

## **Cabinet Minutes 1978 – Important Decisions**

### **Short summary of some of the major decisions of the 1978 Queensland Cabinet**

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Listed below, and outlined briefly, are the most important/relevant decisions contained in the Cabinet Minutes of 1978.

#### **1. Ministers and MPs**

- (a) Expenses. Cabinet decided overseas travel by Ministers must be approved, in advance, by Cabinet and expenses should be properly vouched. [Dec. 27560, sub. 24570, 10 Jan.] This did not apply to visits to New Zealand or Papua New Guinea. [Dec. 27637, 17 Jan.]

Cabinet approved a list of free air travel entitlements, within Australia, for former Ministers and some ex-MPs, following an oral submission by Deputy Premier Bill Knox. The decision was rescinded about three weeks later. [Dec. 28301, 9 May; Dec. 28447, 31 May]

Cabinet decided that overseas travel by backbench MPs at Government expense be not approved. [Dec. 28448, 31 May]

The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General presented Cabinet with a submission outlining the various legal responsibilities of the Auditor-General, Cabinet, the Speaker and others in relation to the expenditure of money on MPs' air transport, indicating the expenditure could only be in respect of MPs' duties. [Dec. 29203; sub. 26021, 18 Sept.]

- (b) Disqualification. Cabinet decided to introduce legislation to remedy a problem that threatened to cost at least two MPs, including the Minister for Health, their seats in Parliament. The problem involved the MPs holding appointments to outside bodies. [Dec. 28293; sub. 25210, 9 May; Dec. 28348, sub. 25261, 15 May]
- (c) Opposition Leader's staff. The Premier recommended to Cabinet that an additional officer be provided for the Leader of the Opposition. Cabinet deferred consideration of the submission for a week, and then

decided not to approve it. [Dec. 28054, sub. 25000, 3 April; Dec. 28093, 10 April]

## **2. Federal issues**

- (a) PNG border. Negotiations over the demarcation of the border between Australia and Papua New Guinea in the Torres Strait continued throughout the year. [Dec. 28610, Sub. 25497, 20 June; Sub. 26217, 3 Nov.]
- (b) Corporations. Queensland agreed to a Commonwealth proposal (initiated the previous year by Business and Consumer Affairs Minister John Howard) to establish a Commonwealth/State Co-operative Scheme for the regulation of corporations and the securities industries, replacing the State-based scheme then in existence. [Dec. 28402, sub. 25311, 22 May]
- (c) Communications. Following an oral submission from the Premier, Cabinet decided, "That no information of any kind is to be supplied to the Commissioner for Community Relations and that the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations and the Director, Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement be informed accordingly." [Dec. 27759, 7 Feb.]
- (d) Duplication. Following a discussion in Cabinet on 11 July (not recorded as a Cabinet decision), Ministers agreed to present reports to Cabinet detailing the extent of duplication of services by the Commonwealth and the States within their various areas of responsibilities.
- (e) Intrusion. The Queensland Cabinet reacted strongly to oppose a proposal by the Commonwealth to hold an inquiry into teacher education. The Commonwealth had sought the cooperation of the States, but told the States it would proceed with the inquiry in any event [Dec. 27854, sub. 24815, 28 Feb.; Dec. 27918, 7 Mar.; Dec. 28646, sub. 25528, 27 June; Dec. 28384, sub. 25294, 22 May]
- (f) Ombudsman accommodation. Following an approach from the Commonwealth and a series of meetings, Cabinet eventually agreed to approve the Premier's proposal. [Dec. 29489, sub. 26272, 13 Nov.; Dec. 29641, sub. 26415, 4 Dec.]

## **3. Indigenous Affairs**

(a) Aurukun and Mornington Island. Cabinet had been considering for a number of years whether it should remove the Presbyterian Church from its role of managing the Aurukun and Mornington Island reserves. Eventually the Commonwealth and Queensland agreed on new State legislation for the management of the reserves by local councils. Later Cabinet ordered the removal of the councils and the appointment of an

Administrator, pending elections the following year. [There were numerous decisions and submissions, including: Dec. 27864. Sub. 24825, 28 Feb.; Dec. 28002, sub. 24953, 21 Mar.; Dec. 28089, 3 April; Dec. 28090, sub. 25033, 6 April; Dec. 28135, sub. 25071; Dec. 28996, sub. 25841, 15 Aug.]

