



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

A Guide to the 1978 State Cabinet Records

PREPARED BY:

**THE STATE RECORDS OFFICE OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Contents

Introduction	page 3
The 1978 State Cabinet Records: An Overview	page 4
The 1978 State Cabinet Records: A Description	page 5
Events and Issues that made news in 1978	page 6
State Cabinet deliberations in 1978	page 7
The 1978 State Cabinet Members	page 11

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 embargo from public access. Each year, a new set of Cabinet records – from 30 years previous – is released from this embargo and may be accessed by the Western Australian community.

The 1978 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 1st June, Western Australia's Foundation Day.

This year the 1978 State Cabinet records are able to be accessed by members of the public from 2nd June 2009 at the State Records Office.

The complete set of 1978 State Cabinet records includes:

- **Cabinet Minutes and Decisions**
- **Cabinet Index**

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

The 1978 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 1978 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 1978, 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 1978 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 `1977/248 v4 – 1978/190 v4*

Quantity: *9 files, 0.64 linear metres*

<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1977/248 v4</i>	<i>10/01/1978 – 21/02/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/75 v1</i>	<i>07/04/1978 – 03/04/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/75 v2</i>	<i>10/04/1978 – 01/05/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/75 v3</i>	<i>03/05/1978 – 26/06/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/75 v4</i>	<i>03/07/1978 – 03/08/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/190 v1</i>	<i>07/08/1978 – 28/08/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/190 v2</i>	<i>04/09/1978 – 29/09/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/190 v3</i>	<i>02/10/1978 – 23/10/1978</i>
<i>Cabinet Minutes and Decisions</i>	<i>File 1978/190 v4</i>	<i>30/10/1978 – 19/12/1978</i>

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*

<i>Cabinet Index</i>	<i>2844/4</i>	<i>08/03/1977 – 21/12/1978</i>
----------------------	---------------	--------------------------------

Events and Issues that Made News in 1978

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

In the international sphere, 1978 was the year the world's first test tube baby, Louise Brown, was born in Manchester England. It is also known as the year of three Popes when after the death of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul I was elected but only survived for 33 days. On 16 October Pope John Paul II was chosen by the College of Cardinals to be the first Polish Pope in history. Also in Italy, the former Italian Premier, Aldo Moro was kidnapped and murdered by members of the Red Brigades. In Guyana 'Peoples Temple' cult leader Jim Jones led his followers in the mass murder-suicide of over 900 people.

In Spain a new constitution was approved by referendum and the King, thereby officially restoring the country's democratic government. The People's Republic of China signalled the beginning of reform and greater openness by lifting bans on works by William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens. In 1978 the films *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease* made John Travolta a superstar and the popular music charts were dominated by the soundtracks of these films all year.

In Australia, the Sydney Hilton bombing caused the deaths of 3 people, Brett Whiteley won the Archibald Prize and Arwon won the Melbourne Cup. In May Australia's longest serving Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, died.

In Western Australia in April, Cyclone Alby devastated the South West, killing 5 people, destroying the Busselton Jetty and causing millions of dollars of damage elsewhere. In 1978 Western Australia won the Sheffield Shield and November 20 was the final day of commercial whaling at Albany.

In State politics a serious rift in the National Country Party saw the party split into two distinct camps, the NCP in coalition with the Liberal Party and the National Party sitting on the cross benches under the leadership of Hendy Cowan. In August a Cabinet reshuffle caused by the resignation of Bill Grayden saw the promotion of Ray Young to the Cabinet.

Thirty years ago, a litre of milk cost 45 cents. If you went Christmas shopping in 1978, a new Sunbeam Iron from Vox Adeon cost \$21.50 and a celebratory bottle of Kaiser Stuhl Summer Wine could be bought for \$1.39.¹

¹ 1978 costs sourced from 1978 State Cabinet Minutes and Decisions and the West Australian newspaper.

State Cabinet deliberations in 1978

Following are a selection of notable issues raised in the Western Australian State Cabinet records of 1978. 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.

Drought Relief - 10/1/78, 13/2/78, 13/3/78

In several parts of the State a severe drought continued into 1978 and as part of relief measures the interest rate on loans for drought relief was reduced from 6% to 4%. In February Cabinet noted recommendations for minimising the effect of the drought on country businesses including measures encouraging local purchasing by State and Local Governments, the use of local contractors and workers and payroll tax and rail freight concessions to those in affected areas. In March drought relief was extended to bee keepers who were experiencing a 60% reduction rate in honey production.

