

# 1974 Queensland Cabinet Minutes

## A report for Queensland State Archives

*By Jonathan Richards*

- **Introduction**

Brisbane and many other parts of Queensland were flooded in January 1974. In that year, the Commonwealth Games was held at Christchurch, New Zealand. The average annual car registration fee was \$32.61 and the basic weekly wage for an adult male, employed under a Commonwealth award and working in Brisbane, was \$58.30. The clothing industry was in the process of converting to the metric system.<sup>1</sup> On the political scene, Queensland's Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen (and it would appear most of the Cabinet) disagreed with Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and the Labor government in Canberra. The state enjoyed a robust electoral gerrymander, with 7,000 voters in the bush enjoying the same representation in Parliament as 25,000 metropolitan residents.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OM May, 1975, *Queensland Year Book 1975*, Brisbane, Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Cabinet approved a new \$680,000 plane for the Premier in July 1974: it was bigger and faster than the \$241,000 model delivered less than twelve months before.<sup>3</sup> After the state election was held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1974, there were 39 National (previously Country) Party members, 30 Liberal Party representatives, and 11 MP's from the Australian Labor Party. At the election, two Cabinet members retired and one was not given a portfolio in the new Government. Nine days after the election, Cabinet approved the rezoning of land owned by Minister Russ Hinze (appointed in November), for a quarry.<sup>4</sup>

- **Commonwealth Government relations with Queensland**

Relations with the Commonwealth Government were one of the major topics of discussion for the Queensland Cabinet in 1974. A law professor from Oxford University was retained at a fee of \$20,000 per year to provide legal and constitutional advice to the Queensland Cabinet, which believed many Commonwealth laws were unacceptable and went to great lengths to counter them. Many submissions to the Cabinet were critical of the Whitlam-led Labor government, but Queensland also accepted funding when it suited and was available.

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<sup>3</sup> See Decision 18498 (Submission 16486) of 26<sup>th</sup> March 1973 and Decision 20904 (Submission 18661) of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1974

<sup>4</sup> Decision 21608 (Submission 19292) of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1974

The proposed *Racial Discrimination Act* ‘eroded’ State powers.<sup>5</sup> The clauses of the *Human Rights Bill* were described as ‘vague and sometimes ambiguous’; Justice Minister Knox believed the Act would only bind the States and not the Commonwealth, and argued that the Act could actually deny freedom. The *Family Law Bill*, which meant that divorce was granted on the grounds of an irretrievable marriage breakdown, encroached on the State’s traditional responsibility.<sup>6</sup>

The threatened abolition of appeals to the Privy Council in Britain did not affect the State’s determination to block the *Commonwealth Seas and Submerged Lands Act*.<sup>7</sup> Cabinet members believed it could only be defeated by ‘a “collusive” action where we persuade someone, at State expense, to be an adversary to our application’.<sup>8</sup> Their wish was granted when a petition was submitted to the Governor asking for legislation to ‘establish Her Majesty the Queen as Queen of Queensland’.<sup>9</sup> Cabinet also approved research by linguistic experts into an archaic French term (*mes soulement* meaning “but only”) in this matter.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Decision 21103 (Submission 18840) of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1974

<sup>6</sup> Decision 20065 (Submission 17895) of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>7</sup> Decision 19948 (Submission 17803) of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1974

<sup>8</sup> Decision 20116 (Submission 17941) of 19<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>9</sup> Decision 20377 (Submission 18177) of 1<sup>st</sup> April 1974

<sup>10</sup> Decision 20769 (Submission 18542) of 25<sup>th</sup> June 1974

Four Commonwealth Bills to alter the Constitution were seen as threats to States' rights, and one, the *Constitution Alteration (Democratic Elections) Bill*, was particularly criticised, as it 'would result in greater representations for electors in metropolitan areas as compared with country areas'.<sup>11</sup> Queensland rejected the establishment of a Darling Basin Authority as 'undesirable and unnecessary', and decided to only allow a limited supply of social welfare data to the Commonwealth as it might be used to 'criticise Queensland's welfare policies'.<sup>12</sup>