(b) Commonwealth intrusion. The Minister, Mr Porter made a long submission to Cabinet complaining about Commonwealth intrusion in which he said an urgent requirement from the Commonwealth was “Demand that the Commonwealth institute a policy of real co-operation instead of domination (we were spurned, harassed and brushed aside in Labor’s term – the last two years have been no better, and might even be seen in some aspects as worse).” Cabinet decided the Premier should raise the problem with the Prime Minister. [Sub. 25009, 3 April; Dec. 28451, 6 June]

#### **4. Education issues**

(a) MACOS (Man: A Course of Studies). This was a program developed in the United States and introduced on a trial basis in Queensland in 1973. Cabinet decided that its use in Queensland schools should be discontinued. [Dec. 27624, sub. 24624, 17 Jan.]

(b) SEMP (Social Education Materials Project). Following an oral submission by the Premier, Cabinet decided the Minister for Education should provide an explanation of SEMP and how far its introduction into schools had proceeded. Cabinet decided SEMP would not be approved for Queensland schools. [Dec. 27761, 7 Feb.; Dec 27786, sub. 24758, 13 Feb.; Dec. 27815, sub. 24786, 21 Feb.]

(c) Text books. Following public criticism about the choice of text books for schools, the Minister made a submission explaining the Department’s policy, which included providing guidelines, but leaving ultimate responsibility with school Principals. Cabinet eventually adopted an amended policy similar to that originally outlined by the Minister. [Dec. 27660, sub. 24651, 24 Jan.; Dec. 22584, sub. 20179, 17 June]

(d) Parliamentary Committee. The education controversies prompted the Premier to propose an inquiry. [Dec. 27837, 23 Feb.; Dec. 27882, 28 Feb.]

#### **5. Police/law and order**

(a) Changes following inquiry. Following an inquiry into the enforcement of the criminal law in Queensland, Cabinet established an interdepartmental committee to review its recommendations. The main outcome was that unless a system of recording interviews by police was established, police powers should not be extended. Cabinet decided later that no mandatory requirement for the video or oral recording of confessional material should be introduced, but that this

should be kept under review “in the light of developments in both the electronic and criminal investigation fields.” [Dec. 26412, 23 May; Dec. 28863, sub. 25628, 31 July]

- (b) Review of prison, probation and parole services. Cabinet was presented with a major review of prisons and parole services by a steering committee of senior public servants, proposing a forward planning policy. Cabinet adopted the recommendations. [Dec. 28546, rec. 25433, 20 June]

## **6. Infrastructure**

- (a) Electricity generator. Cabinet decided to build a new power station at Tarong, rather than at the site at Millmerran recommended by the responsible Minister and the Commissioner of the State Electricity Commission of Queensland. [Dec. 27765, 13 Feb., sub. 24709, 31 Jan.]
- (b) Water. Cabinet sought a report from the Co-ordinator-General on future responsibility for the Wivenhoe Dam (which was then under construction). Cabinet agreed to create a new Water Supply Authority. It later extended the area covered, and changed the membership of the Board, so that it merely represented all the local authorities and had a Chairman appointed by the Minister. [Sub. 24870, 7 March; Sub. 26141, 16 Oct.; Dec. 29354, sub. 26176, 23 Oct.]
- (c) Bridge. In January, Cabinet approved the preparation of the necessary documents for a “traffic facility over or under the lower reach of the Brisbane River from Eagle Farm to Queensport” (now known as the Gateway Bridge). In October it decided tenders should be called as soon as possible for the construction of either a bridge or a tunnel. [Dec. 27727, sub. 24710, 31 Jan.; Dec. 28769, sub. 25636, 18 July; Dec. 29242, sub. 26053, 2 Oct.]
- (d) Rail bridge. Cabinet debated the naming of the new rail bridge across the Brisbane River providing a direct link between South Brisbane Station and Roma Street. It selected the name ‘Merivale Bridge’. [Dec. 28539, sub. 25383, 6 June]
- (e) Future electrification. Cabinet authorised a feasibility study into the electrification of the main train lines between Brisbane and Toowoomba and Brisbane and Rockhampton. [Dec. 28986, sub. 25831, 15 Aug.]

## **7. Commonwealth Games – accommodation**

Cabinet decided that student/nurse accommodation at Griffith University should be adopted as the accommodation for athletes at the 1982 Commonwealth Games. [Dec. 28770, Sub. 25637, 18 July; Dec. 29312, sub. 26122, 9 Oct.]

