

Selected Highlights

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Property development

Redevelopment of Edward Street and Turbot Street (world's tallest building)

The tender for the redevelopment of Queensland Railway land and the Capital Hotel site was put out in October 1985 and closed on 16 December 1985. In April 1986, Cabinet looked at the tender proposals for the first time (Dec. 48546). Of the seven proposals submitted at the preliminary stage, Seymour Developments' proposal appeared to give the best return for government. The assessment of the Mainsel Investments Pty Ltd proposal for an 83 story tower 'creates a landmark building which exceeds any building in the Southern Hemisphere'. However, the Queensland Rail assessment went on to say the proposal was 'grossly oversized to meet future predicted demand' and didn't comply with the Town Plan. Because of the wide variation in the proposals, Cabinet decided to seek additional information from four tenders.

The Co-ordinator-General presented a detailed report to Cabinet on the four proposals (Dec. 48830). The assessment was clear that the most advantageous offer for the Railway Department was the Seymour offer which had a firm financial commitment and a guarantee of completion for \$95 million.

In contrast the Mainsel offer, at a cost of \$300 million, had no financial base guaranteed and an investigation into their financials by a firm of chartered accountants noted 'we do not have enough information to form an opinion on Mainsel Investments Pty Ltd...The full financial resources of directors and associated companies need more detailed investigation'. The assessment of all the tenders by Bright Slater Real Estate also concluded the Mainsel bid was not viable but supported the Seymour bid as being economically viable. Despite the weight of expert evidence against the Mainsel bid, Cabinet decided that the tender by Mainsel be accepted.

Premier Bjelke-Petersen's championing of this troubled and controversial project led to his downfall in 1987 when he sacked five Ministers who refused to allow the project to go through. [Ministers had become aware that allegedly the Premier stood to gain financially from the development of the building.](#)

Redevelopment of the Port Office site cnr Margaret and Edward Streets

In February the Minister for Works and Housing Clyde Wharton, recommended that approval be given to advertise for the submission of proposals for redevelopment of government property bounded by Margaret and Edward Streets, Brisbane, including the renovation of the Port Office Building (Dec. 47982). In September (Dec. 49855) he extended the time allowed for the preferred applicant to consult with the review panel. Negotiations with the preferred applicant, Historic Holdings Pty Ltd, for the redevelopment of the site continued and in October Cabinet agreed to a further time extension to allow a more detailed submission that was agreeable to both parties (Dec. 50013).

Also in October (Dec. 50071) Cabinet decided on a change of tenure of the control over a portion of the Brisbane River adjacent to the Port Office building site during what now would be recognised as the Caretaker period - when governments since the 1950s (at least federally) have recognised the principle of not making decisions that might impede a future government's policies. On 27 October 1986 Ivan Gibbs brought to Cabinet a submission that would allow control of an 80 metre section of

the Brisbane river adjacent to the Port Office site be divested from the Port of Brisbane Authority and vested with the Public Trustee under Section 28 of the *Public Trust Act* for government purposes. The land would be subject to the terms and conditions as directed by the Hon. Minister for Works and Housing (Dec. 50071).

In the explanatory attachment Historic Holdings Pty Ltd, the 'preferred applicant' had submitted an amended scheme that incorporates an extension of the development over the portion of the Brisbane River. In November (Dec. 50201), Ivan Gibbs, Acting Minister for Works and Housing announced that negotiations with the preferred applicant, Historic Holdings Pty Ltd was ongoing and despite some concerns (the company has not yet been able to provide evidence of the availability of debt and equity to enable the project to proceed) they be granted the status of selected developer with the belief that the government's terms and conditions would be met (Dec. 48280, 49855, 50013).

Historic Holdings was the company of Robert Sng Swee Lee. Later this deal would be examined in the trial of Bjelke-Petersen in an attempt to prove that the former Premier had committed perjury when explaining his dealings with the businessman while in government. The Court found there had been 21 dealings with Sng and the Premier. They had met at his home in Kingaroy, at Parliament House and Sng had arranged a job for the Premier upon his enforced retirement in 1987. According to Kieza (2016): "The Crown alleged Bjelke-Petersen gave vague and misleading evidence to cover a connection between a \$200,000 political donation from Sng and his company's application for development rights to the historic Port Office site in inner Brisbane. Sng told the jury he had given brown envelopes, each containing \$100,000 cash, to Bjelke-Petersen and former National Party president Sir Robert Sparkes in September 1986. Sng's company, Historic Holdings, was named preferred applicant for the Port Office site, despite being third in merit on a public service committee recommendation list. In July 1986 it was named selected developer in February 1987 (see also Whitton, 1989). In the lead-up to the 1 November election, Sir Roderick Procter (a long-term National Party trustee) appeared on *The Carlton Walsh Report* arguing that 'the party's return to power would have adverse effects on business and the State economy', and suggesting that the 'government's tendering procedures, when employed, were often a charade' (*Australian Financial Review*, 23 October 1986).

Kangaroo Point

Boosterism was a prime motivation of the National Party government during the 1980s. In submissions brought to Cabinet in October (Dec. 49802) by the Premier, many of the proposals currently being considered were summarised. While that submission was withdrawn, it further highlights how development was valued above everything else with environmental, community and amenity concerns often seemingly a secondary consideration.

On 29 September 1986, Lands, Forestry, Mapping and Surveying minister Bill Glasson sought Cabinet to approve the Fricker Carrington Group as preferred developer, to be given a year to determine suitability of the site around Kangaroo Point. The site consisted of 6.273 hectares and the Premier had announced in earlier reports that the land package was worth 'at least \$10 million' (*The Courier Mail*, 23 April 1986). By far the most generous bidder, Fricker Carrington's offer at \$8.5 million along with the promise of 8 per cent interest on outstanding amounts, knocked the next highest bidder, Gaincolt - who originally offered \$4.5 million but later increased it, out of the park. In the lead-up to the decision to develop Kangaroo Point the government had advertised extensively inviting tenders from overseas and within Australia. Interest was not extensive. In an indication of the State

Government's lack of consideration for local council by-laws, the government indicated that it would override the council in land use zoning permissions, if this was required (Minnery, 1995 p175). Fricker Carrington Consortium's tender proposed home units, a tourist hotel, commercial buildings, a shopping centre, an educational centre and a marine park complex. Theirs was the highest intensity bid (see Dec. 49808).