Direct funding to local government, regional bodies and community organisations was 'unconstitutional', as was consumer protection and health insurance.<sup>13</sup> Reductions in Commonwealth funding to the States led them to consider a broad-based consumption tax of 1% as 'the only solution to revenue problems'.<sup>14</sup> Treasurer Chalk said the States would have to 'ensure they retain the initiative in the whole operation' to be independent of the financial directions of the Commonwealth. He said Commonwealth Ministers were determined to control spending and this was 'indicative of what we can expect in our relations with that Government from now on'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Decision 20144 (Submission 17963) of 26<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>12</sup> Decision 20195 (Submission 18010) of 4<sup>th</sup> March 1974 and Decision 20498 (Submission 18282) of 7<sup>th</sup> May 1974

<sup>13</sup> Decisions 20079 and 20080 (Submissions 17909 and 17910) of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>14</sup> Decisions 20667, 20770, and 20864 (Submissions 18444, 18543, and 18629) of 11<sup>th</sup> June, 25<sup>th</sup> June and 16<sup>th</sup> July 1974

<sup>15</sup> Decision 20667 (Submission 18444) of 11<sup>th</sup> June 1974

- **Electricity**

In 1974, 95% of Southeast Queensland's electricity needs were supplied by the coal-fired Swanbank power station. During the January floods, four underground coalmines at Ipswich were flooded, but only one was assessed as worth recovery.<sup>16</sup> This coal shortage meant that stockpiles at Swanbank were at dangerously low levels by February 1974. Cabinet rejected Electricity Minister McKechnie's recommendation of immediate rationing in homes, offices and factories.<sup>17</sup>

Cabinet approved the carriage of coal from Tennyson power station to Swanbank by road: the coal had been brought to Tennyson from Central Queensland by rail.<sup>18</sup> In April, Cabinet decided that power stations in Southern Queensland would continue to be supplied with Central Queensland coal 'for the time being'.<sup>19</sup> The installation of a second generating plant at Collinsville, near Bowen (for future demand in the north) was 'deferred indefinitely' when Cabinet approved the construction of a transmission line from Rockhampton to interconnect the North and Central Queensland electricity grids.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Decision 20132 (Submission 17957) of 19<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>17</sup> Decision 20282 (Submission 18091) of 18<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>18</sup> Decision 20137 (Submission 17962) of 19<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>19</sup> Decision 20435 (Submission oral Chalk) of 16<sup>th</sup> April 1974

<sup>20</sup> Decision 20125 (Submission 17950) of 19<sup>th</sup> February 1974

Increases in electricity charges were approved in March, and Cabinet considered the reorganisation of the electricity supply industry in Queensland.<sup>21</sup> In October 1973, four new electricity boards to replace the existing seven were approved, but Ministers finally decided to stay with seven.<sup>22</sup> At the same meeting, Cabinet decided to take no action on the site of a new power station until Comalco gave the Government ‘a definite decision to absorb the agreed proportion of the output of the new Gladstone power station’. Tarong coal resources were reserved for future use.<sup>23</sup>

- **Law and order**

Cabinet gave approval in February for the *Public Defence Bill* to provide legal aid to persons of ‘limited means’, and in March decided to rescind a previous Decision and approved \$80,000 of Commonwealth grant money for legal aid services.<sup>24</sup> A “Select Committee to Inquire into and Report upon the Incidence of Crime in Queensland and the Nature, Mode and Adequacy of Punishment Prescribed Therefore” was approved in the same month. The terms of reference for the committee included sentencing periods, the use of prison for reform and rehabilitation, the reintroduction of capital punishment,

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<sup>21</sup> Decision 20265 (Submission 18074) of 18<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>22</sup> Decision 19524 of 29<sup>th</sup> October 1973 and Decision 20466 (Submission 18239) of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1974

<sup>23</sup> Decision 20483 (Submission 18269) of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1974