## **8. Iwasaki Resort**

Cabinet in December 1977 authorised the negotiation with Iwasaki Sangyo (Aust) Pty Ltd to prepare a franchise agreement to provide land for a tourist resort near Yeppoon. [Dec. 27552, 19 Dec.; Dec. 27911, sub. 24868, 7 Mar.; Dec. 28098, sub. 25064, 10 April; Dec. 28219, sub. 25148, 24 April]

## **9. Gold Coast City Council – dismissal**

Cabinet decided to dissolve the Gold Coast Council and introduce legislation requiring that the Mayor in future should be elected from among the members of the Council. [Dec. 27877, sub. 24838, 28 Feb.; Dec. 27884, sub. 24843, 2 March; Dec. 29491, sub. 26274, 13 Nov.]

## **10. Food matters**

- (a) Frozen meat. Cabinet agreed to change the law and allow frozen meat packages to be sold by retail outlets other than butcher shops. As a quid pro quo it also agreed that butcher shops could sell products other than meat. [Dec. 28354, sub. 25031, 22 May; Dec. 28760, sub. 25599, 18 Jul; Dec. 28856, sub. 25718, 25 July; Dec. 29442, sub. 26236, 7 Nov.]
- (b) Bread. Cabinet decided to establish an inquiry into the industry to examine discounting, price cutting, the return of unsold bread, delivery systems and the practicability of a zoning system. [Dec 29347, sub. 26156, 16 Oct.; Dec. 29515, sub. 26316, 20 Nov.' Dec. 29561, sub. 26340, 23 Nov.]

## **11. Late night shopping**

Cabinet decided in March to deal with the long-running controversy over extending shopping hours by appointing three members of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to conduct a public inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act. [Dec. 27886, sub. 24816, 7 Mar.] The inquiry reported in July, and the Minister for Labour Relations recommended adoption of the recommendations. Cabinet deferred a decision on several occasions. [Dec. 29163, subs. 25717, 26017, 18 Sept.]

## **12. Social concerns**

- (a) Nude beaches. Following an oral submission by Mr Hinze, Cabinet decided that approval not be given to by-laws that may be proposed by any local authority seeking to make legal, nudity on beaches in its area. [Dec. 27589, 10 Jan.]
- (b) Fencing swimming pools. The Minister for Local Government recommended that Cabinet approve ordinances made by the Brisbane City Council dealing with the safety and registration of private

swimming pools, including their fencing, but the decision was deferred. [Dec. 27579, sub. 24589, 10 Jan.]

- (c) Maltreatment of children. Cabinet decided to establish a co-ordinating committee on child abuse to advise the Minister on all aspects of child abuse. [Dec. 29524, sub. 26303, 20 Nov.]

### **13. Miscellaneous**

- (a) Environment – World Environment Day. Cabinet decided that no action be taken by Departments to prepare a display in connection with the celebration in 1978. [Dec. 27847, sub. 24808, 28 Feb.] In November, Cabinet decided that World Environment Day 1979, themed on the role of National Parks, should be celebrated by Queensland. [Dec. 29482, sub. 26265, 13 Nov.]
- (b) Traders exploiting the public. Cabinet decided the names of individuals, firms and companies should not be included in critical comments in the annual report of the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. [Dec. 29099, sub. 25926, 4 Sept; Dec. 29162, 11 Sept.]
- (c) Personalised number plates. Cabinet decided Queensland should issue personalised number plates. [Dec. 28916, sub. 25767, 7 Aug.]
- (d) TAB changes. Cabinet agreed to two changes in TAB betting. The first was to increase the minimum bet to \$1 for win and place bets. The second was to approve trifecta betting. [Dec. 27900, 7 March; Dec. 29748, Sub. 26513, 18 Dec.]
- (e) Support for local business. Cabinet decided to approve a tender submitted by a Queensland firm for the supply of 514 fur felt hats and 112 khaki fur felt hats at a cost of \$7,579.50 rather than the tender of \$5,514.99 submitted by a New South Wales firm. The difference was approximately 37.4 per cent. The fur felt hats were issued as part of the uniform for male employees of the Health Department. [Dec. 28342, sub. 25255, 15 May]
- (f) UQ Vice Chancellor. Cabinet recommended the confirmation of the appointment of Professor Brian Wilson as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland. His salary was set at 50 per cent above that of a standard professor. This was the same as was paid to the previous Vice Chancellor, Sir Zelman Cowen, \$47,564. In 1977, Cabinet had rejected a proposal that a salary higher than \$41,820 should be offered if necessary to attract an outstanding applicant. [Dec. 28687, sub. 25566, 4 July]