Development of Railway land at Roma Street

In 1984, Cabinet accepted a proposal to develop the Brisbane Transit Centre at Roma Street. After 'marketing of the lettable space' in the Transit Centre surpassed expectations, the developer, F.A. Pidgeon, put forth a secondary proposal to expand the development – already well underway – to include an additional office tower, which Cabinet approved in May 1986 (Dec. 48772). The proposal was for a 0.3 hectare plot of Railway land between the Transit Centre and Countess Street, to be leased by F.A. Pidgeon for 99 years, with an initial \$1.1 million upfront payment and a nominal annual fee. Minister for Transport Don Lane emphasised a \$200,000 saving on behalf of the Railway Department for F.A. Pidgeon to take responsibility for the beautification of the Roma Street frontage; however, the additional cost of this development to the Railway Department wasn't addressed. A Hansard script from March 1985 had the Minister for Transport stating that the development was valued at \$35 million, by May 1986 this had increased to \$55 million. [Although approved, this expanded development never went ahead.](#)

Sanctuary Cove

Cabinet heard several submissions regarding the Sanctuary Cove Resort during 1986 (see for example, Dec. 49574). At a meeting in Mackay on 13th October, the Premier raised that the development 'could be placed into liquidation without assistance' (Dec. 49973). By December the project was at a 'crisis point' and the Premier argued for a government loan of \$5 million to pay Discovery Bay Developments Pty Ltd. The Government had already provided \$5 million along with Westpac \$7 million, AIDC \$15.5 million and Beneficial Finance \$20 million (Dec. 49973).

Cabinet was told that Beneficial Finance Corporation subsequently had decided not to advance the additional \$5 million outlined in an October submission and would not proceed with the syndicated loan facility. Westpac was therefore attempting to arrange the syndication itself but had been unsuccessful. Thirty banks had been approached – but not one had come on board and no funding had been raised. The key reasons given by banks that had been approached for not supporting the project were: too little equity – only \$10M compared with the loans sought of \$125M; concern about the financial responsibility of management – 'good entrepreneurs but not responsible financial managers' and a concern of lack of property development experience of the principals (Messrs Gore and Lo) (Dec. 50289). Legislation to amend the *Sanctuary Cove Resort Act* was introduced into Parliament in March 1987 (Hansard, 31 March 87:1061).

Extension of Queen Street Mall

Brisbane Lord Mayor (Sallyanne Atkinson) requested an amendment to the *Local Government (Queen Street Mall) Act* to avoid unnecessary delays to the future extension the Mall. Minister Hinze's proposal for the amendment to allow Governor-in-Council to approve the extensions was accepted (Dec. 49795).

Port Douglas

Since 1985, the Queensland government had been working closely with Christopher Skase's Qintex Group to facilitate a proposal for an international resort comprising a hotel, shops, golf course and

condominiums at Port Douglas. In 1986, the site was still Crown reserve but permission had been given for site works to be undertaken. Because of the complexities of the approvals Cabinet agreed to investigate the creation of enabling legislation to overcome the need to introduce separate pieces of legislation for each new development (Dec. 48445, 48590). Despite a number of objections from locals concerned about the impact of the resort, Cabinet approved rezoning in July (Dec. 49226).

Southport Spit

Christopher Skase and his Qintex group continued to be active in 1986, forming a partnership with Gold Coast developer Bruce J. Small Pty Ltd to put a proposal forward for the Mariner's Paradise development on the Broadwater. Ministerial approval was given for the Gold Coast Waterways in 1985 to grant 39,000 square meters of seabed to the Small development for reclamation (Dec. 45821). In February 1986, Cabinet was considering a new proposal that would see the addition of a luxury hotel be added to the existing Marina proposal (Dec. 48096). The government had no objection to the \$12 million joint venture that would give hotel guests and the public access to both the ocean beach and the Broadwater

Thiess Watkins

On 12 December Minister Ivan Gibbs brought a submission to Cabinet (Dec. 50435) regarding the construction of H.M. Prison in North Queensland (Chewko). Previously, on 3 November (Dec. 50122) Cabinet had agreed to construct the prison by 'non-traditional means'. Thiess Watkins was appointed as the selected tenderer and it was reported they were in the planning and development proposal stage. This submission asked to allow Thiess Watkins to invite tenderers to a group of selected sub-contractors to allow earthworks to begin before Cabinet has accepted the development proposal.

Subject to discussions with relevant Ministers, Governor-in-Council approval was sought to award Thiess-Watkins (Construction) a tender for \$7.28 million to redevelop, refurbish and renovate the Queensland Tourism and Travel Corporation premises at 239 Queen Street (Dec. 48599). The previous year (Dec. No. 46742; 6 August 1985), Cabinet decided to request a development proposal from Thiess-Watkins with a guaranteed contract price of \$6.2 million (including \$500,000) for fit-out. Thiess subsequently objected to the Department of Works being the development manager and requested an increase in the contract price. It appears that no other offers were invited.

Thiess and his companies had been awarded numerous government contracts. According to the ADB entry on Thiess, it was later found that he had 'bribed' the Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen with gifts that included an aircraft hangar and equipment repairs estimated to be around the value of \$1 million to gain contracts.

Additional Parking Sea World

Minister for Local Government and Main Roads Russ Hinze on 15 December (Dec. 50448), noted that Sea World is undergoing expansion and needs to fulfil Gold Coast City Council requirements to have more car parks. Hinze informs Cabinet that he was satisfied that the request for additional land was necessary and that this land would in part be taken from land vesting in the Gold Coast Waterways Authority.

Law and Order

Rehabilitation of offenders

For the first time in Queensland, Cabinet approved a Bill 'to provide for the rehabilitation of offenders' on 10 March. This was adopted into legislation as the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*, which established a period of 'rehabilitation' for convicted offenders – 10 years for an adult, five years for a juvenile – after which the conviction would be removed from the person's criminal record. This was on the proviso that the offender was not ordered to serve more than 30 months in custody, and didn't reoffend in the rehabilitation period. The Bill also amended the *Evidence Act 1977–1984* with Section 15A, which granted a person questioned in any criminal or civil proceeding the right not to be questioned (or not to answer if questioned) in a manner that would reveal their conviction, providing their conviction had been spent under the 1986 Act (Dec. 48271).

Report on an Inquiry into Sexual Offences involving children

In 1985, a number of allegations had been made in the media of child sexual abuse and the prostitution of young children. In response, the government authorised the Director of Prosecutions, Mr Des Sturgess QC to investigate and his report *An Enquiry into Sexual Offences involving Children and Related Matters* was handed to the then Attorney-General Neville Harper on 28 November 1985. In January 1986, the Attorney-General reported to Cabinet, in a secret submission, on the Report which ran to three volumes of 432 pages and which had so far only be seen by himself (Dec. 47824). The Report identified criminal activities and suggested amendments to the Criminal Code.

The submission recommends the Report now be made available to the Premier and that certain extracts be available to the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Police, Health, Education and Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs. Cabinet was keen to undertake a 'thorough consideration of the issues involved' before the Report was tabled in Parliament.

Strength of police force

In March, Deputy Premier and Minister for Police Bill Gunn recommended that the approved strength of the Police Force be increased by 359 in 1986–87, on top of any increase warranted to adjust for population growth, after crime statistics from 1 July 1985 to 31 January 1986 revealed 'a continuation in the trend of escalating criminal activity' (Dec. 48359). Statistical increases were noted from 1975–85 in crimes related to assault, break-and-enter, stealing, and unlawful use of a motor vehicle, among others. 'Detected' drug offences were of chief concern, with a reported 745 per cent increase over those 10 years.