<sup>24</sup> Decision 19498 of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1973 and Decision 20313 (Submission 18119) of 18<sup>th</sup> March 1974

flogging as a deterrent for rape, identifying factors in crimes involving violence, and indiscriminate terrorism.<sup>25</sup>

A recommendation for additional police officers was deferred until the 1974/75 Budget deliberations. Minister Hodges said in his submission that one hundred additional police were needed to cope with ‘increasing challenges to authority on an increasing number of issues’. He also stated that ‘there is a trend to violence in this State, in common with similar trends throughout Australia and the Western World, on a scale not previously experienced. These factors apply particularly in the environments of centres of large population and they can be expected to increase’.<sup>26</sup>

Metric clauses for the Traffic Act were approved and the penalty for parking in a bus stop was increased from \$2 to \$5.<sup>27</sup> Cabinet approved in August the preparation of a pamphlet on colour television for distribution to residents in Brisbane ‘and selected provincial centres’. Colour transmissions would begin on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1975, and the Cabinet was aware ‘unscrupulous salesmen’ were trying to sell the public ‘makeshift contrivances to produce “instant colour TV” of no technical value’.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Decision 20292 (Submission 18102) of 18<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>26</sup> Decision 20746 (Submission 18518) of 25<sup>th</sup> June 1974

<sup>27</sup> Decision 20719 (Submission 18494) of 18<sup>th</sup> June 1974 and Decision 21132 (Submission 18862) of 9<sup>th</sup> September 1974

<sup>28</sup> Decision 20960 (Submission 18701) of 5<sup>th</sup> August 1974

- **Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders**

Indigenous Affairs was another issue that caused the Queensland Cabinet to disagree with the Commonwealth Government in 1974. At the first meeting of the year, Cabinet heard that direct grants to Aboriginal people by the Commonwealth were (according to the legal advisers) invalid, and would ‘lessen the power of a State Government’.<sup>29</sup> A month later, the Cabinet decided to inform the Presbyterian Church that the Government was prepared to ‘resume the management of Aboriginal Reserves’ in the face of the Church’s opposition to the granting of a lease to a commercial fishing company on an Aboriginal Reserve.<sup>30</sup>

A request from the Commonwealth for Aboriginal statistics (particularly births and deaths) was rejected, with Cabinet deciding that ‘the various Queensland Authorities will continue to view Aboriginal citizens equally with members of all other racial origins’.<sup>31</sup> When the Commonwealth asked if a film crew could visit Palm Island, Cabinet supported the Health Minister’s recommendation that information would be supplied ‘if available’

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<sup>29</sup> Decision 19924 (Submission 17784) of 8<sup>th</sup> January 1974

<sup>30</sup> Decision 20165 (Submission 17984) of 26<sup>th</sup> February 1974 and Decision 21580 (Submission 19265) of 9<sup>th</sup> December 1974

<sup>31</sup> Decision 20398 (Submission 18196) of 8<sup>th</sup> April 1974



on request, rather than a visit by media staff.<sup>32</sup> Two months later Cabinet approved the inclusion of the whole Palm Island Group into the City of Townsville.<sup>33</sup>

The Cabinet granted four weeks recreation leave for Aboriginal employees on Church and State controlled communities, and approved a \$5 per week increase in ‘training allowances’ for ‘adult male Aboriginal and Islander employees who do not receive Award wage rates of pay’, with ‘all other Aboriginal and Islander employees’ to get an extra \$2.50 per week. While workers in Brisbane got an average of \$58 per week, the basic adult male wage in rural Queensland was \$52 per week. By comparison, the average Aboriginal adult male weekly wage, after the rise, was \$43 per week.<sup>34</sup>

At the same meeting that the Cabinet approved the “wage rise”, they rejected a proposal from Aboriginal Affairs Minister Hewitt for the payment of a very small number of allowances to enable Indigenous students from Cape York and Torres Straits to attend high school in Cairns.<sup>35</sup> Two weeks later Cabinet approved Amendments to the Aborigines Act giving Aborigines ‘freedom of choice in election of management of