Expansion of Bauxite Mining - 3/4/78

At the same Cabinet meeting, Andrew Mensaros the Minister for Industrial Development, presented a Policy for future development of the Bauxite/alumina industry in the South West which outlined a proposal to introduce two bills, one ratifying an agreement with Alcoa for the construction of an alumina refinery at Wagerup, and the other to vary the Worsley agreement to facilitate further development of the refinery at Worsley. The intention of the policy was “to give the State the power to control ... the size and rate of expansion of the alumina industry in the South West.”

Whaling - 13/3/78

In March State Cabinet informed Malcolm Fraser the Prime Minister that while it supported an enquiry, it felt the appointment of a Royal Commission into whaling was not necessary and that it will “merely serve to provide a wider forum for minority groups who wish to influence opinion disproportionately and adds drastically to the cost”. The whaling industry ceased in Australia when the last whaling station closed at Albany on 21 November 1978.

Wittenoom Town Site - 24/7/78, 7/8/78, 18/9/78, 7/11/78

On several occasions in 1978 State Cabinet considered the issue of widespread asbestos contamination at the Wittenoom townsite. By November 1978 Cabinet approved a recommendation by the new Health Minister Ray Young, that the Government tell all remaining residents of Wittenoom of the risks remaining there and that the town should be “phased out of existence and all buildings removed or demolished”.

Cloud Seeding Research – 3/4/78

Richard Old, the Minister for Agriculture, presented a report on cloud seeding after discussions with farmers the previous year during the drought. State Cabinet decided to obtain CSIRO cooperation and Commonwealth Government assistance in undertaking further research into cloud seeding.

Uranium Mining – 10/10/78, 30/10/78

Cabinet approved the agreement the State and Western Mining to establish uranium mining and treatment operations at Yeelirrie, 240 kms north of Leonora. It was estimated that the royalty return to the State would be substantial at “\$1.69 million per annum per percentage point”.

Late Night Shopping - 20/3/78

State Cabinet decided that last night shopping would apply on one night per week beginning 1 May 1978.

Public Service Dress - 24/1/78

The Public Service Board reported to Cabinet that it proposed to agree to dress reforms in the Public Service submitted by the Civil Service Association, including abolishing the requirement for male staff to wear ties, but would not permit the wearing of jeans, “body shirts of ... see-through material”, “bare midriff attire for females” or the wearing of “‘far out’ clothing, including extremes of colour or style”.

Queensland Aboriginal Problems (Aurukun Incident) – 3/4/78

Cabinet approved letters sent by Sir Charles Court to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner, over a confrontation between the Commonwealth and the Queensland Government over what was known at the time as the “Aurukun affair”. Court’s concerns were about Federal interference with State administration of land and mining laws and saw the Commonwealth’s position as a continuation of Whitlam Government policies of “centralism and socialism, and their undoubted intention to trample on the States”.

Establishment of an Aboriginal Housing Board – 20/3/78

In the interests of “more effective dialogue” with Aboriginal people State Cabinet approved an initiative of the State Housing Commission to set up the Western Australian Aboriginal Housing Board to assist the Commission in matters of funds for Aboriginal housing, assisting local Aboriginal tenancies and assisting with

respect to eviction actions. It was felt that Aboriginal involvement would temper “the present misunderstanding and criticism” with regard to housing for Aboriginal people.

Sunday Football - 24/1/78

State Cabinet did not approve a request from the WANFL to allow football games to be played on Sundays in 1978.

Port Kennedy Regional Centre Design Concept – 7/3/78

State Cabinet considered a detailed report on plans for the Port Kennedy region and agreed to the general concept for the use of the area. The report examined the physical environment and planning constraints, and considered potential resort and development options.

‘State of Excitement’ Vehicle License Plates - 1/5/78

In April the public were given the option of whether they wanted to display the slogan “State of Excitement” on new vehicle license number plates. There had been some opposition to the slogan from some quarters.

Land Releases – 17/4/78

State Cabinet considered a submission from the Minister of Conservation and Environment expressing concerns that opening up “virgin lands” should not occur without investigation into effects on “soil salinity, water quality and flora and fauna species”. It noted that “no land release should be recommended unless there has been full and proper consultation with and advice from the Environmental Protection Authority.”

