever since the Whitlam Government legislated in 1975 for the creation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the matter of the ratification and declaration of such had passed back and forth between the Commonwealth and Queensland Government unresolved. [For instance, “Oil Chance in Big Reef Area”, *Courier-Mail*, 14 Jan., p. 5] It took until late in the year to quell concerns over perceived restriction of the State’s authority over its territorial seas, and to clarify the issue of pre-existing mineral exploration leases (said issue nearly costing two Federal Ministers their jobs). Following Cabinet’s agreement to joint Ministerial meetings and its acceptance of decisions therein, Cabinet ultimately gave qualified approval for declaration of the ‘Capricornia’ Marine Park section of the Great Barrier Reef – “subject to the area declared not including any area held under exploration permit”. Also approved was the establishment of a Ministerial Council to oversee operations of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

[Dec. 30217, Sub. 26923, 19 Mar.; Dec. 30622, Sub. 27295, 21 May; Dec. 31279, Sub. 27878, 10 Sep.]

- (b) Air Services. With the continued growth of mining enterprises and associated development in far-flung reaches of the State, the matter of transport routes between regional centres assumed ever greater importance. In response to TAA's "threatened withdrawal from inland services" in central and northern Queensland, the Government sought to clarify Commonwealth policy regarding the obligations of the 'national carrier'. Following a briefing by the Minister for Transport, Ken Tomkins, Cabinet recommended that the Premier inform the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, of the government's firm belief that TAA should maintain *and* improve its inland air services to remote Queensland destinations (Mount Isa in particular). In a draft letter provided by the Minister, attention was drawn to TAA's alleged desire to monopolise the lucrative coastal routes at the expense of Ansett, should it be forced to maintain its inland services. [Dec. 30995, Sub. 27637, 24 Jul.] A week later, the Minister outlined to Cabinet potential courses of action should the Prime Minister respond 'unfavourably' to the Premier's request. Such actions included "a comprehensive examination of all [TAA's] services within Queensland with a view to dismantling the Commonwealth's 'two-airlines' policy", or alternatively accepting TAA's proposal that Bush Pilots Airways take over operation of these inland services (a prospect supposedly rejected by residents of the regional centres in question). [Dec. 31059, Sub. 27679, 31 Jul.]
- (c) Corporations. Following deferral and conditional approval of the matter, Cabinet eventually endorsed the National Companies and Securities Commission Bill, establishing a State/Commonwealth Co-operative Scheme for the regulation of corporations and securities industries (so long as the Bill complied with the 'requirements' of the State Government). The Commission, proposed two years earlier by then-Federal Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, John Howard, would await the result of the Victorian state election in May before deciding its location between Sydney and Melbourne. [Dec. 30008, Sub. 26739, 13 Feb.; Dec. 30014, Sub. 26739, 20 Feb.; Dec. 30094, Sub. 26815, 27 Feb.]
- (d) Unemployment. Against a backdrop of rising national unemployment figures (especially among young people) and a growing shortfall in apprentice trade specialists, the Federal Government had earlier devised a scheme of employer subsidies to be administered through the States. Despite a 'gloomy' national jobs forecast, Cabinet reaffirmed its position of two years earlier not to participate in the Commonwealth's 'Special Youth Employment Training Programme', with the Minister for Labour Relations, Fred Campbell, citing employers' reluctance to avail themselves of the scheme's 'impractical' funding conditions. [Dec. 29956, Sub. 26694, 6 Feb.] However, the Minister noted late in the year that youth unemployment in the State had remained in double figures for the previous four years, reaching 17.8% by December; even more regrettable was the concurrent increase in duration of unemployment to over 26 weeks on average. Accordingly, Cabinet decided to establish an Inter-Departmental Committee to investigate the practicality of the Government's participation in the scheme the following year. Included in the Committee's brief was a direction to report on how "the State Government might take advantage of the \$1000 cash bonus to be paid to

employers” who offered apprenticeships through the Programme. [Dec. 31844, Sub. 28395, 3 Dec.]