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<sup>32</sup> Decision 20845 (Submission 18610) of 9<sup>th</sup> July 1974

<sup>33</sup> Decision 21127 (Submission 18857) of 9<sup>th</sup> September 1974

<sup>34</sup> Decision 19888 (Submission 17746) of 8<sup>th</sup> January 1974 and Decision 21252 (Submission 18957) of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1974

<sup>35</sup> Decision 21253 (Submission 18958) of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1974

property' and altering liquor regulations so beer could be "taken away" from canteens and brought on to Reserves.<sup>36</sup> Torres Strait Islander regulations were left unchanged.<sup>37</sup>

Cabinet considered whether the International Labour Organisation's *Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations* could be approved 'without contradicting the present policies of the Queensland Government'. The main dispute was over land as under existing legislation Aboriginal people had 'no claim or title' to Crown Land in Aboriginal Reserves.<sup>38</sup> At the last Cabinet meeting of the year, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Hewitt presented a submission on Queensland's application for Commonwealth Unmatched Funds for Aboriginal Advancement, noting that changes in funding instalments and the reduction from \$23 million to \$10 million meant many programmes were threatened.

Hewitt asked Cabinet to note the 'financial and political coercion' in the Commonwealth's response, and warned that this was apparently intended to 'embarrass the State Government and to create a situation in which the responsibility of the State Government towards indigenous citizens is passed to the Commonwealth'. This would 'place citizens at the mercy of an administration of questionable competence and integrity' and could lead to the loss of 'much of the northern seaboard of the State'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Decision 21380 (Submission 19079) of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1974

<sup>37</sup> Decision 21381 (Submission 19080) of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1974

<sup>38</sup> Decision 21398 (Submission 19095) of 4<sup>th</sup> November 1974

<sup>39</sup> Decision 21575 (Submission 19260) of 9<sup>th</sup> December 1974

- **Floods**

The disastrous floods of January 1974 in Brisbane and other parts of Queensland were the subjects of over fifty submissions during the year. Cabinet granted financial concessions and approved funds for personal distress, house damage and losses to industry. The Brisbane City Council was blamed for allowing development on flood-prone areas and the Commonwealth was asked for funds to conduct a Brisbane River flood study.<sup>40</sup> All government departments were ordered to ‘exercise economies in paper use’ as 150 tonnes of paper were lost when the Edward Street store was inundated.<sup>41</sup> A flood relief grant of \$2.7 million was granted to the Brisbane City Council and flood mitigation works on Brisbane creeks was approved.<sup>42</sup> The construction of the Wivenhoe Dam was approved using Commonwealth funds.<sup>43</sup> The Queensland Civil Defence Organisation was renamed the State Emergency Service during 1974.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Decisions 20053 and 20058 (Submissions 17885 and 17890) of 5<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>41</sup> Decision 20109 (Submission 17934) of 19<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>42</sup> Decision 20327 (Submission 18134) of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1974, and Decision 21324 (Submission 19022) of 21<sup>st</sup> October 1974

<sup>43</sup> Decision 21146 (Submission 18870) of 16<sup>th</sup> September 1974, and Decisions 21324 and 21338 (Submissions 19022 and 19036) of 21<sup>st</sup> October 1974

<sup>44</sup> Decision 20933 (Submission 18679) of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1974 and Decision 21258 (Submission 18963) of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1974

- **Brisbane and Ipswich**

Apart from the floods, the Cabinet considered other issues in Brisbane and the Southeast. A proposal for a wood chip plant in Brisbane was noted, the cross-river rail link was given approval and the first stage of railway electrification (using Commonwealth funds) began.<sup>45</sup> Approval was given for the redevelopment of Anzac Square.<sup>46</sup> Seven months later, Cabinet decided ‘in view of the weight of public opinion’ to leave Anzac Square as it was and to cancel the freehold title granted to the Brisbane City Council, after the consortium of insurance companies withdrew their tender.<sup>47</sup>