The Deputy Premier claimed the 'dramatic increase in reported crime is highlighted by the fact that Police are clearing more crime now than the total number of offences reported in 1977'. Tony Fitzgerald AC QC cast some doubt on this claim in his 1989 report on the *Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct*, where he identified that the Queensland Police Department Annual Reports tended, over the period from 1969–70 to 1987–88, to present misleading statistics in order to bolster the apparent clear-up rates, and thus performance, of the Police Force (Fitzgerald Inquiry Report (hereafter FIR), pp.157–61). However, Fitzgerald also recognised increased crime rates in Queensland, and the 'already inadequate resources in the

criminal justice system, especially in the Police Force', and that 'the capacity of the Force to take on more work is disregarded, while at the same time its role is constantly expanded' (FIR, p.185).

In September the Minister for Police and Deputy Premier recommended eight police promotions (Dec.49669). Of these, Alan Frederick Barnes, promoted to Inspector of Police, was later mentioned in the FIR p. 201.

On 6 October, Deputy Premier Gunn recommended the preparation of a Bill to amend the *Police Act 1937-85* in order to remove the numerical limitation (currently set at 5) of Assistant Commissioners of Police (Dec. 49873).

Police education standards

In December Cabinet received advice regarding amendments to rules made pursuant to the *Police Act 1937-85* (Dec. 50307). Police Minister Bill Gunn told Cabinet (security B restricted submission) that among other things, the new format Junior Certificates report student achievement at five different levels (Very High Achievement, High Achievement, Sound Achievement, Limited Achievement and Very Limited Achievement). Cabinet was told that the minimum educational standard for the police would be a Junior Certificate with at least a sound achievement in English and in four other subjects. Later it was recommended that it would be beneficial if the police service could 'select men and women with more maturity who have education or work experience beyond high school which will give them a better grounding for police work.

New plane

On 8 December the Premier gave an oral submission (Dec. 50365) labelled secret, that approval be given for the setting aside of the calling for tenders for the acquisition of a new aeroplane for the police service at a cost of \$1.07m.

National Crime Authority

By 1986, the National Crime Authority had been in effect for almost two years. In June, Cabinet recommended to the Governor in Council that the *National Crime Authority (State Provisions) Act 1985* be amended to include specific provisions regarding procedures for the service of summons, and for the form of search and arrest warrants (Dec. 48938). Section 33 of the Act authorised the Governor in Council to make regulations for matters for which no other prescriptions are provided for – one of a number of significant powers granted by the Act.

In August, Cabinet deferred decision on a recommendation from the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Justice for Queensland to grant the National Crime Authority a reference to conduct an investigation into drug importation and tax evasion, called Operation Vigilante, on the grounds that further discussion between the Premier, Deputy Premier and various Ministers was required (Dec. 49469). In May, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia granted identical references to the Authority at an Inter-Governmental Committee meeting – conspicuously, only Queensland held out, citing that 'further detailed consideration would need to be given to the issuing of a reference under the State Queensland underpinning legislation'. Queensland appears to have accepted the reference with Hansard in May 1990 reporting, ['in relation to links between the Mafia and particularly the growing and distribution of marijuana in this country, all Australian jurisdictions on the mainland – that is, the Federal Government and all State governments –have agreed that the National Crime Authority should conduct an investigation under the title 'Vigilante' '](#).

Phone interceptions

On 11 September 1986, Cabinet considered the issue of providing a submission to the committee examining the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Bill 1986 (Commonwealth,) (Dec. 49744). While generally supportive of the extension of the power to State police forces enabling them to intercept calls on drug related matters only, Bjelke-Petersen expressed concern of the mooted supervision by a Commonwealth Minister of a State Minister and was worried about the limitations upon the use which can be made of material gathered. He also raised the involvement of Telecom employees in interception. In 1986 a report of the Joint Select Committee on Telecommunications Interception noted that 16 illegal interception devices had come to the attention of Telecom during 1985-86, seven of which had been located in Queensland.

Misappropriation of monies

1986 was a year characterised by defamation actions and the occasional findings of impropriety by some close to the Premier. In August 1986 Judith Callaghan, wife of adviser Allen Callaghan, was jailed for having misappropriated \$44,529 of public money. On 15 September in an oral submission (Dec. 49763) Cabinet authorised the Minister to grant an indemnity to the bank against any loss which might occur in relation to the recovery of misappropriated money. No mention of what triggered this submission is raised.

Environment

National rainforest conservation

During 1986, Queensland was in conflict with the Commonwealth government over the management of the rainforests of Far North Queensland. In January, Cabinet recommended a letter be sent to Prime Minister Hawke to express the Queensland Government's vehement dissatisfaction with a report tabled by the Working Group on Rainforest Conservation (Dec. 47958). The letter signed by Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, expressly refuted (under the Constitution) the Commonwealth Government's right to intervene in matters of land management within a state. The Premier strongly opposed further nomination of any areas for World Heritage status, and to any review of the rainforest timber industry.

In its recommendation, Cabinet noted that 'the viewpoints of State Government and extreme Conservation Movement representatives were diametrically opposed on very many issues'. It identified the report's proposal of increased Commonwealth involvement and oversight in state rainforest conservation as indicative of 'the ambitions of sectors of the Commonwealth bureaucracy'. Cabinet claimed 'the attitude of this Commonwealth bureaucracy provides fertile ground for militant preservationists to manipulate a sympathetic Commonwealth Government in pursuit of their objectives'.

In its January decision, Cabinet opposed the establishment of any national rainforest conservation programme or research institute. Come June, the Commonwealth Government had 'proposed early negotiations with the States on a National Rainforest Conservation Program,' for which it would provide \$22.25 million over two years. Cabinet agreed to enter into negotiations with the Commonwealth, providing: no State funding be expended on the national programme; the

Queensland Government retained complete control over all the State's Crown rainforest; and the Commonwealth be prepared to negotiate on only seven projects outlined by Cabinet (Dec. 49839). The total cost of the projects proposed by Cabinet were at a cost of well over double the \$22.25 million the Commonwealth Government had agreed to provide. In December, after meetings between State and Commonwealth representatives, Cabinet finally submitted a proposal for funding of \$14 million for projects under the Program (Dec. 50342).

In 1987, the Commonwealth Government went to the election with a policy to [list the Wet Tropics](#) – an area of approximately 9,000 km² along the northeast Queensland coast – as a World Heritage site, and to cease logging in it. This policy was enforced upon the government's successful election.

Nile Perch introduction programme

A program aiming to stock freshwater lakes and impoundments in Queensland with the African species the Nile Perch was discontinued on Cabinet's recommendation in March, after evidence was found of its potential to devastate freshwater ecosystems (Dec. 48239). The angling fishing community had evidently reported a relative lack of native species – generally riverine and thus not easily established in lake situations – of suitable quality for their sport, and the Walkamin Research Station had been tasked with the introduction program. However, after biologist C.G. Barlow visited Africa to review a comparative program already established in Lake Victoria, he asserted that 'it would be irresponsible to persist with the planned introduction throughout Queensland'. Nile Perch had decimated native populations and reduced overall yield in Lake Victoria – and, as Mr Barlow indicated, given its temperature tolerance and highly predatory nature, it had the potential to do the same throughout Queensland and the entire Murray–Darling Basin.