- (e) Land Acquisition. Cabinet decided that discussions with the Commonwealth be entered into regarding transfer of the Elanda Plains property at Cooloola – land acquired in mid-1975 under the Whitlam Government’s disputed National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act – back to Queensland (and at no financial cost to the State). Cabinet offered to withdraw a High Court writ served against the Federal Government over the matter, as basis for such discussions to proceed. [Dec. 30098, Sub. 26819, 27 Feb.]

Ministers and MPs

- (a) Expenses. Following discussions at a Joint Government Parties meeting on 14 March, Cabinet endorsed a revised set of guidelines for Parliamentary Members’ entitlements, proposed jointly by Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Dr Llew Edwards (and marked ‘Secret’). Amendments to previous guidelines included: provision for a Member’s spouse to travel separately on interstate or intrastate air travel while claiming travelling allowance; provision for Members from distant electorates to be offered overnight lodgings in the Parliament House Annexe in lieu of claiming accommodation allowance, not only when Parliament was in session but at all times; and provision for former Members (who had served four terms and ten years in Parliament) and their spouse to be entitled to one return flight every year to any destination in Australia – so long as their primary residence was in Queensland. Also agreed to was the standard salary payable to a Member of the Legislative Assembly (indexed according to average weekly wages for adult males in Queensland), set at \$25,750 for the 1978/79 financial year. [Dec. 30239, Sub. 26948, 19 Mar.]
- (b) Travel. Since May 1977, Cabinet had deliberated how best to impose tighter regulation on official overseas travel by Members and Departmental staff, so as to make savings in Government expenditure. Cabinet ultimately gave approval ‘in principle’ to a submission from the Premier outlining revised conditions for overseas travel for official purposes. These included requirements, tabled in earlier submissions, that each Department submit an annual programme of projected overseas travel to the Public Service Board for review and approval (excepting travel to New Zealand or Papua New Guinea). By the time of this final decision in September, it was anticipated that 101 Parliamentary officers would take overseas trips for official purposes in 1979/80 (compared to 106 approved for the previous financial year). [Dec. 30513, Sub. 27189, 8 May; Dec. 31117, Sub. 27732, 13 Aug.; Dec. 31354, Sub. 27949, 24 Sep.]

Indigenous Issues

- (a) Aurukun and Mornington Island. While still under Government-appointed Administration, Cabinet decided to grant leases to the Aurukun and Mornington Island Shire Councils of “the whole of the lands included in their respective areas”, ostensibly to “secure for the benefit of Aborigines, who reside on the land, preservation of their traditional rights, use and occupancy of the land”. Also approved was the creation in both Councils of reserves for public purposes, including but not limited to ‘Education purposes’, ‘Health purposes’, ‘Police purposes’ and ‘Departmental or Official purposes’ (the reserves to be controlled in each case by the relevant Minister). [Dec. 29821, Sub. 26572, 16 Jan.]

Elections of representatives to Local Authority Councils were due to be held on 31 March in the Shires of Aurukun and Mornington Island. Following an oral submission by the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Charles Porter, Cabinet approved the preparation of a Bill to amend the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978, so that persons residing temporarily at Aurukun and Mornington Island were ineligible for election to the Councils. [Dec. 30010, 13 Feb.] The Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, Russell Hinze, later presented to Cabinet a summary of suggested amendments to be incorporated in the draft Bill. These included provisions that only ‘qualified’ residents of either Shire (as defined in the submission) should be nominated and allowed to stand for election to Council, and that the election results could not be challenged on the basis of any amendment to the Act. Despite the Minister’s recommendation that the Bill be introduced with some haste, the proposed amendments were not approved by Cabinet. [Dec. 30178, Sub. 26889, 12 Mar.]

