



Government of Western Australia
Department of Culture and the Arts
State Records Office of Western Australia

A Guide to the 1979 State Cabinet Records

PREPARED BY:

**THE STATE RECORDS OFFICE
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Contents

Introduction	page 3
The 1979 State Cabinet Records: An Overview	page 4
The 1979 State Cabinet Records: A Description	page 5
Events and Issues that made news in 1979	page 6
State Cabinet deliberations in 1979	page 8
The 1979 State Cabinet Members	page 12

Introduction

State Cabinet records are historically significant documents revealing the decisions made by the government of the day. These unique records are the primary source documents for information about the issues raised at Cabinet meetings.

State Cabinet records are subject to a 30-year restriction access period from public access. Each year, a new set of Cabinet records – from 30 years previous – are released from this embargo and may be accessed by the Western Australian community.

The 1979 State Cabinet records are held by the State Records Office of WA, the authority with responsibility for identifying, managing, preserving and providing the community with access to the State's archives.

Each year the State Records Office marks the release of the State Cabinet records from their 30 year restriction access period on or near the first Monday in June, which is celebrated as Western Australia's Foundation Day.

The complete set of 1979 State Cabinet records includes:

- **Cabinet Minutes and Decisions**

These records are available at the State Records Office Search Room. The State Records Office is situated on the Ground Floor of the Alexander Library Building, James Street Mall, Perth Cultural Centre. The State Records Office Search Room is open Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 4.30pm.

- **Cabinet Index**

The Cabinet Index for 1979 has been digitised and is available on the SRO's website at:

For further details about accessing original Cabinet Minutes and Decisions, please contact the State Records Office on ph. 9427 3360 or email sro@sro.wa.gov.au.

The 1979 State Cabinet Records

An Overview

Unlike the release of Cabinet papers at the Commonwealth level, where more sensitive documents remain embargoed beyond the 30-year period, all of the 1979 State Cabinet records for Western Australia are being released for public access.

The nature of recording Cabinet decisions has changed over the preceding decades. In more recent times, the documentation associated with a Cabinet decision tends to be more extensive than that of earlier times. In 1979, Cabinet recordkeeping was quite detailed and the main set of records comprises the Cabinet Minutes and Decisions.

Although there is a set of Cabinet Agendas and Cabinet Indexes that are included in the records being released, topics of Cabinet submissions are simply listed chronologically.

To assist in locating information within the Cabinet Minutes, a digital copy of the original index of the issues heard at Cabinet meetings accompanies this guide.

The 1979 State Cabinet Records

A Description

Cabinet Minutes and Decisions

- Cabinet Minutes are the original primary source that document decisions made at Cabinet meetings.
- Cabinet Minutes comprise the names of Ministers for each meeting, copies of cabinet submissions, a record of Cabinet decisions and supporting reports/summaries for submissions (if applicable).

Location: *State Records Office of Western Australia*

Reference: *Series 1228, Consignment 1819, files `1979/004v1–1979/437v3*

Quantity: *11 files, 0.9 linear metres*

Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/004 v1	23/12/1978 – 23/01/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/004 v2	30/01/1979 – 27/02/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/004 v3	06/03/1979 – 02/04/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/004 v4	09/04/1979 – 07/05/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/180 v1	14/05/1979 – 25/06/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/180 v2	02/07/1979 – 16/07/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/180 v3	24/07/1979– 22/08/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/180 v4	27/08/1979 – 02/10/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/437 v1	09/10/1979 – 29/10/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/437 v2	05/11/1979 – 26/11/1979
Cabinet Minutes and Decisions	File 1979/437 v3	03/12/1979 – 17/12/1979

Cabinet Index

- Chronological index recording the topic of each submission raised at cabinet meetings.