Managing problem crocodiles

After the death of Mrs Beryl Wruck, who was attacked by a crocodile on the Daintree River in 1985, the Queensland Cabinet was under pressure to allow for an open season for culling of the growing number of estuarine crocodiles (Dec. 47820). The policy at the time was for the National Parks and Wildlife Service to relocate crocodiles over six feet long from inhabited areas. The Cabinet was against an open season because it would not be that effective against larger crocodiles which had survived previous culling. Cabinet thought an expansion of the management program by the National Parks and Wildlife Service would be the best option.

Economic development

Greenvale Nickel

Mining, alongside agriculture, was an important revenue earner for Queensland. The government continued to provide support to industries despite indications that they might not be sustainable. In 1986, the Greenvale Nickel Project near Townsville was struggling and the Queensland Government worked to permit the importation of nickel to boost the processing plant. In August and September there were a number of Secret submissions to Cabinet on the issue (Dec. 49613, 47875, 49561 & 49705). Cabinet was concerned that without imported nickel, the treatment plant would close by 1992, when the Greenvale ore body was exhausted.

To facilitate importation, the Queensland Government would have to invest \$42 million for infrastructure in New Caledonia and Yabulu, near Townsville.

At that stage the project's debt was \$940 million with the project's value of only \$120 million (Dec. 49705). The plant was owned by the Bond Group and Freeport. Overseas banks were withdrawing from the project and there was concern these new arrangements would leave 'the Queensland Government, with the ANZ, in the uncomfortable position of being the only debt holders in the project'. Under Treasurer Leo Hielscher supported the project, stating he was confident that the ore importation project would go ahead and noting that this would save 700 jobs, an important consideration for a regional economy dependent on mining. The decision recommended the Premier include in his Election Policy speech an announcement about the ore implementation project.

Industry Assistance, Agricultural Development, Bailouts and Disasters

Sugar

In 1986, sugar was still an important industry for Queensland and the beneficiary of considerable government subsidy. On 28 November Premier Bjelke-Petersen asked Cabinet to provide assistance to Babinda/Mourilyan Sugar Mills (Dec. 50288). This decision was premised on a restructuring of the mills, changes to management and the establishment of a board to oversee Babinda operations. The Committee recommended that subsidies of \$3.7 million be applied as up front grants to reduce existing debt to \$2 million. Labelled secret, the submission noted earlier submissions (Dec. 49024) of June 1986 where guidelines for subsidies were proposed; Dec. 49699 where regulation of sugar prices were discussed, and Dec. 48013, 48863 & 48939 where deregulation of the industry was raised. In 1986 it was estimated that there were 6400 sugar cane growers in Queensland, 31 sugar mills, 26 operating their own railway systems, transporting 22 million tonnes of harvested cane annually. The industry was heavily regulated (Dec. 48608, 49804).

Treasurer Bjelke-Petersen brought to Cabinet the decision that \$20 million for carry-on assistance be confirmed and not directed towards debt reconstruction finance – which was a Commonwealth responsibility (Dec. 47874). This \$20 million was made available in loans to assist sugar producers to assist with ongoing farm expenses such as fertilizer crop planting etc. There was concern that if the State, rather than the Commonwealth, provide debt reconstruction grants to sugar growers it would set an unacceptable precedent. Thus it was recommended that Cabinet confirm the continuing availability of the \$20 m for carry on assistance and not direct any money towards debt reconstruction finance which was a Commonwealth responsibility.

Manufacturing

Though the focus was overwhelmingly on mining and agriculture, the then Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology Mike Ahern was working to broaden Queensland's economic base with the State Industry Development Strategy – Choices for Queensland.

In echoes of the later "Smart State" policy, the Minister argued for greater attention to manufacturing industries and the need to invest in new plants and technologies (Dec. 50052). -He noted the need to expand manufacturing to reduce high levels of imports and that Queensland's manufacturing base was low and that the value add of manufacturing was greater than that of mining and agriculture. However, the discussion paper on the industry strategy was withdrawn from Cabinet without a decision.

Coal

In December Bill Gunn, Deputy Premier, (Dec. 50441) discussed rail freights that applied to the industry. The Queensland Coal Association (QCA) had presented a submission arguing that the total amount of freight not yet paid (estimated to be around \$21 million) be suspended – to be paid at a later date after discussions with the government had concluded. In addition the QCA proposal submitted to Cabinet asked for additional concessions to be granted to all Bowen Basin export coal mines that began after 1978. Options were provided for Cabinet to consider.

Support for businesses

Cabinet granted \$1.9 million to the Arnotts Biscuit factory to help it move from Coronation Drive to Virginia (Dec. 50266). The factory had to move because of major BCC road works meaning access to the site for trucks would soon be impossible. The total price of relocation was \$31 million and Cabinet was told that the company's board met recently and weren't pleased with this excessive capital outlay. Cabinet was worried Arnotts might close its Brisbane doors. Hence the grant towards the costs was approved with conditions with the intent being to save around 500 jobs as well as the potential losses of expenditure on local inputs.

In early September (Dec. 49655) Cabinet heard a secret submission in relation to Comalco Pty Ltd in relation to operations at its Gladstone Aluminium Smelter. Included in the new deal being discussed was a new electricity tariff charged to the company - details of which were to remain strictly confidential.

Bailouts

Throughout 1986 the government came to the aid of a number of stricken businesses. One example was when Industry Minister Mike Ahern reported on the O'Phee group of companies that was in serious trouble (Dec. 50164). A family run manufacturing company in Pittsworth, the company had secured contracts to make trailers for China. While Cabinet didn't want any support measures to be seen as precedent setting, they were worried Queensland's reputation would be damaged in terms of future trade with China. O'Phee also employed a substantial number of people. The Queensland Government was prepared to provide a government guarantee of \$200,000 to Mercantile Credits or other lenders approved of by the Treasurer to enable the firm to be sold as a going concern. Cabinet was updated on 15 December (Dec. 50374).

Moura mine disaster

On 16 July, an explosion at the Moura No. 4 mine in central Queensland caused extensive damage and killed 12 underground mine workers. Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen gave verbal approval for a \$50,000 grant for the Moura Mine Disaster Relief Fund on 22 July (Dec. 49399). The next day, the bodies of the 12 workers were recovered after an extensive recovery operation (Dec. 49521): (<http://cfmeu.com.au/25th-anniversary-of-queensland-coal-mining-disaster>). The Minister for Mines and Energy Ivan Gibbs submitted a report to Cabinet in August, detailing the event and noting that nothing out of the ordinary had been reported in the lead-up to the explosion, and that further investigations were required to identify the source before an inquiry would be held (Dec. 49521). A week later, Minister Gibbs made a verbal submission to Cabinet suggesting that further expert advice might need to be sourced from Britain (Dec. 49756).