- (b) Federal ‘Intrusion’. On 16 January, a locally-convened Community Council was elected at Yarrabah reserve near Cairns. At once appearing “hostile to the [State] Government’s policies for Indigenous peoples”, the Council duly petitioned the Commonwealth for land rights and entitlement to self-management, proposing a conference at Aurukun on these issues to which was invited other Aboriginal council members and Federal representatives. In light of the pending Local Authority Council elections, the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs recommended that such a conference – “with its inevitable influx of radicals and sensation-seeking media representatives” – would not be in the best interests of Aurukun’s residents; Cabinet concurred. [Dec. 29957, Sub. 26695, 6 Feb.] In the weeks following the Council elections, Cabinet reaffirmed its position that the State Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Advancement was the sole authority responsible for matters affecting Indigenous communities on State Reserves. Also decided was the State’s rejection of Commonwealth proposals for funding assistance to the Yarrabah Aboriginal Council. [Dec. 30447, Sub. 27130, 23 Apr.] Subsequently, Cabinet decided not to participate in a proposed State/Federal Ministerial visit to Yarrabah to diffuse the ‘deteriorating’ situation. Rather, and in light of the State and Federal elections to be held the next year, the Premier and Deputy Premier were encouraged to confer with the Prime Minister directly, so as to “avoid any [further] damaging confrontation between our Governments”. [Dec. 30803, Sub. 27454, 19 Jun.]

Education Issues

- (a) School Standards. With the start of another school year approaching, Cabinet decided to reaffirm its authority over standards of conduct and appearances at State Schools. This was in part prompted by reports reaching the Department of Education that some school teachers had advised their students that 'Advance Australia Fair', and not 'God Save the Queen', was the National Anthem (the former was, in fact, regarded as the National Tune and only officially became the National Anthem in 1984). Accordingly, the Minister for Education, Val Bird, recommended that all school Principals be advised of the following guidelines: Australian flags would be supplied to all schools by the Commonwealth upon application to the local Federal Member (at an estimated cost, for the 1953 State and non-State schools, of \$52,731); similarly, the Commonwealth would provide cassette recordings of the 'Royal Anthem' for any occasion where the playing and singing of the National Anthem was appropriate, such as at daily school parades; so long as circumstances allowed, the Australian flag should be flown and honoured, and a picture of Her Majesty the Queen displayed, at all school parades or assemblies; and finally, Principals were to exercise 'proper control' over teachers' professional standards of dress and grooming, and were "requested to take a realistic but firm approach to those few teachers who might not meet acceptable standards". [Dec. 29772, Sub. 26529, 9 Jan.]
- (b) Inclusive Education. Commissioned by the Prime Minister in 1977, the 'Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants', chaired by Melbourne barrister Frank Galbally QC, aimed to assist migrants settle more easily into Australian society while maintaining a sense of their own background and culture. Cabinet later gave its approval for the adoption of recommendations contained within the 'Galbally Report', the findings of which were presented in April 1978, as they pertained to multicultural education in Queensland schools. A revised Departmental policy statement, submitted by the Minister for Education and outlining how "Queensland State Schools must help all children cope with the realities of living in such a society", was to be promulgated immediately as the Department's views on multicultural education. Also approved was the establishment of a Multicultural Committee to oversee the implementation of the new policy guidelines (all associated costs of which were to be met by the Federal Government). [Dec. 30284, Sub. 26987, 26 Mar.]

Late in the year, a Joint Government Parties meeting resolved that "the current Government policy on children of lower educational ability be changed so that all children who require an education should be given a place in a State-run facility". Subsequent to the Minister for Education submitting this resolution, Cabinet decided that (as funds became available) provision be made for 'handicapped' children to receive at least some access to formal education programmes. This directive included, on a trial basis, the admission to State Special schools of 'moderately intellectually handicapped' (or what were termed 'sub-normal') children. [Dec. 31671, Sub. 28238, 5 Nov.]