Off road vehicles 1/5/78, 2/10/78

In May it was reported to State cabinet that the drafting of a Bill for the control of off road vehicles was complete and it was agreed that provision for third party insurance not be included in the Bill. In October Cabinet approved the introduction of the Bill to Parliament.

Tinted Film for Motor Vehicle Windows - 8/5/78

In May David Wordsworth, the Minister for Transport, presented a report to Cabinet expressing concerns about “the number of vehicles appearing on the road with tinted films on the side and rear windows.” The report said the Road Traffic Authority was “totally opposed to them” and suggested that “Western Australia should simply outlaw” tinted windows. But the report went on to say that given WA’s heat and intense light, tinted windows “with a certain degree of

opacity” and reflectivity should be allowed. Cabinet agreed that regulations defining specifications for tinted windows should be investigated further.

Nuclear Power Station site - 19/6/78

In June 1978 Cabinet requested the Minister for Industrial Development, Mines Fuel and Energy, to initiate a survey of areas for reservation as site for a nuclear power station.

Nuclear activities regulation act - 30/10/78

State Cabinet approved the introduction of a Bill to protect the environment and the health and safety of people from the harmful effects associated with nuclear activities.

Yagan Commemorative Statue - 10/7/78, 7/8/78

After consideration State Cabinet decided that it was not “desirable to participate in a monument to or statue of Yagan” as a 150th anniversary project.

National Corporations and Securities Agreement – 11/12/78

In September 1978 State Cabinet approved a proposed formal agreement to establish “a National Corporations Commission in Australia by cooperative arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States” and in December it was formally approved. This framework was the beginning of what later became the Australia Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

Concessions for Electric powered vehicles – 18/9/78

A proposal that electrically powered vehicles be granted a concession on licence fees and third party insurance, as part of the State’s Petroleum Fuel Conservation policy, was considered by Cabinet. It is recorded that Cabinet favoured the idea, but without concession for third party insurance and the Minister for Transport was asked to “resubmit, with recommendations.

150th Anniversary of Western Australia - 24/7/78, 18/9/78, 19/12/78

Preparations for the following year’s celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Foundation of Western Australia, were discussed on several occasions in Cabinet in 1978. For example hospitality guidelines were drawn up in response to the large number of requests from organisations for State and Civic Receptions throughout the year and a proposal to close roads to traffic in the City of Perth on New Year’s Eve was approved.

The 1978 State Cabinet Members

Court Ministry (until 7 August 1978)

The Hon. Sir Charles Walter Michael COURT, O.B.E., M.L.A.
Premier; Treasurer; Minister Co-ordinating 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 Fisheries and Wildlife; Tourism; Conservation and the Environment; Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. Raymond James O'CONNOR, M.L.A.
Minister for Works; Water Supplies; Housing

The Hon. William Leonard GRAYDEN, M.L.A.
Minister for Labour and Industry; Consumer Affairs; Immigration

The Hon. Ian George MEDCALF, E.D., Q.C., M.L.C.
Attorney-General; 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 Local Government; Urban Development and Town Planning

The Hon. Keith Alan RIDGE, M.L.A.
Minister for Health; Community Welfare

The Hon. David John WORDSWORTH, M.L.C.
Minister for Transport

The Hon. Margaret June CRAIG, M.L.A.
Minister for Lands and Forests

Court Ministry (7 – 25 August 1978)

The Hon. Sir Charles Walter Michael COURT, O.B.E., M.L.A.
Premier; Treasurer; Minister Co-ordinating 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 Fisheries and Wildlife; Tourism; Conservation and the Environment; Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. Raymond James O'CONNOR, M.L.A.
Minister for Works; Water Supplies; Housing; Labour and Industry; Consumer Affairs; Immigration

The Hon. Ian George MEDCALF, E.D., Q.C., M.L.C.
Attorney-General; 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 Local Government; Urban Development and Town Planning

The Hon. Keith Alan RIDGE, M.L.A.
Minister for Health; Community Welfare

The Hon. David John WORDSWORTH, M.L.C.
Minister for Transport

The Hon. Margaret June CRAIG, M.L.A.
Minister for Lands and Forests

The Hon. Raymond Laurence YOUNG, M.L.A.
Minister without Portfolio

Court Ministry (25 August 1978 -)

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