The future water supply for the Moreton region was referred to a Committee for a further report. The submission by the Co-ordinator General noted that by the year 2001, 90% of all available surface water in the area would be used and arguments over water allocation had already taken place between city, shire and town authorities.<sup>48</sup> Cabinet also referred the matter of dredging in the Brisbane River to a committee, which was to consider whether should it be prohibited or restricted near residential areas.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Decision 19919 (Submission 17777) of 8<sup>th</sup> January 1974, Decision 20625 (Submission 18406) of 4<sup>th</sup> June 1974, and Decision 20935 (Submission 18681) of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1974

<sup>46</sup> Decision 20391 (Submission 18189) of 8<sup>th</sup> April 1974

<sup>47</sup> Decision 21472 (Submission 19163) of 18<sup>th</sup> November 1974

<sup>48</sup> Decision 20302 (Submission 18108) of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>49</sup> Decision 21178 (Submission 18809) of 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1974

The verandahs of the Bellevue Hotel were removed after the Works Department reported that they would need to be completely dismantled for repairs.<sup>50</sup> Six months later Cabinet gave approval for planning to start on the development plan for the Government Precinct in George Street.<sup>51</sup> The passing of legislation relating to, and the construction of Queensland's first "Pedestrian Plaza", at Ipswich, was endorsed by the Government.<sup>52</sup>

Cabinet gave approval in principle for the establishment of a multipurpose park between Mt Coot-tha and Mt Nebo to be named either "D'Aguilar Forest Park" or "Brisbane Forest Park". The idea had been first suggested by The Gap Quarries Protest Action Group and was supported by Mt Nebo residents, the Rural Environment Protection Association of Brookfield and numerous conservation groups.<sup>53</sup>

- **Economic development**

Throughout the year, approval was given for submissions to the Commonwealth for funds to build 'urgently needed' dams in many parts of Queensland. Cabinet considered Comalco's intention to build an aluminium smelter at Gladstone at six Cabinet meetings

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<sup>50</sup> Decision 20465 (Submission oral Hodges) of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1974

<sup>51</sup> Decision 21280 (Submission 18977) of 14<sup>th</sup> October 1974

<sup>52</sup> Decision 20897 (Submission 18654) of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1974 and Decision 21605 (Submission 19289) of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1974

<sup>53</sup> Decisions 20859 and 20878 (Submission 18624) of 16<sup>th</sup> July 1974 and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1974

in 1974, noting at one stage that the Government was ‘not convinced’ that the company intended to build the smelter.<sup>54</sup> The Government and Comalco eventually reached an agreement to share the cost of infrastructure development at Gladstone.<sup>55</sup> The Treasurer was authorised to negotiate with mining companies over royalty payments, which were usually 5c or 10c per ton.<sup>56</sup>

Foreign ownership of land was considered by Cabinet, which decided to ask senior officers of the Justice and Lands Departments to consider ‘the best and simplest method by which overseas ownership of land could be identified and controlled’.<sup>57</sup> Department of Primary Industries officers participated, with Cabinet’s approval, in dairy feasibility studies in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>58</sup>

- **Beaches and coastal development**

The control of beach erosion on the Gold Coast continued to be an issue for the Government, but the Cabinet decided to take no further action on the purchase of

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<sup>54</sup> Decision 20213 (Submission 17987) of 4<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>55</sup> Decision 21173 (Submission 18897) of 16<sup>th</sup> September 1974

<sup>56</sup> Decision 20906 (Submission 18663) of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1974

<sup>57</sup> Decision 21242 (Submission 18917) of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1974

<sup>58</sup> Decision 21122 (Submission 18852) of 9<sup>th</sup> September 1974 and Decision 21348 (Submission 19045) of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1974

vulnerable land.<sup>59</sup> Cabinet approved an exchange of land at Kawana on the Sunshine Coast (45 hectares of frontal dunes for 80 hectares of vacant Crown Land) for beach protection purposes.<sup>60</sup>