Justice/Legal Issues

- (a) Criminal Law Inquiry. Following an earlier inquiry into the enforcement of criminal law in Queensland, the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, Bill

- Lickiss, submitted his Department's review of findings from the Committee of Inquiry established the previous year. The review included recommendations for the implementation of some (but not all) of the Committee's findings, and directed relevant Government Departments to consider how changes to law enforcement might be implemented "without extending police powers in any way". Cabinet referred the review to the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, Ronald Camm, for his response to matters pertaining directly to police conduct in law enforcement. Among the review's more pertinent recommendations was that the video or oral recording by Police officers of confessional material remain *not* mandatory. [Dec. 29953, Sub. 26691, 6 Feb.]
- (b) Legal Aid. After lengthy negotiations with the Federal Government, and following its decision in April 1978 to establish a Queensland Legal Aid Commission (that had yet to be legislated for or proclaimed), Cabinet eventually gave approval for the signing of a State/Commonwealth Agreement that would bring the Commission into being. One of the sticking points in negotiations was the Commonwealth's insistence that the Agreement include provision for a separate Aboriginal Legal Aid Service; the State Government got its way on this matter, however, arguing that the Commission would of itself provide legal assistance to *all* Queensland citizens equally. [Dec. 30560, Sub. 27235, 15 May]
- (c) Russell Island Investigation. Following repeated media reports of allegedly fraudulent surveys and valuation of allotments on Russell Island in Redland Bay, and accusations from former Opposition Leader, Tom Burns, of a Government 'cover-up' of the ensuing police investigation, Cabinet noted several submissions regarding an Inquiry into the matter. [Dec. 29876, Sub. 26622, 23 Jan.; Dec. 30602, Sub. 27275, 21 May; Dec. 30813, Sub. 27464, 19 Jun.; see *Courier-Mail*, 23 Jan., p. 1; 24 Jan., p. 3; 30 Jan., p. 2] When the Inquiry's Chairman, Mr J. F. Morgan (Surveyor-General for Western Australia), concluded his investigations and appeared to clear the Government of any collusion in the affair, the Opposition called for the Inquiry findings to be made public. [*Courier-Mail*, 21 Apr., p. 3] Cabinet much later noted a report submitted by the Minister for Survey and Valuation, John Greenwood, detailing the disciplinary measures to be taken against the surveyor charged over the matter. [Dec. 31979, Sub. 28570, 17 Dec.]

Bellevue Hotel Demolition

With construction planned for a new Parliament House Annexure and renovation planned for much of the CBD's Government precinct, Cabinet directed the Minister for Works and Housing, Claude Wharton, to undertake a survey and valuation of furnishings and furniture pieces in the government-owned Bellevue Hotel and Old Parliament House premises. [Dec. 29775, Sub. 26532, 7 Jan.] After the Minister submitted his itemised survey and recommendations, Cabinet decided that 'historically valuable' items be retained for use at Parliament House, and approved the removal for sale or reuse of all other items from those premises. [Dec. 29885, Sub. 26626, 30 Jan.]

Cabinet later deferred consideration of a detailed submission from the Premier (marked 'Secret') outlining the proposed 'utilisation' of the Government precinct area between George and William Sts in Brisbane's CBD. The submission comprises a report produced by the Department of Works for the consideration of

a select committee of high-level Government officers. This report includes a detailed appendix outlining “the future of the Bellevue Hotel”. Its summary states that the Bellevue Hotel had been classified by the National Trust as being ‘worthy of preservation’, but also that the building’s restoration had been estimated at over \$2 million. An outline of architectural reports commissioned by the Government lists several major faults and failings of the building’s structure. The summary then goes on to say that, in comparison, “the cost of demolition would be in the order of \$40,000”, and so (perhaps predictably) demolition was recommended. [Dec. 30208, Sub. 26914, 19 Mar.; *Courier-Mail*, 28 Mar., p. 3] Next month, Cabinet made the decision (also marked ‘Secret’) to adopt all the recommendations of the report contained within the Premier’s earlier submission, subject to further discussions at a Joint Government Parties meeting at an unspecified date. [Dec. 30391, 17 Apr.; *Courier-Mail*, 18 Apr., p. 1; 19 Apr., p. 1; 20 Apr., pp. 1, 3] With mounting public concern at government plans to demolish an iconic Brisbane landmark within a month, there was growing pressure from within some Government ranks to heed the public outcry. However, three days following Cabinet’s decision, and under cover of darkness, the Bellevue was hastily and unceremoniously demolished. [*Courier-Mail*, 21 Apr., p. 1; 22 Apr., pp. 1, 3; 23 Apr., pp. 1, 3; 24 Apr., pp. 1, 3; 25 Apr., pp. 1, 2, 3, 12]