Social Policy

Health

Public Hospitals

By June 1986, Health Minister Brian Austin was appealing to Cabinet for additional funds for the State's public hospitals (Dec. 49014). With a number of new hospitals and redevelopments to be commissioned in 1987 he was concerned about the lack of staff to open these facilities. New hospitals were being built in Cairns, Maleny, Redlands and Banana as well as major redevelopments at Gold Coast, Rockhampton and Mt Isa. Despite his appeal, Cabinet declined to give immediate relief to the health system and instead agreed to look at the issue in the context of the 1986/87 budget.

The Health Minister was again unsuccessful in gaining funding when he took forward a proposal to establish Queensland's first heart transplant service. A Department of Health Working Party recommended the establishment of a Cardiac Transplant Unit at Prince Charles Hospital during the 1986/87 financial year at the cost of \$330,000 (Dec. 49348). Though Cabinet supported the Unit in principle it was subject to the funds being found within the normal Department of Health budget.

Royal Flying Doctor Service

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), through the Health Minister, also appealed to Cabinet for additional funding (Dec. 47829, 48554). The Minister's submission asked for an additional \$400,000 to offset the operating deficit for that year but was not approved by Cabinet. Instead, they asked the RFDS to 'undertake a detailed and full review of its current services and how and where such services might be rationalised'. Without the additional funding, the options open to the RFDS were to close one of its three centres and reduce services to rural Queensland. Though the Minister was concerned that a reduction of services would lead to a 'public outcry' Cabinet remained unmoved.

Tuberculosis

The mass immunisation of Queensland school children against tuberculosis was stopped in 1986 (Dec. 48092). Mass vaccination of school children had been undertaken since 1954 but Cabinet decided continuing the program was not cost effective. Mass vaccination was to continue for at risk groups which included immigrants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. All school children were still to have skin tests to check for tuberculosis.

National Campaign Against Drug Abuse

Drug use in Australia increased exponentially and became a [major public health concern](#) in the 1980s. As part of a national approach the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) was established in 1985. To prevent drug dealers from operating in other states out of a Queensland base, Cabinet approved the creation of a provision within the Drug Misuse Bill that made it unlawful for a person residing in Queensland to commit an offence punishable under the law of the other state (Dec. 47925). This was passed into legislation as Section 12 of the *Drug Misuse Act 1986* (Parties to offences committed outside Queensland). In the same meeting, Cabinet also approved a

\$1.2 million tender for the construction of the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Detoxification/Rehabilitation Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital (Dec. 47907, 48988).

As part of its commitment to the NCADA, the Queensland Government also proposed a Program of Activities over three years for the 'development of new and enhanced drug education and treatment/rehabilitation initiatives'. In March 1986, Cabinet approved submission of the 1986/87 Programme to the Commonwealth Government to secure funding for activities this period (Dec. 48325).

Education

For some time, Queensland had lagged behind other states in regards education and during the 1980s a catch-up with the other states was spurred on by Commonwealth funding arrangements. By 6 November, 1986 Education Minister Lin Powell was given approval to argue for an increased allocation of tertiary education places and associated funding for Queensland on the basis of projected increase in citizens aged 15-29 (Dec. 50157). State's rights were never far from any argument and the minister was advised to emphasise that Queensland received a smaller share of Commonwealth funds relative to other states. On 1 December 1986 the Education Minister brought to Cabinet the new Commonwealth-State arrangements regarding additional components to be added under the Commonwealth Funded General Recurrent Programme for 1986 (Dec 50280). The state would receive \$8.5 million for developmental activities for teachers, curriculum development including computer skill training and special needs support. While Cabinet was generally supportive, in his letter to the federal Minister, Powell noted Queensland will 'give no undertaking to provide data on student attainment cross-tabulated by principal social group'. The comparative data that could be used to ascertain the standard of Queensland students may not have been welcomed by Cabinet.

Capital works

In the 1985-86 budget, education along with health outlays, amounted to 40 percent of government expenditure of the \$600 million capital works program that had been approved in the 1984/85 budget. \$119.3 million had been allocated to education. As a result 78 new preschools had been built and it seems an addition eight new schools were completed or currently under construction (Dec. 50117).

Textbook allowances for secondary school students

On 15 September (Dec. 49722), Cabinet approved textbook allowances for secondary school students. The Year 8 allowance was \$53, but the Year 12 allowance was only \$45. \$110 was approved for first-year students in a Rural Training School or Art College.

Census

In 1986, the Commonwealth Acting Statistician wrote to the Queensland Government advising that the Commonwealth Government was creating a working group based on the assumption the census would now be held every 10 years instead of the usual five (Dec. 48345). Queensland Ministers were acutely aware of the value of the population Census to the state to ensure their fair share of federal funding. The Australian Statistician was to be advised that the Queensland Government believed the

provision of a five yearly Census was a Commonwealth legal obligation and the matter should be formally raised with the relevant Federal minister (Dec. 49224).

Legislation

The *Adoption of Children Act* was amended to allow for the creation of a voluntary Adoption Contact Register to allow either birth parents or adopted people over the age of 18 to seek a reunion (Dec. 48279).

Government

Payment of costs for defamation by Ministers

An oral submission by the Premier in March gave approval for the costs of certain defamation actions connected with their official duties to be paid by the government (Dec. 48210). This innocuous decision set off a raft of activity with the Premier the next day issuing five writs for defamation at public expense. The following week all Cabinet Ministers joined with the Premier in an action against the Labor member for Lytton, Tom Burns.

Cabinet subsequently decided that any damages awarded from actions where the government bore the costs should be paid into general revenue (Dec. 48352). In April, Cabinet supported an action by Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and the Arts, Henry McKechnie against the Labor Opposition leader and the *Gold Coast Bulletin* (Dec. 48498)

In July, Cabinet agreed that in relation to the defamation actions instigated by the Premier and Treasurer against Keith Wright and Henry Dempsey and the Australian Broadcasting Corporations that the Under Secretary be authorised to make payments into the Solicitor's account in relation to this action (Dec. 49440).

Also in July, Health Minister Brian Austin and the Minister for Transport Don Lane had joined in a defamation action against the *Sunday Sun* where they had been referred to as 'the Quisling Quinella' (Dec. 49441).

The Fitzgerald Inquiry was concerned about this activity and pointed out that the Cabinet records 'failed to reveal any written submission or formal record which explains the basis for this policy' on payment of defamation costs that the defendants were political opponents of the government or media organisations and 'the subject matter in every case concerned allegations which had been made of corruption' (FIR p. 119).

Redevelopment of National Party headquarters in Spring Hill

In April, the Minister for Local Government Russ Hinze brought a submission before Cabinet to facilitate the redevelopment of the site for the National Party Headquarters in Spring Hill. The Brisbane City Council had designated the area as special residential but as the submission said 'this was unacceptable to the Executive of the [National] Party' (Dec. 48446). After discussions, the Brisbane City Council said they would offer no objection to the site being developed for commercial purposes. To progress the redevelopment, the State Government initiated proceedings against the

Brisbane Town Planning Act to include a commercial precinct in the Spring Hill Development Control Plan.

State advertising in newspapers

In June, an oral submission by the Premier stated 'a change be made in the allocation of classified advertising to 100 per cent Queensland Newspapers while maintaining a 50/50 split in display advertising between the Queensland Newspapers Group and the Daily Sun Group' (Dec. 49176).