Cabinet lifted a previous restriction to allow an application for a South Stradbroke Island canal development proposal to be lodged with Albert Shire Council.<sup>61</sup> Approval was also granted to Cambridge Credit to build the “Pacific Waters” canal estate at Biggera Creek, with half the dredging cost (\$200,000) to be paid by the state.<sup>62</sup> Later in the year, the issue of canal development at Nerang Creek was further considered after the 1974 floods showed that local government approved subdivisions would cause increased flooding in some existing canal estates, especially at Tallebudgera Creek and Surfers Paradise.<sup>63</sup>

Cabinet approved the erection of a National Fitness Camp near Currumundi north of Caloundra, with a \$500,000 Public Liability Policy to be taken out to cover ‘the possible eventuality of any explosions caused by artillery shells’. The Army advised that no assessment could be made and it was not practicable to clear the area, which had been used in World War Two as an artillery range.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Decision 19965 (Submission 17797) of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1974

<sup>60</sup> Decision 20326 (Submission 18132) of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>61</sup> Decision 19657 of 19<sup>th</sup> November 1973 and Decision 20428 (Submission 18221) of 16<sup>th</sup> April 1974

<sup>62</sup> Decision 20783 (Submission 18553) of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1974

<sup>63</sup> Decision 21432 (Submission 19128) of 11<sup>th</sup> November 1974

<sup>64</sup> Decision 21378 (Submission 19076) of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1974

- **Conservation and wildlife**

Cabinet approved, in principle, the boundaries of the Coolooloa National Park after a long-running fight with conservationists.<sup>65</sup> It also, as noted, agreed to establish the Brisbane Forest Park. When the matter of a visitor plan for the Great Barrier Reef was discussed, Premier Bjelke-Petersen said that ‘in view of current actions’ on offshore islands and the Commonwealth claims to sovereignty over seas and seabed, a Great Barrier Reef Authority should not be formed at this time.<sup>66</sup> Six months later, the Minister for Lands and Forestry was instructed to determine ‘which areas can be declared as Marine National Parks immediately’, and to also consider the need for ‘the establishment of a State Authority to preserve and manage the Great Barrier Reef area’.<sup>67</sup> Cabinet then approved the recommendations for proclaiming a Marine Park Area off the coast of Queensland.<sup>68</sup>

Mines Minister Camm presented a submission on limestone mining at The Caves Area, near Rockhampton. Cabinet endorsed the Minister’s action in asking companies to give up some leases for National Park and keeping others.<sup>69</sup> When the assessment from the

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<sup>65</sup> Decision 19963 (Submission 17845) of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1974

<sup>66</sup> Decision 20371 (Submission 18171) of 1<sup>st</sup> April 1974

<sup>67</sup> Decision 21276 (Submission 18976) of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1974

<sup>68</sup> Decision 21437 (Submission 19133) of 11<sup>th</sup> November 1974

<sup>69</sup> Decision 20544 (Submission 18328) of 20<sup>th</sup> May 1974



committee examining the *Great Barrier Reef Petroleum Royal Commission Report* was received, Ministers noted that drilling risked damaging the reef but could bring revenue; they recommended that the report be carefully considered and a further submission be made to Cabinet.<sup>70</sup>

- **Public Service**

Cabinet, at its first meeting for 1974, endorsed the recruiting of overseas doctors for public hospitals in Queensland.<sup>71</sup> In July, it approved the recruitment in Canada of nurses for public hospital employment, with over one hundred expected to begin work in Queensland hospitals in early 1975.<sup>72</sup> Health Minister Tooth had spoken to Ministers several times about the shortage of nurses in public hospitals, and said some wards had already been closed due to the lack of staff. Tooth recommended an increase in nursing salaries, but Cabinet did not adopt his position and opposed a variation in the public hospital nurses' award.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Decision 21485 (submission 19175) of 18<sup>th</sup> November 1974