Environment

Fraser Island. With public debate continuing over how best to ‘utilise’ the natural resources of southern Queensland’s sand islands, Cabinet approved the findings and public release of an Interdepartmental Committee’s Report regarding a Fraser Island Management Plan. The report, submitted to Cabinet by the Premier, outlined a programme of work on recreation and visitor facilities as well as advice for implementation of the Management Plan. Government Departments were directed to assess the relative priority of actions required to implement the Plan’s recommendations. [Dec. 30352, Sub. 27044, 9 Apr.]

In light of such programmes and potential tourist development on the island, Cabinet later recommended that the Governor, Sir James Ramsay, proclaim Fraser Island as a District of Sub-Artesian Water Supplies, thereby restricting the extraction of water from groundwater sources and controlling its use. This action had been recommended in the Fraser Island Management Plan approved by Cabinet earlier in the year, primarily to protect the island’s freshwater lakes from contamination by the intrusion of seawater. [Dec. 31223, Sub. 27829, 3 Sep.]

Infrastructure

- (a) Burdekin River Scheme. Cabinet decided to request additional funding from the Commonwealth for the Burdekin River Dam project, submitting that the Scheme should be considered a ‘Special Project of National Importance’ and thereby qualifying for financial assistance separate from that offered through the National Water Resources Programme. [Dec. 29755, Sub. 26474, 9 Jan.; *Courier-Mail*, 13 Jan., p. 5] Later in the year, Cabinet approved several submissions from the Premier proposing that advanced planning for the project proceed and that expenditure of over \$8 million be released for preliminary work. [Dec. 30916, 3 Jul.; Dec. 31566, Sub. 28140, 22 Oct.; Dec. 31601, Sub. 28140, 29 Oct.; Dec. 31834, Sub. 28385, 3 Dec.]

- (b) Wivenhoe Dam Project. In a detailed submission to Cabinet, the Premier outlined how expenditure on all aspects of the dam project at Wivenhoe was expected to peak in the 1978/79 financial year. In the same period, however, Government revenue sources used to fund project expenditure were anticipated to diminish. Regardless, and despite Departmental advice of a likely shortfall in raising required loan funds for the year, Cabinet decided to continue with construction work on the Wivenhoe Dam and to draft legislation transferring responsibility to the fledgling Brisbane and Area Water Board. [Dec. 29784, Sub. 26541, 9 Jan.; Dec. 30395, Sub. 27082, 17 Apr.] In the meantime, the Premier recommended that the Coordinator-General arrange for the deferral of loan repayments to major contractors, and to “actively seek further loan offers”. Ultimately, foreign buyer credit of some \$44 million was later secured through Mitsubishi Bank to guarantee the overseas content of contracts to conclude construction work on the project (coincidentally, Mitsubishi Australia Ltd. was contracted for the supply of turbines, pumps and generators to the Wivenhoe Dam). [Dec. 31389, Sub. 27984, 24 Sep.]
- (c) Railway electrification. With only limited grants available to it through the Commonwealth’s Urban Public Transport Programme, the Metropolitan Transit Authority faced a shortfall in funds to cover costs of the electrification of Brisbane suburban railways. So as to complete the minimum electrification required, Cabinet approved for the extension of contracted work on the Darra-Ipswich rail line section (on condition that no contract payments be due before the 1979/80 financial year). [Dec. 29780, Sub. 26537, 9 Jan.] At the same Cabinet meeting, it was agreed for the Premier to accept the Prime Minister’s invitation to Officer-level discussions regarding additional Commonwealth loan funds to complete the city’s railway system electrification. [Dec. 29781, Sub. 26538, 9 Jan.]
- (d) Container Port Contract. With tenders being received for operation of the first container terminal facility at Fisherman Islands, the Port of Brisbane Authority assumed it had been authorised by a previous Cabinet decision to contract out the stevedoring operation. The Government, however, disputed this interpretation and appeared set to intervene in the tender awarding process. After several deferrals of the matter, Cabinet ultimately decided that the Port Authority be directed to grant stevedoring rights at the new container facility to a consortium including the Australian National Line, bypassing the earlier recommendations of both the Port Authority and the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism, Allen Hodges. Despite being offered control over the level of charges the consortium could impose at the facility, the Port Authority expressed its dissatisfaction loudly at the Government’s intrusion (with Brisbane’s Lord Mayor, Frank Sleeman, even resigning from the Port Authority Board in protest). [Dec. 30011, Sub. 26778, 20 Feb.; Dec. 30298, Sub. 26993, 29 Mar.; *Courier-Mail*, 4 Apr., p. 1; 5 Apr., p. 3]
- (e) Houghton Highway. After a submission by the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads, Cabinet decided that the new bridge across Bramble Bay connecting Brisbane’s northern outskirts to the Redcliffe peninsula be named the Houghton Highway. Officially opened to traffic in December, the bridge was named after the recently retired local MP (National) and Speaker of Parliament, James Houghton. Ironically, his retirement triggered a September by-election in the seat of Redcliffe that allowed the Liberal candidate, Terry White, to win what