Elections

1986 was an election year – the first under new boundaries and increased districts. In the first half of the year Cabinet heard several submissions about the format of the ballot paper and how to deal with preferences – timing of when preference decisions could be lodged and what to do if preferences did not follow the party list. Several of these were later rescinded (Dec. 47882, 48041). On 10 March (Dec. 48285) the position in regards to the above were clarified as was how to manage the electoral roll in regards to new electoral divisions.

In January (Dec. 47825) Cabinet agreed to a Joint Commonwealth State electoral enrolment card in regards to a joint State/Commonwealth form and for the operation in Queensland of a single enrolment procedure.

In June (Dec. 49019) it was agreed to a likely expenditure of \$400,000 in order to embark on 'a vigorous advertising campaign' to educate voters on the new electoral boundaries and districts.

By October the venue and arrangements for the Tally room and media centre were being discussed (Dec. 49877). Labelled secret, Cabinet decided that the QE11 stadium was the most suitable venue and in order to minimise any disruption to the election coverage, the general public would not have admittance. Visitors' passes would be issued and Ministers were requested to advise the number and category of passes required to the Attorney-General. Other parties could request passes from the Principal Electoral Officer.

Commonwealth/State relations

In 1986, the Queensland Cabinet was in frequent conflict with Bob Hawke's Federal Labor government. As well as a number of ideological conflicts, there was continuing concern that Queensland was being unfairly dealt with or that the Commonwealth didn't understand the special circumstances in the State. For example when the Commonwealth sought to remove the income tax exemption for gold mining - a Paul Keating proposal as part of the White Paper on Reform of the Australian Tax System - Cabinet noted the impact on regional economies and the impact on profitability of small mines (Dec. 48184).

When the Commonwealth sought to establish a National Railway Industry Council to advise on issues on developing a viable railway industry in Australia, the Queensland government declined to participate mainly because of concerns about over-representation from the ACTU and railway unions (Dec. 48078). Queensland was also concerned about the introduction of the Australia Card and in April declined to provide information requested by the Australia Card Secretariat from the

Queensland Registrar-General and would not let Commonwealth officials visit Brisbane to discuss the technicalities (Dec. 47816, 48257 & 48589).

There were some positive interactions with the Commonwealth. In March, the State struck a deal with the Commonwealth to offer assistance to the tin mining industry (Dec. 48004, 48275) and Queensland agreed in April to support co-operative measures to counter tax avoidance (Dec. 48511).

Fringe Benefits Tax

The proposed Commonwealth introduction of the "Fringe Benefits Tax" also raised alarm but with a focus on the potential impact on Ministers and Members of Parliament entitlements (Dec. 48550). An oral submission by the Premier confirmed that if Member's Electorate Allowances or home telephones were included, the State Government would pay the tax (Dec. 48961).

With the tax's introduction due on 1 July 1986, the Queensland Government believed it could mount a good case against the validity of the legislation under Section 114 of the Constitution, claiming that the State Government as an employer could not be taxed in this manner (Dec. 49240).

Commonwealth's Occupational Superannuation proposals

In January, Cabinet was worried about the significant implications of the three per cent productivity claim to be distributed as an employer superannuation contribution that had been announced jointly between the Federal Government and the ACTU.

The Commonwealth's proposals would lead to an increase in the government's wage bill by \$500 million annually. Cabinet was also unsure about the Commonwealth's authority to impose conditions on the superannuation funds managed by the Queensland Government. To further investigate, Cabinet established a Superannuation Review Committee to look at the issue with membership by the Chairman of the Public Service Board, the Under Treasurer, Acting State Actuary and the Manager, State Service Superannuation Fund (Dec. 47844).

When the Review Committee reported to Cabinet in March as a secret submission (Dec. 48194) the issues were more clear cut and legal counsel were being briefed. The Queensland Government was to intervene in the productivity claim before the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to argue that the capacity does not exist to absorb such a claim without economic damage. Queensland was also to raise with the Commission whether they had the legislative power to direct any award in the form of superannuation.

Publicly, Queensland Ministers had expressed their opposition to the productivity award and any further union involvement in superannuation schemes. To gain further information, the submission recommended that Crown Law officers be briefed to obtain advice on the legal moves available to the Queensland Government and the constitutional position of the Commonwealth and State government.

National Wage Case

On 11 February the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission were scheduled to look at three issues:

- a review of the wage fixing principles
- six monthly wage case
- productivity/superannuation hearing (see above).

Queensland intended to make application against all three issues (Dec. 48035) and in particular to strongly oppose the productivity/superannuation issue. By March, Queensland was still waiting its turn to present its submission but officials were pulling together the economic arguments.

In April, matters had moved on and the Queensland government, along with the Confederation of Australian Industry, were scheduled to appear in the High Court on April 15 to argue the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission did not have the jurisdiction to deal with the superannuation issue (Dec. 48496).

In November, Cabinet supported the abolition of annual leave loading as part of its submission to the case (Dec. 50237). In December, Queensland's written submission to the National Wage Case was approved by Cabinet (Dec. 50278). The state had prepared a number of economic arguments to support its case against large wage increases and was now seeking a minimum 12 month moratorium on the superannuation issue (Dec. 49129). The Queensland submission acknowledged that this was the 'most important National Wage Case of the last 20 years' (See also Dec. 49233, 49155, 47844 & 48194).

Immigration

The Commonwealth had reported that the migrant intake for 1985/86 was running to schedule and indicated that the target of 84,000 could be exceeded slightly, predicting an increase to 95,000 in 1986/87 and 105,000 in 1987/88. Queensland expressed concern that it was not receiving its share of migrants, either in real or percentage terms, and requested a greater input to the formulation of the program in future years (Annual Conference of Ministers for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Dec. 48565)).

Public sector

Savage Inquiry

In December a secret submission established a Public Sector Review Committee to undertake a review into potential rationalisation of the activities of Government departments and statutory authorities (Dec. 50301). The objectives of the review would be to eliminate duplication, introduce measures which encourage development of 'managers' rather than regulators, ensure greater flexibility in deployment of resources, develop a greater sense of measures and lead to higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Sir Ernest Savage, Mr Gordon Douglas and Mr John Andrews would be joined by a public sector representative, Mr Russell Roberts, as secretary. The Committee report would be no later than 30 June 1987.

In November the Premier raised a secret submission regarding the review of the public sector (Dec. 50247). The review recommended changes to the tenure and conditions of permanent heads. If the

changes were made Cabinet was told permanent heads would have greater control over their resources and be able to manage promotions – other than at executive level – within their departments. At the executive level it was considered that there was a need for some independent input into the selection process, while vacancies at the level of permanent head would remain with the relevant Minister. In a dramatic move away from past practice, it also raised accountability issues – noting permanent heads were to be made more accountable by placing them on contracts – the terms and conditions proposed were included in the attachment. Existing permanent heads would be able to choose whether they move to new conditions while efficiency and not seniority was now the basis for promotion.