Location: *State Records Office of Western Australia*

Reference: *Consignment 2844, part of item 4*

Quantity: *1 file, 0.01 linear metres*

Cabinet Index	2844/4	09/01/1979 – 17/12/1979
---------------	--------	-------------------------

Events and Issues that Made News in 1979



Skylab debris on display at the Miss Universe contest in Perth, July 1979

*[reproduced with kind permission of the National Archives of Australia
NAA: A6135 K/19/7/79/2]*

The following historical summary has been prepared by staff of the State Records Office of Western Australia

In the international sphere, 1979 was the year that Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister of Great Britain and also the year Saddam Hussein became President of Iraq. The Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran from exile in February that year, coming to power in an Islamic revolution. In November students took over the American Embassy in Tehran causing a diplomatic crisis between the US and Iran.

On 29 March America's most serious nuclear power plant accident occurred at Three Mile Island and in July 1979 the first Sony Walkmans went on sale in Japan. 1979 was the United Nations' International Year of the Child, and the global eradication of smallpox was certified by a commission of eminent scientists on 9 December 1979. Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize and the One Child Policy was implemented in China for children born in 1979.

In Australia in 1979, the Australian Federal Police was formed with the stated aims of tackling terrorism and drugs; the movie *My Brilliant Career* featuring Perth born actress Judy Davis was released; "Up There Cazaly" was a hit for

the Two Man Band; and Senator Neville Bonner, the first Aboriginal in the Australian Parliament, and Harry Butler, Western Australian naturalist and broadcaster, were jointly awarded 'Australian of the Year'.

In 1979, Western Australia marked 150 years of settlement, and celebratory events included the staging of the 'Miss Universe' contest, and a visit from Prince Charles, whose salty kiss in the surf at Cottesloe, planted by a local beauty, made international headlines. In June an earthquake struck the wheatbelt town of Cadoux causing almost \$4 million damage and in July Skylab made a dramatic return to earth near Esperance, again placing WA on the front page of newspapers around the world. WA's longest serving Premier, Sir David Brand, received a State funeral at Wesley Church in Perth after his death on 15 April.

An issue dominating State politics in 1979 was the 'Noonkanbah Dispute'. In June, Amax and Mines Department personnel arrived at the gate of Noonkanbah station, to commence drilling on what was contended as a sacred Aboriginal site. Finding the gate blocked by members of the local Yungngora community, legal action in the Supreme Court ensued, delaying drilling for the rest of the year.

Thirty years ago, a 600ml bottle of milk cost 28 cents. A three bedroom home in Duncraig, with a separate family room, would set you back \$43,500, but if you preferred to rent, a 2 bedroom flat in Mount Lawley was \$35 per week. A brand new Toshiba Microwave in 1979 cost \$319¹.

¹ 1979 costs sourced from 1979 State Cabinet Minutes and Decisions and *The West Australian* newspaper.

State Cabinet deliberations in 1979

Following are a selection of notable issues raised in the Western Australian State Cabinet records of 1979. The description of the issues is generally taken directly from wording used in the Cabinet Index. Dates shown below denote the relevant date(s) of deliberation in the Cabinet records.

150th Anniversary of Western Australia, 'WAY 79' - 30/4/1979, 14/05/1979, 05/11/1979



On several occasions in 1979 State Cabinet deliberated on the State's 150th Anniversary celebrations. Cabinet discussions included whether to invite the Prime Minister, and Premiers from other States, to the Military Tattoo, Parmelia Yacht Race and 150th Golf Tournament which were planned towards the end of the celebrations, in November 1979. Cabinet also discussed the success of the 150th Anniversary emblem and the need to retain the emblem for future use in sporting and state promotions. Cabinet approved the retention of the emblem with the

“understanding that it is not to replace the WA ‘Birthmark’ or be incorporated into the State Flag”. Cabinet also decided against granting a special remission to prisoners during the ‘sesquicentennial’ celebrations, but did accept the gift of a Symbolic fountain from the Chamber of Mines to commemorate the 150th Anniversary (see Symbolic Fountain below).