was the National Party's only electoral toehold in the greater Brisbane area. [Dec. 31733, Sub. 28299, 19 Nov.]

Mining

'Interfering' Legislation. A submission by the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police drew attention to "an increasing number of complaints" made to the Government by mining companies regarding 'restrictive' and 'unreasonable' local by-laws and requirements. According to advice from the Solicitor-General, such 'interference' – whereby "a Local Authority can withhold the right of a lessee to mine on leases granted to it by the Crown" – might potentially hamper the further development of the State's mining industry. Subsequently, Cabinet approved the drafting of legislation to amend the Mining Act 1968-1976, so that Local Government town-planning schemes could not override provisions within the Mining Act. [Dec. 29858, Sub. 26604, 23 Jan.]

After a Premiers' Conference in June 1978, the Prime Minister had released a statement on 'interactive' State/Federal jurisdiction over offshore mining activity. Following discussions with the Australian Minerals and Energy Council, however, the Government viewed any common mining codes relating to the seabed off the Queensland coast as 'confusing', 'onerous' and a likely "forerunner for Commonwealth pressures for uniform mining legislation throughout Australia". Consequently, Cabinet decided that the relevant State, rather than Commonwealth, legislation and codes should hold unfettered jurisdiction over all offshore mining activities "within the territorial sea and beyond". This was to be 'firm State policy' in all negotiations with the Commonwealth over offshore mineral rights. [Dec. 30044, Sub. 26770, 20 Feb.]

Development

- (a) Hamilton Island. Approval had been given in previous years to Hamilton Island Enterprises Pty. Ltd. (eventually wholly owned by Mr Keith Williams) for a tourist resort development, subject to receipt of a detailed planning scheme. When the plans eventually were lodged with the Department of Lands, the Minister, Neville Hewitt, recommended that the expansive (and, needless to say, expensive) resort project be allowed to proceed; the granting of a Special Lease of up to 75 years tenure was also recommended. Cabinet duly approved the establishment of a tourist resort covering the whole of Hamilton Island, with the development including the building of an airstrip. [Dec. 37080, Sub. 27431, 19 Jun.]
- (b) Brisbane City Mall. Cabinet decided, in collaboration with the Brisbane City Council, to establish a Technical Committee to investigate all matters relating to the construction of a pedestrian mall in Brisbane's CBD. Areas of investigation included the likely impact upon traffic patterns, an assessment of potential parking inadequacies and the best possible location for a pedestrian mall. This decision, however, was not to imply the State Government's willingness or ability to commit costs toward the proposed project. [Dec. 31190, Sub. 27800, 27 Aug.] The City Council even threatened to withdraw its support for the project when Cabinet later decided to reject plans for the redevelopment of Anzac Square in the city centre. [Dec. 31266, Sub. 27865, 10 Sep.]