On 24 November, Cabinet reviewed senior public service salaries where it was acknowledged that salaries of permanent heads in the Queensland Public Service were currently below other major States and the Commonwealth (Dec. 50248). It was decided they were to be increased at the cost of \$300,000 for a full year.

Restrictions on staffing

The implications of the government's policy since 1975 of nil growth to the public sector were becoming apparent (Dec. 50426). Government departments were undertaking strategic planning to identify future operations but until this was completed it was hard to gauge the staffing requirements needed to maintain essential government services. In the meantime new buildings didn't have enough staff to open and there was difficulty in implementing new legislation. Ministers had been asking for additional staff for their own departments and at the time of the submission 1054 applications had been put forward. This submission asked for 116 positions to be considered.

On 10 March, the Premier recommended Cabinet to approve the introduction of the Subordinate Legislation Review Bill following the recommendation regarding business legislation by the Savage Review (Dec. 48283). The amendment included an 'objectives' statement as well as the inclusion of an 'escape clause' which allows the revival of old regulations.

One week later, (Dec. 48336) Cabinet was reminded that the Bill had been introduced to Parliament on 12 March. Its aim was to give effect to the regulation revocation programme – and was linked to the new legislative handbook being developed – which was to provide guidance in terms of government requirements for formulating new regulatory proposals.

Incremental payments due to public servants and hospital employees

On the 22 September (Dec. 49803), Cabinet decided to advise the State Industrial Commission that the Government had serious concerns about paying increments in the current economic climate and that an increase would be inappropriate given a review was being conducted by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

Cabinet had previously decided (Dec. No. 48341) that there be a "total opposition" to union claims in the Industrial Commission and that no increases be granted.

Overseas travel for official purposes

On 1 July, Cabinet set out a program for overseas travel allowances for government department personnel, on the advice of the Public Service Board (Dec. 49228). Of the 194 visits programed, one was particularly incongruous: that on behalf of the Board itself (p. 38 of schedule). The reason stated was vague: 'To obtain first-hand knowledge of current developments in relation to the central co-

ordination of personnel management, and other management systems.’ In addition, for a three-week trip to three countries (UK, USA and Canada) it estimated a cost of \$50,000 for two personnel (a Board member and a senior officer). This amount far exceeded any proposed costs for a comparable visit, such as for the First Assistant Under Treasurer’s four-week visit to the USA, Canada and England, at a proposed cost of \$10,000 (p. 46 of schedule). This decision came towards the end of a period of increased political interference in the Public Service Board, in which the government [‘sought greater control and less transparency in the employment of senior officers’](#)

Indigenous Affairs

Deed of Grant in Trust Communities (DOGIT)

Deed of Grant in Trust communities were established under legislation in 1984 to give Indigenous councils the capacities to administer the former reserves and missions.

Implications of the Wik case

In the lead up to the Wik case in the High Court, Community Services Minister Bob Katter asked Cabinet to consider a bill to repeal *The Aboriginal Relics Preservations Act 1967/76*. The submission discussed the ‘grave consequences’ that face the state should funds provided by the Commonwealth to finance Mabo High Court challenge achieve success for the plaintiffs. The submission argued recent actions by the Commonwealth in regards Kakadu National Park stands as an abject lesson and if that happened in Queensland it would be a devastating blow to pastoral and mining industries in Queensland. Thus the proposed bill would aim at strengthening Queensland sovereignty over sites of significance; and protect against future federal intervention (Dec. 50437). Earlier, Katter had noted that a loss in the High Court of Australia could severely damage the DOGIT as communities ‘are coerced towards similar litigation with the hope of gaining compensation and a form of title unique to the indigenous communities’ (Dec. 49957).

Though not directly referencing Wik, in March amendments to the Land Act were approved by Cabinet (Dec. 48346). The amendments increased the maximum term of pastoral leases from 30 years to 50 years and automatically extended every pastoral lease 50 km inland from the coast from Cape York to the New South Wales border for another 20 years (see also Dec. 48226, which discussed the extension of leases; and Dec. 48111 where discretionary trusts – selections and preferential pastoral holdings were considered).

Woorabinda DOGIT

In September, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Woorabinda DOGIT (Dec. 49829). In an earlier submission the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services, Bob Katter had tried to support the capacity of the new Council to be economically viable through including some additional pastoral properties and cattle within the agreement as well as substantial quantities of millable timber. The submission (Dec. 48350) was withdrawn but the later submission stipulated any cattle on the land to be handed over was to be purchased by the new Council at the going rate (Dec. 49829).

Additional DOGIT issues

As a consequence of the DOGIT policy (Dec. 50011; for legislation see also Dec. 49740), Bob Katter asked Cabinet to agree when each deed of grant in trust is given over to community councils, that departmental rental ledgers be balanced to ensure debts currently owed for rents to the department are wiped; any pre-paid rentals be refunded to individual tenants; and the Community Councils take over the debt as an asset (they would get the housing stock).

Another Submission (Dec. 50438) by Katter in December outlines a process to transition responsibility for financial planning and decision making from the Department of Community Services to councils. A number of Community Services staff would transfer to Council positions from the Department.

In a move that would be controversial today, Paul Clauson, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, on 8 December (Dec. 50350) asked for Cabinet to recommend a canteen license for Kowanyama Aboriginal Council. The submission notes that earlier approvals had been given to Palm Island Aboriginal Council, the Cherbourg Community Council and the Woorabinda Aboriginal Council in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

The decision to go ahead with the first reticulated energy supply in the form of a solar photovoltaic electricity generating system for Coconut Island was made against the backdrop of a restructuring of the electricity industry whereby tariff equalisation insisted rural consumers paid no more than urban dwellers for electricity (Dec. 49922, 50443). The Coconut Islands in the Torres Strait had long been neglected in terms of energy provision, and yet were a politically and strategically important region for Australia. Northern Development Minister Bob Katter insisted the Islander workforce participate in the construction of the plant through a formal islander participation programme.

Charters Towers

In December Bob Katter also introduced a submission dealing with the disposal of Aboriginal reserve land in Charters Towers. The decision was made to suspend consideration until 19 January 1987 (Dec. 50436). It is clear that the government was worried about the potential for land rights groups to become involved and that the reserve was encroaching upon the town's development. Katter proposed money from the sale to go to assist a small group of Aboriginal men seeking to commence farming interests.

Payment of Award wages to Aboriginal workers

The issue of paying award wages to Aboriginal workers came before Cabinet a number of times in 1986 (see for example, Dec. 49853). At that time Indigenous workers for the Department of Community Services were paid less than the relevant industrial award. In March, the Department of Community Services was advising Minister Katter that it was not possible to pay award wages because positions would have to be cut back and it would cost the government an additional \$10 million (Dec. 48290). 'Private research' undertaken by the Minister showed the advice to be incorrect and he believed the Government was in a position of 'extreme legal vulnerability' with the issue. Cabinet agreed to the payment of award wages to Aboriginal workers but this was to be accommodated through existing Departmental funding, which would lead to the loss of a number of positions.