Sex discrimination - 09/01/1979, 27/03/1979

State Cabinet discussed the type of legislation required to cover sex discrimination, it was decided “that a special all embracing legislation be not proceeded with, but a clear statement be made of the research undertaken and the reasons for our decision. At the same time it should be made clear that where there is unfair discrimination appropriate action will be taken”. A statement of the Government's Policy on Sex discrimination was released in March.

Marriage allowance - 09/01/1979

Cabinet discussed the proposal that the current marriage allowance for women and men be abolished in January 1980. The female marriage allowance was made to female employees to compensate married women for their forced resignation and the male allowance entitled male officers to receive an additional increment within their clerical range once they were married.

Aboriginal land Rights - 06/02/1979

Cabinet decided to set up a review of the terms governing Aboriginal reserves to deal with any inconsistencies in the access provided to land.

Human Rights - 06/02/1979, 13/02/1979

The Commonwealth Government sort support from all State Government's to adopt the United Nations human rights legislation. Discussion ensued around the Cabinet's view of adopting this legislation and a press release was issued on the 13/02/1979 outlining the Cabinet's unwillingness to commit to the human rights legislation.

Woodman Point - Jervoise Bay - 13/02/1979, 27/03/1979, 18/04/1979, 02/07/1979, 13/08/1979, 05/11/1979

Cabinet discussed the need to amend the Metropolitan Regional Scheme to provide for the changes around Jervoise Bay, appoint a project co-coordinator and prepare a new Reserve Bill. In addition negotiations to purchase land from the Commonwealth were begun. The Metropolitan Regional Planning Authority (MRPA) was asked to manage the Woodman Pont properties as an interim agreement until the remaining recommendations by the Minster of Town Planning could be acted on. The Minster for Urban Development and Town Planning presented the MRPA amendment 255/31 Jervoise Bay - Woodman Point which was approved by Cabinet.

Sites for possible Nuclear power plant - 13/02/1979, 16/07/1979

Investigations into possible nuclear power plant sites were undertaken; a number of locations were identified with further investigations required including possible options to purchase private land. Detailed engineering, environmental and town planning reports were requested before any final decisions could be made. Cabinet approved the purchase of land designated South 1 by the State Electricity Commission but made it clear that the land was not committed to be used for nuclear power.

Kalgoorlie research plant and Yeelirrie uranium project - 13/02/1979 – two decisions

Following the Environmental Protection Authority's report and discussions with Western Mining Corporation – Cabinet declared that there are no environmental restraints on the Yeelirrie project going ahead in accordance with the Environmental protection authority's recommendations.

Conversion of Nedlands baths into a Marina - 20/02/1979

Cabinet approved "the issue of a jetty licence by the Harbour & Light Department for the rehabilitation and alteration of the Nedlands baths into a Marina for the mooring of about 40 boats".

Ord River Hydro Power - 20/02/1979

Development and transmission of hydro power from the Ord River to Darwin was approved in principle by Cabinet.

WA Trade Promotion Centre, establishment at the Horseshoe Bridge - 27/02/1979, 27/03/1979

Cabinet approved the development of the WA Trade Promotion centre at the horseshoe bridge in light of the support of the Trade centre by the 150th Anniversary celebrations committee.

Energy Policy for Western Australia - 27/02/1979

Cabinet approved the release of the Energy Policy for WA to make a clear statement on the states energy policies in the light of the current attempts to link bauxite mining, North West gas shelf and nuclear power activities.

Accommodation for Aboriginal fringe dwellers - 23/04/1979

Cabinet approves the Minister for Community Welfare to discuss with Treasury the proposal to provide bunk house accommodation to Aboriginal families in the Swan Valley.

Symbolic Fountain – Forecourt, Central railway station - 14/5/1979, 12/06/1979

A report was requested from the minister for Cultural Affairs, Transport, Local Government and Urban Development on the proposed symbolic fountain at the Perth central railway station. Cabinet then approved the gift of the symbolic fountain from the Chamber of Mines as its contribution to the 150th Anniversary.