Commonwealth Games

- (a) Accommodation. Following decisions made the previous year and subsequent contracting arrangements being finalised, the Premier submitted that the proposed use of student nurse accommodation at Griffith University to house visiting Games athletes and officials was 'satisfactory'. Cabinet duly confirmed its agreement with the University's administration regarding construction of facilities within University grounds. [Dec. 29785, Sub. 26542, 9 Jan.]
- (b) Drug Testing Facilities. Sir William Knox, the Minister for Health and former Deputy Premier, submitted details of proposed drug testing facilities to be housed at the Royal Brisbane Hospital Laboratory for use during the Games. Cabinet requested further information regarding the expenditure for additional equipment and staff required to perform the volume of drug testing anticipated. [Dec. 30931, Sub. 27567, 10 Jul.] A week later, Cabinet noted but made no commitment to those details contained in a submission by Sam Doumany, the Minister for Welfare Services and Acting Health Minister. [Dec. 30982, Sub. 27613, 17 Jul.]

Industrial Relations

- (a) Industrial Commission's Powers. Following threatened strike action by Unions in the Electricity Industry over claims for a 35-hour week, Cabinet sought to have the Full Industrial Court rule that such action defied a restraining order issued by Industrial Commissioner, Mr A. Gibson. If successful, this would show the Unions in question to have breached the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, thereby allowing for those Unions to be deregistered. [Dec. 31593, Sub. 28167, 22 Oct.] A subsequent submission by the Minister for Labour Relations, however, noted legal advice that this course of action would not succeed in front of the Industrial Court. [Dec. 31731, Sub. 28287, 19 Nov.]
- (b) Emergency Powers. Failing successful court proceedings such as that sought above, the Premier later delivered an oral submission proposing prompt Cabinet meetings to address any impending Union strikes. Cabinet duly decided that in the event of likely strike action within an 'essential industry' a Meeting of Cabinet be called immediately, so that a State of Emergency might be proclaimed and 'emergency powers' conferred upon the relevant government authorities. A draft proclamation was to be prepared and 'held ready' for such an occasion in future. [Dec. 31885, 4 Dec.]

Public Relations

- (a) Positive Spin. The first half of the year had proved to be something of a public relations minefield for the Government, with a series of controversial decisions arousing public anger and disdain. Perhaps with this in mind, the Premier delivered an oral submission following which Cabinet decided that the Government's Public Relations Officer should confer with Ministerial Press Secretaries regarding how best to publicise the Government's achievements. [Dec. 30662, 28 May] Later in the year, and again following a submission by the Premier, Cabinet gave approval for the Public Relations Bureau to train a group of photographers in "essential aspects of press and promotions photography".

This team of Government photographers would operate under the auspices of the 'Forward Alert Program' implemented in June, the aim of which was to allow the Government to respond quickly and positively to unforeseen political developments via media and press outlets. [Dec. 31701, Sub. 28262, 12 Nov.]

Cabinet approved the production of a publication, presented in précis form in a submission by the Premier, titled "Queensland: Australia's Superstate". According to the submission, Dr Derek Townsend had been seconded to the Premier's Department "for the express purpose of producing a special publication to promote the State." Proposed contents of the publication included chapters titled, 'Queensland, The Industrial State', 'Queensland in the Year 2000', and (rather ominously) 'Discovering Who is Boss'. The publication was to be marketed at a profit for the Government, and printed in bulk for promotional use during the 1982 Commonwealth Games (it is unknown whether this work was ever published; Dr Townsend did, however, later become the Premier's authorised biographer). [Dec. 31798, Sub. 28362, 26 Nov.]