<sup>71</sup> Decision 19927 (Submission 17787) of 8<sup>th</sup> January 1974

<sup>72</sup> Decision 20860 (Submission 18625) of 16<sup>th</sup> July 1974 and Decision 21524 (Submission 19213) of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1974

<sup>73</sup> Decision 20615 (Submission 18396) of 4<sup>th</sup> June 1974 and Decision 20843 (Submission 18608) of 9<sup>th</sup> July 1974

On the subject of Industrial Relations and the Commonwealth, the Government's position was defiant. Canberra's "Committee of Inquiry into Co-ordinated Industrial Organisations" was informed that Queensland found the proposals of Justice Sweeney 'totally unacceptable'. It would 'continue to deal with State branches of Unions rather than deal with militant Federal Unions which have never done anything at any time'; Health Minister Tooth noted that the Australian Workers Union 'strongly supports the Queensland Cabinet Decision in this matter'.<sup>74</sup>

The Cabinet decided to oppose Public Service pay claims, although the Premier noted in his submission that there was a need for 'a special review of the salaries of senior officials', including the Police Commissioner and Directors-General of departments.<sup>75</sup> Cabinet approved the phasing in (over a lengthy period) of a long service leave scheme for all Crown employees, noting that it was 'a massive task' to enter all staff records into 'the Treasury computer'.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Decision 20551 (Submission 18335) of 20<sup>th</sup> May 1974

<sup>75</sup> Decision 20714 (Submission 18489) of 18<sup>th</sup> June 1974

<sup>76</sup> Decision 21189 (Submission 18905) of 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1974

- **Women**

In January, Ministers gave approval for the repeal of Rule 43A in the *Queensland Police Regulations*, which had given all male officers seniority over all female members.<sup>77</sup>

Cabinet approved the *Age of Majority Bill* in 1974, lowering from the age for marrying, voting, and drinking from twenty-one to eighteen.<sup>78</sup> Cabinet endorsed the principle of equal pay for female and male workers under *International Labour Convention No 100*, with a note that ‘strict compliance is not necessary’.<sup>79</sup>

- **Southbank**

The subject of a new site for the Queensland Museum was discussed in January, with the Premier noting that the current site (the old Exhibition Building at Bowen Hills) would have to be cleared before a new museum could be built, and ‘this site could be isolated by planned freeway construction’. Three alternative sites (Albert Park, Woolloongabba railway yards and Mt Coot-tha) were considered but the recommended site was close to the proposed maritime museum at South Brisbane. There were ‘objections on the grounds

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<sup>77</sup> Decision 19954 (Submission 17809) of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1974

<sup>78</sup> Decision 20243 (Submission 18054) of 11<sup>th</sup> March 1974

<sup>79</sup> Decision 20653 (Submission 18429) of 11<sup>th</sup> June 1974

of possible flooding' but 'this danger could be overcome', and the only problem was the cost of the land.<sup>80</sup> Cabinet decided to take no action on this matter.<sup>81</sup>

Six months later Works Department officers discovered that light fitting cables had pulled the floor out of alignment causing 'loud cracking noises' to be heard in the old Museum Building.<sup>82</sup> Works Minister Hodges reported to Cabinet that the Exhibition Building housing the Museum was believed to be structurally sound but there were some minor faults and an annual inspection of the building should be made.<sup>83</sup> In November, at one of the last meetings for 1974, Cabinet gave approval for the establishment of a Cultural Complex at South Brisbane comprising an Art Gallery, State Library, Museum and a Centre for the Performing Arts. The expected cost of land acquisition, construction and roadworks was \$45.4 million.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Decision 20003 (Submission 17849) of 29<sup>th</sup> January 1974

<sup>81</sup> Decision 20020 (Submission 17849) of 5<sup>th</sup> February 1974

<sup>82</sup> Decision 21118 (Submission 18848) of 9<sup>th</sup> September 1974

<sup>83</sup> Decision 21161 (Submission 18885) of 16<sup>th</sup> September 1974

<sup>84</sup> Decision 21481 (Submission 19171) of 18<sup>th</sup> November 1974