In June, a Survey Team was established to look at the attrition of positions and to work out the number of positions needed in the new communities (Dec. 49026). A submission was presented to Cabinet in September but was withdrawn without a decision (Dec. 48665). In July during discussions on the State Budget it was agreed that \$10.3 million would be allocated for Aboriginal wages. No provision was made to increase wages to award rates (Dec. 49398).

On 29 September Cabinet decided that the report about the payment of award wages to Aboriginal communities be accepted in principle. The conditions were listed as: the commencement of award conditions to Aboriginal works in essential services at Yarrabah be noted; that award conditions be applicable to such works at all other communities on the basis of 50 per cent before 1 November and the remainder by 31 January 1987; and that the foregoing arrangements proceed by a process of attrition so that there would be no additional cost to the consolidated revenue fund (Dec. 49853).

In September a submission that was withdrawn related to the Aboriginal Affairs Council. Among other things the Commonwealth had sought support for the collection of statistics related to Indigenous incarceration. The Queensland response was that it was able to gauge the ethnic constituency of the prison populations without any expensive survey so it would not support this measure. It did agree to the need to develop solutions for the disproportionate numbers of Indigenous people in detention (Dec. 49636).

Industrial disputes

In mid-January (Dec. 47879) Cabinet discussed the Liquid Fuels Shortage at the Ampol Refinery. Minister Ivan Gibbs gave a rundown on the continuation of an industrial dispute at Ampol and the anticipated shortage of liquid fuel in Brisbane and Queensland as a result. Members of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) were involved in the dispute and Cabinet was told that attempts to arbitrate had failed. Workers were covered by Federal awards. Bans applied by AWU since 22 December 1985 had prevented Ampol from transferring product from refinery into bulk storage terminals of other oil companies and instructions were issued by the management to close the refinery as of 14 January should the dispute not be settled.

Ampol produced 60 per cent of Queensland's liquid fuel requirements. Cabinet was told that the restrictions on transfers of product had had a major impact on fuel to motorists. Under the *Liquid Fuel Supply Act of 1984*, extensive powers existed for the government to deal with production and allocation of available fuels during a proclaimed emergency relating to liquid fuels. Cabinet was informed that the *State Transport Act 1938-81* also provided more generally for proclamation of a state of emergency during which wide powers could be invoked. The government had received advice from the Solicitor-General that this Act was more suitable to present situations pending planned amendments to the *Liquid Fuels Act*.

Cabinet considered invoking existing powers if necessary so that if the dispute was not settled quickly, action involving the declaration of a state of emergency could proceed.

Trade

Future Development and Promotion of Queensland-China Trade

Cabinet decided that the Government should as a matter of policy adopt a role of supporting the private sector to develop export markets in China along with the reestablishment of a Qld/China Trade Advisory Committee (Dec. 47885). The Premier noted that the State Government involvement should be low key – as should the developing relationship with the Brisbane City Council and the Shanghai Municipality.

Coal Plant with the Republic of Turkey

In February, a secret Cabinet submission outlined plans for a consortium with Queensland Government equity to build an integrated coal supply, coal distribution and power generation plant at Iskenderun Bay on the Turkish Mediterranean (Dec 48118). The bid, in conjunction with Seapac Control Services, would have seen the vertical integration of Queensland coal expertise with Queensland both as an investor in the coal plant as well as the monopoly supplier of coal to the project.

As a 30 per cent equity investor, the Queensland Government, would have contributed their expertise to building the coal fired base station along with port and coal handling facility. The Queensland Electricity Commission (QEC) was to provide technical advice and auditing for the build.

Senior officials had travelled to Turkey in early 1986 to assess the feasibility of the project and to meet the relevant Turkish authorities.

It was estimated the power station would use 3.5 million tonnes of coal a year and lead to the opening of a new coal mine for the state. By August, the Under Treasurer had travelled to Turkey for negotiations and acknowledged that though 'the ultimate implementation of the project has always been doubtful...the potential rewards for Queensland have always made it worthwhile to persevere' (Dec. 49487).

The Seapac/ Queensland Government proposal was the preferred tender by the Turkish government but the deal fell through when the Queensland withdrew as an equity investor in 1988.

Expo '88

Cabinet kept a close watch on the progress of the Expo site and during 1986 with Expo Chair, Sir Llew Edwards making quarterly reports to Cabinet (Dec. 47985).

Expo '88 site

In January, Robin Gibson and Partners were appointed architects to design the internal fit-out of the Queensland Pavilion for Expo '88. The design had to accommodate the monorail passing through the Pavilion and space for entertainment areas for VIPs and to ensure the sponsors area were equipped with appropriate bar and kitchen facilities.

In an oral submission (Dec. 50450) the Premier asked Cabinet to approve extension of the closing date for acceptance of proposals of interest till 16 March 1987 for development of the Expo '88 site once Expo was over.

Mr Wharton recommended that selective tenders be invited for the fit-out of the Qld Expo '88 Pavilion (Dec. 49870). The selected building contractors are outlined in the submission.

In December the Premier recommended that the redevelopment authority be authorised to incur additional expenditure of its project management agreement with Thiess Watkins (Construction) Ltd. by an amount of \$9 million (Dec. 50446). The Thiess company engagement was negotiated in April 1985.

Curiosities

Adoption of a bird emblem for Queensland

Unlike other states and territories, Queensland somehow had missed out on having a bird emblem. This was rectified in early 1986 when Cabinet approved the adoption as Queensland's bird. The brolga had already been chosen as a Supporter for the Queensland Coat of Arms in 1977. At the time, the College of Arms in London found that the brolga was 'statuesque and most distinctive heraldically' and 'being a crane, it is the type of bird which can be used to form a most satisfactory Supporter of Arms' (Dec. 47865).

Halley's Comet

Halley's Comet was due to pass over between the 9 - 13 April in 1986. Sunday 13 April was identified as the official observation evening instead of the initial date of 9 April which was found to clash with the Interdominion Harness Racing Championship (Dec. 48180).

A committee was formed to investigate the feasibility of reducing the light across Brisbane to enhance the view of the Comet (Dec. 47871). The legal implications of turning off streetlights was discussed and concerns that the Department of Main Roads would be liable for negligence if an accident occurred. Support of the private sector and individuals in switching off advertising and building lights was also sought.

List of precedence

Queensland's list of precedence had not been reviewed since 1975 and the Premier brought forward a new list for Cabinet approval. Since that time, the Knighthoods had been abolished and recipients of the Order of Australia were added to the list. The Lord Mayor's precedence was moved higher but the Premier continued to take precedence over the Prime Minister.

Senior Citizen's week 6-10 October 1986

Two Decisions (Dec. 47960, 49025) upheld that Queensland would hold an Annual senior citizen's week, which in 1986 would also coincide with the first Premier's awards. An allocation of \$50,000 was provided. By December, post events, a new submission brought to Cabinet (Sub. 45449, Dec. 50439) notes this amount proved inadequate and thus for 1987 a minimum of \$100,000 be

provided. In December, Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, Yvonne Chapman recommended that Cabinet confirm the date to be last week of October; that responsibility lay with the Department of Family Services and the increased special allocation be considered in the context of the 1987-88 state budget.

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