- (b) Damage Control. Following an oral submission by the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Cabinet recommended that the Premier lodge an official complaint with the Board of the Australian Broadcasting Commission regarding the broadcast of the 'Four Corners' programme on Saturday, 19 May. The programme investigated the living conditions in Aboriginal settlements in and around Weipa, and highlighted continuing disagreement between local Aboriginal Councils and the State Government over issues such as land rights, self-management and mining leases. Advice was also to be provided to the Premier indicating whether any legal action might be initiated against the programme's producers (although it is not recorded whether any ensuing action came of this). [Dec. 30626, 21 May; *Courier-Mail*, 21 May, p. 8]

Policy/Social Issues

- (a) Child Adoption. Cabinet agreed to enter into working arrangements with officials in Thailand and Sri Lanka for the adoption of children by Queensland married couples, so long as acceptable adoption practices were observed in those countries. It was recommended that the Adoption of Children Act be amended to allow for the exchange of certain information between the Department of Children's Services and foreign governments or agencies regarding 'suitable' Queensland adoptees. [Dec. 29980, Sub. 26711, 13 Feb.]
- (b) Solar Energy. Against a backdrop of the continuing worldwide energy crisis, the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police submitted a review of the Government's solar energy policy for deliberation. Cabinet decided that the Government should encourage the use of solar energy in private and public applications, and support its research and development as an alternative energy source in projects that are "particularly relevant to Queensland". Accordingly, the Department of Works was directed to "investigate the feasibility of installing demonstration solar hot water systems on selected Government buildings". The Department of Commercial and Industrial Development was also directed to "examine the production of ethanol from such crops as sugar cane and to carry out a cost benefit analysis on the use of the product alcohol to supplement the State's motor spirit production". [Dec. 30595, Sub. 27268, 21 May; *Courier-Mail*, 15 May, p. 3; 4 Jun., p. 3]

- (c) Fencing Swimming Pools. With the issue deferred and further investigated over the previous two years, Cabinet eventually approved of ordinances proposed by Brisbane City Council regarding the safety and registration of private swimming pools. This included the 'thorny' matter of mandatory fencing of pools, a point over which neither the Council nor even the Government's Coalition partners seemed able to find accord. Approval was conditional on the fencing requirement in question being modelled on the provisions of the by-laws earlier adopted by Rockhampton City Council. [Dec. 31526, Sub. 28106, 15 Oct.]

Miscellaneous

- (a) Personalised Number Plates. Cabinet approved for draft legislation to be put to the Governor to introduce personalised number plates in April. As successfully argued by the Minister for Main Roads and Local Government the previous year, licence plates would feature three letters and two numbers separated by a map of Queensland, all in green on a white background. Plates were to be issued at \$100 per set. [Dec. 30198, Sub. 26904, 19 Mar.]
- (b) Bread Inquiry. Cabinet directed that draft legislation be approved and introduced during the current sitting of Parliament, thereby establishing a Bread Industry Committee. Its charge was to implement the findings of the Inquiry, established the previous year, investigating bread pricing, trading and marketing practices. The Inquiry's report, delivered to the Minister for Primary Industry on 17 January, found that Brisbane still had the cheapest bread of any capital city in the country. [Dec. 30287, Sub. 26990, 26 Mar.; *Courier-Mail*, 18 Jan., p. 10]
- (c) Overseas Government Office. Following an oral submission by the Treasurer, Cabinet approved the establishment of Queensland Government Representation in Tokyo. The preferred location of this commercial office was in the Marunouchi financial district of the Japanese capital. Cabinet also suggested that the Premier "take appropriate action for the obtaining of the necessary approval of the Japanese Government for the establishment of this office". [Dec. 31094, 6 Aug.]
- (d) Metrification. After discussions between the Premier, the Minister for Labour Relations and the Chairman of the Metric Conversion Board, Mr J. D. Norgard, agreement was reached on Queensland adopting metrification concurrent with the rest of the country. Consequently, Cabinet decided that, as of 4 February 1980 (or 3 March 1980 for the Shire of Burke), all articles offered for sale in the State would be priced solely in terms of the metric system, in keeping with similar action across other States and Territories. [Dec. 31235, Sub. 27841, 3 Sep.]