Cadoux earthquake - 05/06/1979, 25/06/1979, 17/09/1979

Cabinet decided to apply to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance under the natural disasters standing arrangements and also awaited a report of State Counter Disaster Committee. A detailed report on the situation in Cadoux was tabled on the 25/06/1979. Cabinet noted details of reports on the Safety of Public Buildings in Cadoux following the earthquake in June.

Oil Drilling on Noonkanbah Pastoral Lease - 05/06/1979, 12/06/1979

Cabinet seeks legal advice regarding the Amex Noonkanbah drilling proposals. Cabinet gave approval for the Minister for Cultural Affairs to direct the Trustees to provide consent for the drilling as detailed in the submission to Cabinet by the Minister for Mines.

Pastoral Leases for Aboriginals - 13/08/1979

The Minister for Lands provided a report on the proposed transfers of pastoral leases which Cabinet agreed to subject to “the addition of provisions, that areas claimed to be sacred Aboriginal sites will be declared and agreed before any transfer will be considered” that “a review of the provisions and particularly the retention of mineral rights to the Crown in respect of Special leases” occur, and that “no special leases in pastoral areas being issued without prior approval of Cabinet”.

Deputation by Aboriginals to WA government in March 1928 - 25/06/1979

Cabinet approved the placing of a plaque at the entrance to the old treasury building in St George’s Terrace, to commemorate the deputation made by seven Aborigines to the Premier in 1928.

Aborigines – Commonwealth and the suggestion of a Treaty - 03/09/1979

Cabinet decides to protest to the Prime Minister about his plans to meet Aboriginal leaders with a view to discussing a Treaty.

Drought Relief - 03/09/1979, 10/09/1979, 02/10/1979, 29/10/1979

Cabinet decides to implement a drought relief scheme for farmers facing their third or fourth consecutive years in drought. Cabinet noted the widening of the states drought areas and authorised the Treasurer and Minister for Agriculture to decide on the necessary new forms of drought relief.

Nude bathing - 24/09/1979, 29/10/1979, 10/12/1979

Cabinet decided the problems associated with nude bathing at Swanbourne beach “are best dealt with by the Local Authorities and that they will not provide funds for parking, toilets and other improvements to the land”.

Prices of milk, cream and milk products - 15/10/1979

Cabinet approved an increase to 28 cents for a 600ml bottle of milk.

Perth Cultural Centre – naming - 19/11/1979

Cabinet decided that the “Perth Cultural Centre” is the preferred name for the designated central precinct due to this term’s “general style and usage” by the public.

The 1979 State Cabinet Members

Court Ministry

The Hon. Sir Charles Walter Michael COURT, O.B.E., M.L.A.
Premier; Treasurer; Minister Co-coordinating Economic and Regional Development

The Hon. Desmond Henry O'NEIL, M.L.A.
Deputy Premier; Chief Secretary; Minister for Police and Traffic; Regional Administration and the North-West

The Hon. Richard Charles OLD, M.L.A.
Minister for Agriculture

The Hon. Graham Charles MacKINNON, M.L.C.
Minister for Works; Water Supplies; Tourism; Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. Raymond James O'CONNOR, M.L.A.
Minister for Labour and Industry; Consumer Affairs; Immigration; Fisheries and Wildlife; Conservation and the Environment

The Hon. Ian George MEDCALF, E.D., Q.C., M.L.C.
Attorney-General and Minister for Federal Affairs

The Hon. Peter Vernon JONES, M.L.A.
Minister for Education; Cultural Affairs; Recreation

The Hon. Andrew MENSAROS, M.L.A.
Minister for Industrial Development; Mines; Fuel and Energy

The Hon. Edgar Cyril RUSHTON, M.L.A.
Minister for Transport

The Hon. Keith Alan RIDGE, M.L.A.
Minister for Housing

The Hon. David John WORDSWORTH, M.L.C.
Minister for Lands; Forests

The Hon. Margaret June CRAIG, M.L.A.
Minister for Local Government; Urban Development and Town Planning

The Hon. Raymond Laurence YOUNG, M.L.A.
Minister for Health; Community Welfare